

## **CTA's Response to Chinese Government Allegations: Part Four**

19 June 2008

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Ever since peaceful protests erupted in Tibet, starting from 10 March, the Chinese government used the full force of its state media to fling a series of allegations against the "Dalai Clique". These allegations range from His Holiness the Dalai Lama masterminding the recent Tibet protest to His Holiness the Dalai Lama making attempts to restore feudalism in Tibet.

This is the fourth in a series of response by the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) to these accusations.

The Chinese translation of this response will be available later at [www.xizang-zhiye.org](http://www.xizang-zhiye.org) The Tibetan translation is available on the Tibetan edition of this website [www.tibet.net/tb/](http://www.tibet.net/tb/)

### **One China, Two Communist Parties**

#### **Two Different Chinese Responses**

Some senior Chinese officials complain, based on what they term as His Holiness the Dalai Lama's "contradictory statements," that there seems to be two Dalai Lamas. The same mystery overwhelms us. There seems to be two Chinese Communist Parties, as well. This is perhaps in line with China's own present political arrangement of one country, two systems. One Chinese Communist Party seems warm, responsive and transparent as judged by the swift manner President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Wen Jiabao handled the earthquake disaster in Sichuan. China's international image was immeasurably enhanced by China's efficient organisation of its rescue and relief efforts.

The other Chinese Communist Party is tight-fisted, paranoid and caught in a Cultural Revolution time warp. For example, to deal with the Tibet protests, the authorities decided to wage "a people's war." For a responsible government of a major power in the world to "wage a war" against its "own people" is out of tune with the tradition of China's own revolutionary past and certainly out of step with civilized behaviour. Consider, beyond the glare of the international media spotlight, the Chinese authorities, without remorse and mercy, cracked down on peaceful protestors. They beat the protestors, arrested them, tortured them to obtain confession and imposed long prison terms. While their colleagues elsewhere in Sichuan were desperately trying to save lives, the PLA and PAP in the Tibetan areas of the province were more concerned about arresting Tibetans involved in scattered protests, which continue to this day, than saving the lives of the quake victims.

The vanguard of the "people's war" is the People's Armed Police (PAP). Its main mandate is to ensure domestic security. The PAP's total strength is 800,000. The members of the PAP were the ones, in their blue track-suit, who accompanied the Olympic torch-relay around the world. The

PAP is the organization that has been charged with cracking down on the peaceful Tibetan protestors. Against the backdrop of the Tibet protests, the news Bulletin of the PAP in April issued a call to arms. The issue said, "The drums of war are sounding, a decisive battle is at hand. For the sake of the Chinese nation's image and for the honour of the People's Armed Police, let us not forget our duty."

In contrast, during the earthquake catastrophe, the Chinese people were shown the face of the good Chinese Communist Party. The official response to this disaster was immediate, sincere and effective. Despite a ban by the Propaganda Department on reporters from travelling to the earthquake zone, no punishment was meted out to the media organisations which ignored the ban. In fact, Chinese reporters rushed to Chengdu to report the disaster and the relief efforts. In the face of this, the order was rescinded. Grassroots organizations and private individuals swung into action to help in the rescue and relief efforts. Private donation efforts raised millions of dollars to help the victims. In the face of public pressure, the authorities held a three-day mourning for the quake victims, a level of mourning matched only by the one given to the likes of Mao Zedong. As Nicholas Kristof said in his op-ed for The New York Times on 22 May 2008, the Chinese Communist Party treated its people, this time, as "citizens, not subjects."

In Sichuan the media is allowed in. In Tibet the media, even now, is strictly barred. In Sichuan the government appeals and gratefully accepts foreign aid. In Tibet, despite the request of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, international medical teams are prohibited from travelling to the region to treat the injured. "Playing up the response to the earthquake while restricting coverage of repression in Tibet could prove a shrewd move, rather than one that cascades into instability," writes Philip Taubman of the New York Times, reprinted in the Indian Express, 26 May 2008.

### **Why this discrimination?**

This discrimination stems from the fact that in Tibet, the authorities show the ugly face of the Chinese Communist Party to the people. This side of the Chinese Communist Party treats the Tibetans as subjects. There is a long list of what they can or cannot do. The Chinese Communist Party believes that the Tibetans cannot think for themselves. Despite bitter Tibetan opposition, the authorities continue with their patriotic education campaign to force Tibetans to express their loyalty to the party and China and denounce His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In fact, the authorities are determined to go on with the hardline policies, including the Chinese government arrogating to itself the right to choose the reincarnation of Tibetan lams. All this ignited the current open Tibetan resistance.

The discrimination also stems from the fact that as far as the issue of Tibet is concerned the authorities have allowed the hardliners in the leadership to shape China's Tibet policy. We have made this case elsewhere in our response. As we have mentioned elsewhere, the uncompromising and unflinching statements from this set of people is a cause for alarm and concern. A senior leader of 'Tibet Autonomous Region' in trying to formulate the authorities' hardline policy to deal with the crisis in Tibet said, "For years we have looked after our people (spies and agents) outside. Now it is time to put them to work" (cause destruction to the exile community).

## **Class Struggle Over in China, Not in Tibet**

Class struggle in Tibet today is alive and kicking. This is based on what the Chinese Communist Party in a letter dated 27 August 1958 said to the Qinghai authorities. This letter is a guideline in how to handle the major uprisings that had erupted amongst the Tibetan tribes. The letter said, "In a society of classes, the issue of nationalities is in essence the issue of class. If you cannot recognise the essence of classes, no effective decision on the issue of nationalities can be taken."

In China class struggle and socialism have become history. According to a news report filed in the 19 October 2001 issue of South China Morning Post, the then Chinese foreign minister, Tang Jiaxuan, upbraided a reporter from Taiwan for calling China 'communist.' The Chinese foreign minister said, "This is Shanghai, a big city on Chinese soil. How dare you call us Communist China. Communist China has become history. Such a term no longer exists." In China the term class struggle also does not exist. In fact, in an effort to burnish Jiang Zemin's Three Represents theory, businessmen and entrepreneurs are welcomed to be members of the Chinese Communist Party.

In Tibet, the authorities' struggle toward the "Dalai clique" is framed in terms of class struggle, with no compromise, no retreat and no quarter given or expected. Class struggle is the highest form of struggle. On this struggle depends the very survival of the Chinese Communist Party. From the perspective of the CCP, it is a life-and-death struggle, of you die and I live.

It is in this vein, Zhang Qingli stated, "We are currently in an intense, bloody and fiery struggle with the Dalai clique, a life and death struggle with the enemy." He also called His Holiness the Dalai Lama "A wolf in sheep's clothes and a devil with a human face but with a heart of a beast."

Behind this life-and-death struggle against the Tibetan people are the hardliners in the leadership who have advocated Sinicization for China's "assimilation problem" of minorities, particularly the Tibetan case. These hardliners have also been responsible for the policy, announced last year, that henceforth the CCP would recognise all the reincarnate lamas of Tibet, which strikes at the very heart of the Tibetan people's beliefs and their value system. These hardliners in the leadership are supported in their views by Meng Jianzhu, the minister for Public Security, who was in Tibet during the crisis to supervise the clampdown, Zhang Qingli, the party secretary in the "Tibet Autonomous Region," and Jampa Phuntsok, the governor of the region.

There are different views within the leadership regarding how to handle the issue of Tibet. Mark Maginer, reporting for the Los Angeles Times in a report that appeared on 5 June, says, "And Beijing is making more use of good-cop, bad-cop tactics. On the issue of Tibet, for instance, some arms of the government decried the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, even as other parts called for negotiations."

That there are two schools of thought in the Chinese central government on how to handle the issue of Tibet is admitted by the Chinese state media. For example, China's official news agency, Xinhua, in its commentary by Yi Yan, republished on its website, [www.chinaview.cn](http://www.chinaview.cn) of 1 July 2008 admits this. The commentary is titled The Choice for Dalai Lama. It says, "If the Dalai Lama wrongly gauges the support the West gives him, and takes for granted the good intentions

of the central government, or tries to seek a prey that is beyond reason, or even encourage and instigate his radical followers to engage in violence, once again, Beijing will surely be enraged. Under that circumstance, it will force the central government to give up on him, once and all. There exists such advocacy in the central government now."

This is an extraordinary admission to make. During the student demonstration on Tiananmen Square in 1989, the prime minister, Zhou Ziyang, was forced out of office because he suggested that there were two ways of thinking in the leadership regarding how to deal with the protesting students.

Policy differences over Tibet at the highest leadership level is confirmed by leakages to the media. Michael Sheridan of the Sunday Times on 13 July said that a more hardline approach to deal with the issue of Tibet was published in the April and May editions of the Xizang Tongxun, a classified publication restricted to party officials. He said translations of these were handed over to his paper in Hong Kong. In these documents, Michael Sheridan says, "Internal Communist Party documents have revealed that China is planning a programme of harsh political repression in Tibet despite a public show of moderation to win over world opinion before the Olympic Games next month.

"A campaign of 're-education' has been outlined in confidential speeches to meetings of Communist party members by Zhang Qingli, the hardline party secretary of Tibet...

"Zhang has admitted behind closed doors that the Chinese authorities in Lhasa, the Tibetan capital, face "a tide of encirclement" and that anti-Chinese violence in March "destroyed social stability". He has warned that "final victory" is far off.

Our question is, why has the hardliners managed to define China's Tibet policy and not the moderates?

China's two top leaders' view on the issue of Tibet and the role of His Holiness the Dalai Lama is widely divergent from the views held by the hardliners. As mentioned elsewhere, during a visit to Laos at the end of March, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao told the international media, "Provided that the Dalai Lama renounces claims of independence, and in particular exerts his influence to stop the present violent activities in Tibet, and acknowledges that Taiwan and Tibet are inseparable parts of China, we can continue to resume dialogues with him."

In late March, President Hu Jintao in a call to President Bush said, "If the Dalai Lama truly relinquishes independent Tibet claims, and stops splitting the motherland, and especially stops inciting and planning the violent and illegal actions in Tibet and thereby harming the Beijing Olympics and acknowledges that Tibet and Taiwan are inseparable parts of China, we agree to continue dialogue with him."

During a visit to Japan later, Chinese President Hu Jintao said his government's attitude to the dialogue with the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama was sincere. President Hu Jintao, as reported by Reuters on 7 May 2008, speaking after a summit with Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, said China's recent talks with representatives of Tibet's exiled Buddhist leader the

Dalai Lama had been "conscientious and serious" and said that the two sides had agreed to continue contacts.

Commenting on the attitude of these two leaders of China to the Tibet issue, Cao Xin, a political analyst, says, "The response of China's two topmost leaders reflect the reality that Tibetan Buddhism has powerful and perpetual influence on the Tibetan people, and it is also a reality that the Dalai Lama has profound influence on the Tibetan people as the religious leader of Tibetan Buddhism."

The writer says, "Based on the above-mentioned realities, some pragmatic policy changes should be considered. First, we need to distinguish between the majority of Tibetan religious believers and the government-labeled 'Dalai clique.' Given that the Dalai Lama is the only religious leader the Tibetan devotees recognise, religious faith and worship toward him cannot be handled simply as a typical political issue and should not be labeled as splitting the Motherland. This is in accordance with the policy of regional autonomy, and we must uphold it as the bottomline."

Cao Xin wrote this commentary in 2 April issue of Southern Weekend, an influential newspaper published out of Guangdong, the most dynamic of the Chinese provinces.

The tragedy is that the accommodating views of China's top leaders and the thoughtful analysis of these views are virtually shut out from and certainly drowned by Xinhua's shrill and almost hysterical denunciations. If name-calling could be a substitute for real policy, then Zhang Qingli could bag the Olympic Gold hands down in this category. If Zhang Qingli and his ilk think that shouting down people, rather than listening to their concerns and addressing them, is the right way to go about tackling China's Tibet mess he and his like are doing no service either his country and those under whom they serve. Replicating policies in Tibet that have spectacularly failed elsewhere is inviting disaster.

### **The Question of the "Splittist" Flag**

On 31 March, Xinhua published a commentary by its writer, Cao Kai, entitled Dalai Lama a politician, not a simple monk. Apart from regurgitating the usual allegations, the writer says, "To make this government in exile status (sic) more credible, the Dalai Lama and his supporters produced a 'Tibetan national anthem' and 'Tibetan national flag', which had never existed before 1959."

These days the Chinese authorities call the Tibetan flag by various names. It is condemned as a "reactionary," "splittist" or "separatist" flag. It is sometimes called "the flag of the Tibetan government-in-exile." The Chinese state media also refer to it as the "Tibetan independence flag." Sometimes the Chinese authorities refer to it as the "snow lion flag."

One of the strange complaints of the Chinese authorities against the Tibetan exiles' use of the Tibetan flag, as implicit in these words of frustration and outrage, is that the Tibetan refugees had not sought permission from the Chinese authorities for the use of the motifs of the flag: the snow mountain and the snow lion. A report that appeared in China Daily on 11 April and reprinted in Xinhuanet.com the next day says this about the use of the snow mountain and snow

lion. "They also used the image of our pure snow mountain and the just dauntless lion to make their so-called 'snow lion flag,' a cunning tactic to deceive kind-hearted people."

### **The Origins of the Tibetan National Flag**

The Tibetan national flag is not an exile Tibetan invention. It has, in its various incarnations down the centuries, become a part of the Tibetan identity. The Tibetan flag with the snow mountain and the two snow lions existed long before communist China invaded Tibet. The origins of the Tibetan national flag go back to the time of King Songtsen Gampo in the 6th century. The various regiments of his army used different banners. One particular regiment, the Yu-ru To, had a standard emblazoned with a pair of snow lions facing each other. Another regiment, the Ya-Ru Ma, had a battle standard with a single snow lion. The Tsang-Ru Lag regiment had an upright snow lion, leaping toward the sky. This tradition of having the snow lion in the banners and battle standards of the Tibetan army continued down the centuries till the Great 13th Dalai Lama standardized the present flag, which since then became the standard around which the Tibetan people rallied.

### **The Tibetan Flag's International Appearance**

The September 1934 issue of the National Geographic Magazine devoted a feature on the flags of the many nations of the world. One flag mentioned is the Tibetan national flag. We reproduce below both the cover of that particular issue of the magazine.



"With its towering mountain of snow, before which stand two snow lions fighting for a flaming gem, the flag of Tibet, is one of the most distinctive of the East," says the September 1934 issue of the National Geographic magazine.

The Tibetan flag's first appearance at an international gathering, as far as we know, was at the Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi in 1947. In a letter to Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, independent India's first prime minister, said, "You know that there is going to be an Inter-Asian Relations Conference in the last week of March in Delhi. This Conference has assumed an unusual importance and it is going to be very representative indeed. Almost every country of Asia from the west to the east and south, including the Arab countries, Tibet, Mongolia and the

countries of South-East Asia as well as the Asian Republics of the Soviet Union will be represented by leading men."

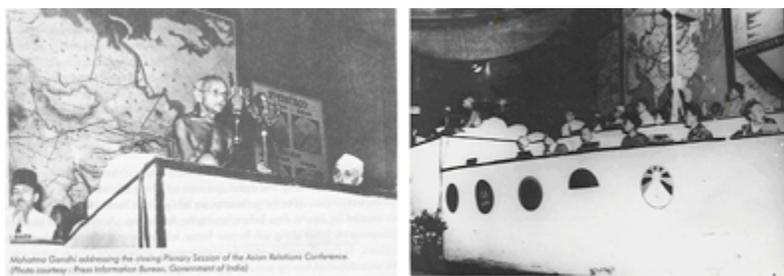
Tibet's participation at the Asian Relations Conference is discussed at length in a new book, *Tibet: The Lost Frontier*, by Claude Arpi. The Indian invitation to Tibet for the conference was received. "Sometime in early March 1947, the delegation departed from Lhasa," writes Claude Arpi. "They journeyed first to Dromo in the Chumbi Valley, where they were joined by a messenger of the Kashag bringing a Tibetan flag, which they were requested to hoist during the Conference."

*Tibet: The Lost Frontier* says, "The plenary session of the conference was held in the Purana Qila. The leaders of each of the thirty-two delegations were sitting on the dais behind a plate with the name of the country and the flag of the country. Tibet had its own flag with the snow-covered mountains and the two snow lions representing the dual powers of the Dalai Lama. There was a huge map of Asia behind the delegates on which Tibet was shown as a separate country."

The Tibetan delegation composed of eight members, led by Teiji Sampho Tsewang Rigzin, and assisted by Khenchung Lobsang Wangyal, met with Mahatma Gandhi and presented him with khatas, greeting scarves. Gandhi-ji admired the fine silk and on enquiry where the silk was made, he was told it was made in China. Gandhi-ji gently advised the members of the Tibetan delegation that Tibet should start making its own silk.

Sampho Tenzin Dhondup, the son of the head of the Tibetan delegation, writes in his memoir, *My Life's Turbulent Waves*, "For the actual session, two seats were reserved on the dais for the two Tibetan delegates with a complete picture of Tibetan national flag on the front part of their table. A picture of the Tibetan national flag was also displayed on the table of the two Tibetan ambassadors. The picture depicted the snowy mountain with a pair of snow lions facing each other. And on the table was a wooden tablet inscribed "TIBET" in emboldened English."

Reproduced below are two photos of the historic event.



Mahatma Gandhi at the Asian Relations Conference/The Tibetan delegates and the flag below

## **Mao and the Tibetan National Flag**

Even Mao Zedong had heard about the existence of the Tibetan national flag. In his address to the parliamentarians at the 4th World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet held from 18 to 19 November 2005 in Edinburgh, His Holiness said, "Let's now come to the Tibetan national flag. I think some of the present Chinese officials when they see this flag (pointing at the Tibetan national flag) they become angry. They feel it is the sign of a splittist. When I was in China, on one occasion, Chairman Mao asked me whether we have a national flag or not. With a little hesitation, I said, 'Yes'. Then, Chairman Mao encouraged me by saying, You should keep the Tibetan national flag along with the red flag."

In his biography, *A Tibetan Revolutionary: The Political Life and Times of Bapa Phuntso Wangye*, the founder of the Tibetan Communist Party, touches on this incident. He recounts, "Mao perceived that the Dalai Lama was concerned by his question and immediately told him, "That is no problem. You may keep your national flag."