

Tibet and India's Ideal of World Peace

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The Indian Government has often proclaimed world peace to be its master ideal. Nobody can doubt its sincerity. But it has been rather been a deluded dreamer of peace than an effective worker. For it has based all its hopes on an unrealistic conception of things. This conception may be summed up as thinking in terms of two equally undesirable power blocs — the Russian and the American — striving for world domination. The facts are quite different.

There is only one power bloc bent on bringing the entire earth under its sway. The mind of the Russian Communist is essentially intolerant: it will not permit free thought either in politics or philosophy, art or science — everything must subserve Dialectical Materialism, the Economic View of History and the Collective State. What is even worse, everything must be made grist to the dreadful mill of Stalinist dictatorship - Communism itself must be Stalinist and be geared to the aims and interests of the Soviet Union. There is no such ambitious intolerance on the part of America. While Russia and all countries controlled by her refuse to recognise even a Communist like Tito and are endeavouring to subvert all non-communist Governments, America has not the slightest intention to convert any democracy into an American model. Democracy in Britain is different in several respects from what it is in the USA, and the French democracy is again dissimilar in various functions to the British and the Indian democracy has features of its own that are not shared by any of the others. America, as the most powerful democratic country, imposes no fixed pattern and leaves all the uniqueness untouched. It has no specific quarrel with even Marxism and Collectivism. Communists live and preach in the very heart of America and she does not insist on any democracy putting an absolute ban on them. Of course, they have to be checked when they turn traitors, but they are free to agitate by constitutional means for a change of government. Communist countries, so long as they do not foment violent revolutions outside their borders or launch aggression, are not meddled with. The world has nothing to fear from America's power. This does not mean that the American are exempt from ordinary human faults, but it means that the general world policy of the United States is "Live and let live". All this is in marked contrast to the Soviet policy and proves that the world is not divided into two equally self-aggrandising blocs but into a terrorist Russian bloc desiring to crush the many-sided intellect of evolving man and a group of freedom-cherishing nations headed by America who has the capacity to halt the march of Soviet tyranny.

The Indian Government, not seeing the fundamental unlikeness of the two parts into which the world is split, has nourished the illusion that it can serve the cause of the peace best by keeping aloof from both the parts and securing some sort of balance of power. It has further fancied that peace is really threatened by only the American West and the Russian East, while the countries of Asia are intensely anxious to avoid war and to live on brotherly terms. In consequence, there has been a sentimental turning towards the newly formed regime of Mao Tse-Tung which is the strongest single Asiatic power. A fond hope has been entertained that since economic reconstruction is a crying need in China as in most of the other Asiatic countries —India, Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia, etc.— - there would be a concentration on it and a sincere desire to help the cause of peace. At the back of our Prime Minister's constant holding of a brief for Mao, there has been the idea of creating in alliance with him of a third bloc — a mighty Asiatic association of 800 millions people with potential riches of immense magnitude — to safeguard world peace. Aiming to check the thirst of the Western bloc for world-domination, Jawaharlal Nehru has raised often the slogan of "anti-colonialism". Mao has fervently joined in the shouting. Nehru has pushed even further and said that colonialism must go no matter if its going means the triumph of Communism. Not that he has been advocate of putting, as Russia seeks to do, the human mind in fetters: he believes that Asiatic Communism is bound to be of a non-Russian brand and therefore should not be made an excuse for any remnant of colonial rule by the West. To support his belief he has kept pointing at Mao. And Mao did his best by clever propaganda to play up to Nehru so long as it suited his own game. He encouraged Nehru to overlook the glaring fact that Red China was allied by a Treaty with Soviet Russia, that she had openly spurned neutrality as between the West and Stalin, that through Peking Radio she had flung abusive names at India and Nehru himself for sitting on the fence instead of clasping Stalin's hand - in short, that she was entirely different from India and intended to fit perfectly into the patterns of expansionism which Russia had devised and which was to begin in Asia with the North Korean attack. An alliance between a neutral democratic India and a Communist China thoroughly on the side of Stalin was a political and ideological impossibility, but the myth of what Nehru has called "Asiatic sentiment" made the most fatuously pink spectacles, with the results that nothing short of a severe slap in the face could shake our government out of its ill-founded dream of world peace by means of a Sino-Indian entente.

Mao, of course never accepted Nehru as a brother as the simple reason that the latter never put himself entirely under Stalin's wings. In fact, Mao had India on the list of those whom he and Stalin would like to liberate or liquidate. And he was resolved to let nothing deter him. So, when the hour struck, he trampled without the least hesitation on India's plea for peaceful behaviour, invaded Tibet in spite of contrary assurances to India and actually accused India of being "affected by foreign influences hostile to China" because she protested that an armed attack on Tibet was "surprising" and "regrettable".

The severe slap that alone could wake our government to ugly realities has come. Clearly, with a China so blatantly militarist and imperialist, India can have no alliance in the cause of peace. Moreover, the new common frontier of 1300 miles with China which Tibet's incorporation in the Chinese Republic will entail signifies a vast threat to a country pronounced to be "affected by foreign influences hostile to China". New Delhi has sufficiently sat up to take notice of such elementary things. But though the eyes of our Government have been pulled open and its tongue loosened enough to modulate disapproval in mild yet dignified terms, the limbs are still lax. We have not found the strength for decisive action. We have stood by and allowed Tibet to be crushed. We have laid the unction to our souls that a couple of critical notes have gone from us to Peking. But when small helpless countries are run over it is not noble words which are required. Brave deeds are called for — and for bravery, in the present instance, we do not appear to have one drop in our veins. Leave aside taking arms against the unprovoked aggression and summoning the great Western democracy to our side, we have not even broken off diplomatic relations with China. That is the least we should do to register our deep disgust at her brutal and cynical behaviour. Just we accepted the Red regime in Peking despite the violation of Nationalist China's territorial integrity by Soviet Union in the process of its establishment we are accepting the annexation of autonomous Tibet by Mao. There is possible for us here not even the superficial defence that the war is a civil one or that the old government stank to the skies with corruption. We know very well that the unabashed aggression has been committed and that the new government is a believer in brute force and is unscrupulously expansionist. We are keenly alive to the danger of Mao casting avaricious eyes at India, we are well aware that his Communism is of the Stalinist variety in at least the ambition to spread it all over the world but force of arms. But have we the guts to stand up to the bully from beyond the Yangtse? Have we the moral courage to boycott him on the international plane and declare ourselves to be one with the defensive democracies of the West? It seems we still hope to buy off Mao with absence of positive action. But to write off Tibet for the sake of imagined self-security is sharply reminiscent of Chamberlain scarifying Czechoslovakia at Munich and claiming to have won the peace in our time. The same blind kind of peace we shall win if we fail to present a really bold and dynamic front to Mao.

Let us not blink the fact that Tibet is useful to China principally as a gate of entry to India. Sooner or later the attempt will be made to threaten us. What exactly along the 1300 miles of the new frontier the thrust will come it is too early to say. But Nepal, with sixteen railroads leading directly into India from her borders, appears to be the most likely objective. There may not be direct attack at first, for the Gurkhas are great fighters though their fighting abilities may not weigh against overwhelming number and better equipment. What is more likely is a Communist penetration of the existing popular movements a further working up of internal disturbances dividing the political structure as well the soldiery, and then the call by one party to China for aid. The call, if he comes, will be set forth with a

specious legal excuse. It is not generally known that for over a hundred years up to 1912 Nepal sent missions to China every fifth year with an assortment of gifts. As such Sudhakar Bhatt has observed, the Chinese inclined to interpret this as a tribute. Mao may equate such tribute to what Tibet often gave to Manchus; in that case Nepal would be regarded as a kind of remote vassal in whose affairs the suzerain country would hardly interfere except when critical conditions within the subject territory rendered interference necessary. In any case the right to interfere would be said to remain. The right, even with clear judicial eyes, would be as fictitious as that over the affairs of Tibet - even more so since a nominal suzerainty has at least been recognised in relation with the latter. But Mao would not be stayed by any such judicial vision. He would brazenly put forth his flimsy claim and order a Liu Po-cheng to march into Nepalese territory. All the more brazen a face would he wear on account of the fact the ruling families of Nepal as well as Sikkim have on several occasions intermarried with those of Tibet. The intermarriages, he would say, put Tibet and Nepal together as territories more or less under common royalty and give China the right to integrate both. We are up against a consciousness enemy who under various pretexts will exploit to the full military superiority over us in the interests of Stalinist Communism. The more we try to placate him the more encouraged he will feel to browbeat us. Our sole hope of safety lies in banishing all fear from our hearts and coming out in the open with anti-Mao gesture inviting all possible American and British aid. There is no time to lose. If we wait too long we may half perish before we are helped.