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BY

Georgians because they were supposed to have more feminine modesty and distinction of bearing.

Mr. NEUMAN: How many Georgians are there out there now?

Dr. LANG: About three million.

Colonel ROUTH: In your very well-informed studies of that area, did you come to any conclusion about the "cradle of human civilization" when man decided that he would stop hunting and grow crops and live in villages? It is suggested that that started between the Caspian and the Black Sea. I wondered whether you came across any evidence of that kind of story.

Dr. LANG: I must crave indulgence for not attempting a reply to that one. I feel very much like the founders of the Philological Society who had to face the question of the origin of language, and accordingly decreed in their original statutes that no discussion should take place in the Philological Society on the question of the origin of language! I feel myself in the same position in regard to that question.

The CHAIRMAN: Our time is up. I would like to ask just one question, and I should be glad to have an answer either "Yes" or "No." Am I correct in feeling that Georgia, with its two thousand years of civilization, its literature, its architecture, and so on, has never really undertaken the nationality effort of expansion—nationalized expansion—into the other countries?

Dr. LANG: The answer is "Yes" and "No"—yes, you are right; no, it has not.

The CHAIRMAN: I know that you will want to thank Dr. Lang for his most pleasant approach to this very comprehensive subject on which he has enlightened us today and to give him your thanks in the appropriate manner. We are very glad to have had him with us.

(*The vote of thanks to Dr. Lang was accorded by acclamation.*)

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"TIBET AND RUSSIAN INTRIGUE"

By P. L. MEHRA

I

THE three great land masses of Asia—India, China and Russia—lie on the periphery of Tibet. Russia, in the north, does not touch Tibet directly, albeit Sinkiang's pivotal position, as between Russia and China, has been a subject of considerable interest to close students of Inner Asian affairs.[1] For though not precisely a neighbour, Russia's close proximity through Sinkiang, not to say (Outer) Mongolia, has not left her altogether unconcerned with Tibetan affairs; the interest being particularly sustained during the periods of her military expansion in Asia.[2] The recent "peaceful liberation" of Tibet by Red China and her admittance into what the Dalai Lama has called "the family of the great Motherland"[3] inevitably directs Russian interest and intrigue in the forbidden land into new channels, for the road to Lhasa must now lie through Peking and not, as hitherto, through the Tarim basin on to the Chang Tang.

Keen students of Tibetan affairs are not quite agreed upon their interpretation of the true strategic significance of a Communist-controlled Tibet. For some the land of the lamas is not likely to serve as a stepping-stone for a Russian-inspired invasion of India or Pakistan, for she is in fact too high, too devoid of exploitable resources and too backward and barren a waste to play any such role.[4] To others, with the feverish Chinese activity of road-building and air-base construction of the past few years, Tibet's importance in the atomic age of today as a political base from which China would be enabled to manœuvre *vis-à-vis* the whole of South and South-East Asia cannot be easily underrated.[5] But perhaps, inevitably, the Kremlin's moves on the chequer-board in this part of the world must be subordinated to Peking's own ultimate objectives. Time was—a bare half a century ago—when the reverse held true, and the Manchu rulers of China allegedly renounced all claims to Tibet in return for a guarantee from the (Great White) Tsar of their country's territorial integrity![6] It is to those years one must turn to investigate the mainsprings of Russian interest and activity in the high uplands of the Tibetan plateau.

In the opening years of the present century, with China an active scene of intense carving up of spheres of influence, Russian intrigue in Tibet occupied an important place in Lord Curzon's thinking and carried no small weight in the British Government's final approval of the 1903-4 armed expedition to Lhasa. What was the exact nature and scope of the intrigue? Again, to what extent did the danger so posed represent a real threat to Tibet, and hence to the British hegemony of their Indian Empire? At one time queries such as these elicited only hush-hush replies, but by piecing together small bits of information, somewhat grudgingly vouch-

safed by those most competent to know, fairly accurate answers can now be attempted. A gleam of light is thus shed on a fascinating chapter in the chequered story of Tibet *vis-à-vis* her peripheral neighbours.

The British military expedition to Tibet, just alluded to, was led by Colonel Francis (later Sir Francis) Younghusband. Comprising a small number of "frontier diplomats," and escorted by a couple of hundred well-armed troops, the expedition had originally started as a commercial mission. Its ostensible aim was to negotiate on some trading rights, and settle a few outstanding border disputes with the representatives of Tibet's god-king, and of the Imperial Chinese Amban at Lhasa. Its real purpose, however, was to meet the Russian challenge at a point the farthest removed from India's borders.[7] Younghusband's despatches, from the time he and his men assembled at Khamba Jong (some 30 miles inside Tibet) to the day they arrived in Lhasa, continue to refer to Russian activities: Russian munitions and rifles are discovered, Tibetan troops are said to be led by Russian-trained Buriat lamas, Russia is continuously pictured as stiffening the Dalai in his resistance to negotiate any agreement with the Mission, Tibetan lamas are represented warning the Mission that if they were defeated they would fall back on a mighty Power.[8] In this encounter with the Lhasa lamas, and their general, at Guru, Younghusband frankly told them that the British were annoyed, for while they (the Tibetans) showed great friendship for the Russians their hostility to the British was very pronounced.[9] Excerpts may be cited here from two of Younghusband's despatches as typical of the reports on which the Government of India, and the authorities in London, were fed:

> "Information that the Tibetans are relying on Russian support and that Russian arms have entered Tibet has now been received from several independent sources. It may be assumed . . . that Dorjieff is at Lhasa; that a promise of Russian support has been given to the Tibetans; and that the Tibetans believe that this promised support will be given to them."[10]

And again, a few days later:

> "Colonel Chao stated that Dorjieff is at present in Lhasa. He . . . said that the arrogance of the Tibetans was due to their reliance on the support of the Russians . . . that of late the Tibetans have been taunting the Chinese openly and saying that they have now a stronger and greater Power than China upon which to rely for assistance."[11]

Contemporary observers of the scene were divided in their assessment of the exact nature and scope of the Russian "plot" in Tibet. Thus, while some held that Curzon had done little except to furbish up the old bugbear of Russian intrigue and that "not a tittle of evidence" existed beyond unsupported newspaper clippings and bazaar gossip,[12] others thought that British intervention in Tibet became necessary because their interests "clashed all along the line with those of the Muscovite."[13] Later writers are not quite so categorical,[14] and perhaps the best that can be done is to collate all available evidence and judge the facts for oneself.

II

According to a Chinese scholar, Russia in 1900 is said to have held out a promise to defend Tibet diplomatically against the British; in 1901 as willing to sponsor a pro-Tibetan movement among Russian subjects—both Buriat and Kalmuks—in Tibet.[15] In November of the same year the project of establishing a Russian consulate at Tachienlu in Western China, not far from Tibet's borders, was officially put forward.[16] That at the turn of the century Russian policy, in areas adjacent to Tibet, was extremely adventurous is borne out by the fact that in 1899 they were demanding the establishment of a vice-consulate at Rangoon, while about the same time they were engaged in belittling, and disparaging, the British Agent at Kashghar (in Chinese Turkestan) for his want of consular rank.[17] As background to a proper understanding of Russia's active interest in these areas, her expansion, throughout the nineteenth century, over the khanates of Central Asia, must be constantly kept in view; an expansion which, among other things, had involved the British in two costly wars with Afghanistan. Characteristic of this breath-taking Russian advance was a growing belief that large parts of the Chinese Empire, then in hopeless decay,[18] which bordered on Russia constituted a sort of power vacuum which Russian men and material had to fill, even as they had filled the vast spaces of Central Asia.[19]

Did Tibet form a part of this sphere of interest cum influence? Evidently not, for the notorious Russian proposals submitted to China towards the close of 1900, while they earmarked Kashghar, Yarqand and Khotan, besides Mongolia and Manchuria, as Russia's sphere of influence, did not include Tibet;[20] nor yet did the Scott-Muravieff agreement of April, 1899, show her (Tibet) to be within the Russian orbit.[21] "Interest" in Tibet, then, must have been born out of some other factors, circumscribed both in time and space. What factors were these and how were they born?

A long line of Russian explorers who were by no means all intelligence agents—indeed, the contributions of some of them in the zoological, geological, and the botanical fields were of a very high order—had encountered their British and Indian counterparts over the Tien Shan, the Karakoram, and the Pamirs.[22] These "meetings" seem to have made the Russian "menace" a familiar topic to the British public—even if there had been no conflict of interests elsewhere. It has been maintained that Russia's relations with Tibet were thus established in "an accidental way," which precluded the possibility of any long premeditated scheme on the part of Russia, "but the move appeared as such in the eyes of foreign observers,"[23] and it was that belief which was important.

Apart from the explorers who first "discovered" Tibet for most Russians, there were the Buriat and Kalmuk subjects of the Tsar, many of whom found their way into Lhasa's monasteries and some of whom could, without much difficulty, be hired as intelligence agents. It will be recalled that the celebrated Dorjieff was himself a Buriat Mongol who had come to Tibet to round off his education. Even the lesser-known Tserempil is said to have served his novitiate in monasteries around Lhasa and Urga.

Two factors may be borne in mind here. One, to the lama Buddhist Lhasa has always remained the Mecca where his education and training reach their final perfection. Two, since territorial expansion at Tibet's expense has never been—indeed, can scarcely be—a Russian goal, these Buriat monks have never been suspect in Tibetan eyes.

Still another factor responsible for Russian "interest" in Tibet during this period was the pronouncedly anti-British leanings of Tsar Nicholas II. Most unfriendly to the English, the Tsar used to call them "zhids," or Jews.[24] Indeed, a report drawn up for the young Nicholas in April, 1895, by his Foreign Minister contained the observation, "our principal and most dangerous enemy in Asia is, undoubtedly, England." And Nicky's marginal comment therein was, "Surely!"[25] As a matter of fact, the looseness of the language employed by responsible Russian statesmen who should have known better, is surprising and even shocking. Thus, the celebrated Russian Finance Minister, Count Sergei Witte, talked of Russia prevailing "from the shores of the Pacific to the heights of the Himalayas,"[26] and a Prince Ukhtomsky thought there were hardly any frontiers for the Russians in Asia.[27]

III

A major link that was to bind Tibet to the Russian orbit was the Buriat Mongol Aguan Dorjieff, briefly referred to in the preceding pages. Dorjieff—his name has many variants, viz., Dorji, Dorshieff, Dorzhievy, Dogiew, Dorjew—was by birth a Buriat of Chorinskaia, in the province of Verchnyudinsk, who was brought up in the convent of Azochowski.[28] A man of wide learning and ability, he studied over a number of years in the Drepung monastery, where he is also said to have won a theological degree. His reputation as a scholar seems to have earned him the position wherein he won the Tibetan Pontiff's complete confidence. For when the Dalai came of age, Dorjieff found himself to be his "Work-Washing Abbot."[29] Another version of Dorjieff's early career pictures him as an employee of the Russian Foreign Office and the Intelligence Service as early as 1885. In this capacity he is said to have visited most of the capitals of Europe and acquired all the important traits of an accomplished diplomat. We are further told that when the thirteenth Dalai assumed power "it was contrived" that Dorjieff should become his tutor.[30]

As "Work-Washing Abbot," part of Dorjieff's assignment was to sprinkle water, scented with saffron flowers, a little on the person of the Dalai Lama, but more on the walls of the room, on the altar and the books—as a symbol of cleansing. He was thus very close to the person of Tibet's god-king. An ardent Russian at heart, Dorjieff appears to have told the Lama that because of their close contacts with Mongolia, more and more Russians were taking to Tibetan Buddhism and that it was not impossible that even the Tsar might embrace this faith. One can imagine the young Dalai afire with the vision of the all-powerful White Tsar standing by his side, a convert to Tibet's great religion! And how vivid the contrast must have appeared to him between a ruler who was moving close to his faith and another that seemed intent upon destroying it. Need

one wonder, then, that while Lord Curzon's advances were coldly received and his sealed letters returned unopened, the Dalai despatched diplomatic missions of goodwill to St. Petersburg and that he looked to Russia to save him from the intense attentions which his southern neighbour was bestowing on him?[31]

Dorjieff, it must be emphasized, did not talk of trade or of "opening up the country," and though the British protested time and time again that their main interest was commercial intercourse, the Dalai thought this only to be a clever ruse behind which lay hidden many an ulterior motive. That this was his view is manifest from a letter which he wrote at about this time to the ruler of Sikkim:

> "Why do the British insist on establishing trade marts? Their goods are coming in from India right up to Lhasa. Whether they have their marts or not, their things come in all the same. The British, under the guise of establishing communications, are merely seeking to over-reach us. They are well practised in all these political wiles."[32]

While the Dalai's knowledge of British "wiles" seems to have been complete, his disenchantment with the Russians lay hidden in the limbo of an embryonic future. And meanwhile the Buriat Dorjieff played his game, and that, too, with the active support of the Tibetan ruler.

On October 15, 1900, the official column of the *Journal de Saint Petersburg* announced that His Majesty the Emperor had received in audience a certain "Aharamba-Agvan-Dorjieff," who was described as the "first Transit Hamba to the Dalai Lama of Tibet."[33] So ill posted was the British Embassy in Russia that they could supply their Foreign Office in London with no additional information either regarding this visitor or the purpose of his visit.[34]

Dorjieff, however, appeared again next year, and on this occasion his mission attracted a great deal of attention in the Russian press. It was described as "extraordinary," and its "diplomatic" nature was emphasized. As regards its purpose, stress was laid on the fact that it was intended "further to cement" the already existing relations with Russia, that although Tibet was quite accessible to the Russians, the mission's aim was to make it even more so.[35] A well-known paper commented that Dorjieff's reappearance underlined the fact that his previous conclusions had been favourable and that the Dalai Lama had been confirmed in his intention of contracting the friendliest relations with Russia. The Lama must have recognized, the paper further argued, that Russia was the only Power able to counter British intrigues which had persisted for so long, and indeed seemed to be awaiting an opportunity to force an entrance into the country.[36]

While there was some recognition, in a section of the press, that Tibet's subordinate status *vis-à-vis* China did not make the Dorjieff mission strictly diplomatic in character, emphasis was laid on the fact that as Russia alone had upheld the integrity of China, the Tibetans, though Chinese subjects, naturally came to Russia to pray for assistance; and doubtless they would be very welcome.[37]

The second mission, which excited all this comment, comprised eight Tibetans with Dorjieff as the leader. Apart from the attention it evoked in the press, the mission, which was officially described as "the Envoys Extraordinary of the Dalai Lama of Tibet," was received by the Emperor, the Empress, the Foreign Minister (Count Lamsdorff) and the Finance Minister (Count Sergei Witte).[38]

It is necessary to bear in mind the publicity attendant upon this second visit of Dorjieff if only to remind oneself that when, in response to the British Ambassador's pointed inquiries, the Russian Foreign Minister categorically denied that the mission had any significance whatsoever, Count Lamsdorff's viewpoint did not carry conviction with everybody. Even the British Ambassador, while communicating the text of his interview to the Foreign Office, did not conceal his scepticism. The Russian Foreign Minister had, indeed, assured the British that Dorjieff made his visits for the purpose of collecting money for his religious order from among the numerous Buddhist subjects of the Emperor; that his visit had no official character; and that although he was accompanied by Tibetans this had no significance whatsoever.[39] On a subsequent occasion Count Lamsdorff again held forth the assurance that the Dorjieff mission had "no political or diplomatic character," that at best it could be compared to the Pope's goodwill missions to the faithful in other countries. Again, while conceding that the Dalai had sent him (Count Lamsdorff) an autographed letter, he tried to pursuade Sir C. Scott, the British Ambassador, that it was really an exchange of innocuous courtesies.[40]

The British may have accepted Russia's bland assurances with a considerable pinch of salt, but, preoccupied as they were with the war in South Africa, they sought only to pin down the Russians to their words. A warning to St. Petersburg that H.M.G. "could not regard with indifference" any proceedings that might tend to alter or disturb the status of Tibet was thus deemed adequate.[41] Lord Curzon, however, to whom the news of Dorjieff's activities was a further confirmation of Russia's persistent advance towards the Indian frontiers, was already pressing the Home Government for an "altered policy." The Buriat came as a welcome grist to his mill, and he drove his point home even more forcefully. When Lord George Hamilton, the then Secretary of State for India, countered the Viceroy's arguments by pointing out that the use of force might drive the Tibetans further into the arms of Russia and put forth "the very material" objection that British military establishments, just then, were in no condition to launch "any expedition of size beyond the frontiers of India," Lord Curzon was still unimpressed.[42] If Russian moves in Tibet's direction became persistent, he warned the Secretary of State, "my answer to any such proceeding . . . would be very simple. Without the slightest delay I would put a British army into Lhasa."[43]

Serious as the situation was, it became doubly so when, towards the fall of 1902, rumours of a Sino-Russian Agreement on Tibet became widespread. The pivotal provision of this twelve-clause deal was said to be China's renunciation of all her interests in Tibet in return for a Russian guarantee of her territorial integrity.[44] The British Government, completely alarmed, sounded a stern note of caution to the Chinese, reminding

them that in any such eventuality H.M.G. would take all necessary steps "for protecting the interests of Great Britain," and that in the meantime as for the Tibet-Sikkim border, they (H.M.G.) proposed to "make effective our treaty rights."[45] The threat posed was very real, for the (British) Political Officer in Sikkim was instructed to undertake a tour along the (Tibet-Sikkim) border, rectify the frontier where there had been encroachments by the Tibetans, and was to be accompanied by an armed escort.[46]

Whether Dorjieff's two missions had any significance apart from their interest to the Russian Geographical Society, as Lamsdorff professed, or for that matter whether the Russians had tried to "take over" Chinese interests in Tibet as the British feared, may be hard to establish.[47] Not difficult to concede, however, is the fact that both these developments had noticeably stiffened Britain's stand on Tibet and that despite the serious differences in outlook between the Viceroy and the Home Government the latter had veered round to his policy, if only gradually, "to enforce" the agreements of 1890 and 1893. The logical sequence was the British military expedition to Lhasa, to which we have alluded earlier. Face to face with Younghusband and his men marching relentlessly on to Lhasa, the oft-professed desire of the Russians to come to the aid of the Tibetans was put to its severest test—that of actual performance. And here the limelight is stolen by another colleague of Dorjieff who, though not quite as well known, yet performed better than he promised.

IV

Tserempil (also spelt Zerempil and Serempil), who worked under his pseudonym Bogdanovitch, was, like Dorjieff, a Buriat Mongol who had served his novitiate at the Ganden monastery near Urga.[48] While out there he is said to have come under the influence of Aguan Dorjieff. Commended to the Foreign Office, he was trained in the Indian section of the Russian General Staff for exploration and intelligence work in Central Asia. Proving capable and trustworthy he was sent on secret missions to many parts of Asia, including Calcutta and Peshawar. In January, 1900, he was put under the orders of one Colonel Alexander Nikolavitch Orlov. Later in June that year he was assigned the task of marching through the tribal areas of the North-West Frontier on his way to Peshawar, where he was to deliver explosives and pamphlets. These were subsequently to be used in the uprisings of the tribes of Swat and Bajaur.[49]

Not long after, Tserempil was chosen to play an important role in the new policy whereby the Tibetan Government was to be strengthened against the British by supplying it with arms. Here Tserempil's chief, the energetic Colonel Orlov, was entrusted with the task of transporting these arms and ammunition from Urga to Lhasa. Of the two caravans organized for this purpose, Orlov was put in charge of the larger one with two hundred camel-loads of rifles—it was proclaimed to be a scientific expedition—and was to march from Urga, through the Gobi, by way of Tsaidan and Tong La to Lhasa. The second one was entrusted to Tserempil, and

his route lay through Koko Nor, Tosson Nor and Oving Nor to Lhasa. His party numbered forty men, including twenty Cossacks, and their stock-in-trade comprised fifty-five horses and two hundred yaks, all laden with rifles and ammunition, apart from some small munition guns. Tserempil, who travelled under an assumed Mongol name, encountered many an adventure during his arduous trip, in most of which he emerged victorious, and finally reached Lhasa in November, 1902. By then Orlov had already arrived there.[50]

Here at Lhasa, we are told, Dorjieff had already taken over as War Minister, and under his orders Tserempil set up a factory for the manufacture of Martini Henry rifles and jingals.[51] Russia, whose hands had in the meantime been tied by her categorical assurances to Great Britain on the one hand,[52] and by her increasing embroilments with Japan on the other, seems to have left her agents in Tibet to fend for themselves. And when Younghusband arrived at Khamba Jong, and later proceeded up the Chumbi valley to Gyantse, the promised Russian assistance was not in evidence. Russia's agents, however, were not inactive. Thus Tserempil is reported to have been sent to P'hari to get information about the British and, if possible, to stay their advance by putting all sorts of difficulties in their way. The initial Tibetan failure in the fighting at Guru[53] is attributed to the fact that crack Tibetan troops were withheld for the stand that was to be made at Gyantse Jong and the Tse-chen monastery, whose strategic importance at the junction of the roads both to Shigatse and Lhasa was constantly kept in view. Tserempil is also said to have participated in the boldly conceived attack on the mission's camp at Gyantse[54] and in the fighting that took place at K-aro La.[55] He is said to have taken an active part in the attempt to disrupt British communications on the way, too, and in the final and heroic stand made by the Tibetans at Gyantse Jong.[56] Only when a complete surrender appeared inevitable did he hasten back to Lhasa for what was to be a last-ditch effort to throw out the British.

How much reliance can be placed on Filchener's story is hard to say. Two facts, however, are deserving of attention. One, that in the siege of the Commissioner's camp at Gyantse, and the fighting at the 16,200-foot high mountain pass of Karo-la, the Tibetans were making a bold attempt—imaginatively conceived and heroically executed—to cut the British off " by the root." Two, at both places the Tibetans fought stubbornly and tenaciously, yielding ground only when they had to. In fact, both these actions are in marked contrast to the earlier engagement at Guru, for here the Commission was on the defensive[57] and, though Tibetan casualties were heavy, no " massacres " followed. This could partly be explained by the fact that the men of Kham and Shigatse were better led by " influential lamas " and " officials " from the capital and, as has been pointed out earlier, were better equipped with " Lhasa-made and foreign rifles." They displayed great valour in contrast to the raw levies of Guru who permitted themselves to be herded together. In the fighting that followed—the assault on Gyantse Jong (July 5-6) and the Gurkhas' engagement at Karo La (July 18)[58]—the mission, now handsomely reinforced, was once again on the offensive, although the number of Tibetans engaged in de-

fending the Jong was the highest of the entire fighting—nearly 5,000 to 6,000 men.

In assessing the degree of truth in the exploits attributed to Filchner's hero another important fact needs attention, and it is that quite a few of his details are corroborated by independent authorities. Thus a Japanese traveller, one Ikai Kawaguchi, who is reckoned as "one of the leading foreign authorities on Tibet," has confirmed the story of the 200 camel-loads of Russian munitions which arrived in Lhasa in December, 1901, to January, 1902.[59] Kawaguchi also refers to "another caravan of 300 camels" which had arrived "some time before." The contents were "firearms, bullets and other interesting objects."[60] We have already noticed that some of Tserempil's adventures are corroborated by contemporary reports in the columns of the (London) *Times*.[61] And yet, broadly speaking, it remains true that most of the thrilling escapades which find mention in Filchner's pages lack support elsewhere and hence must be accepted with extreme caution.

Apart from Tserempil, Russian intrigue in Tibet revolved largely around the person of Aguan Dorjieff. To his early associations with the Tibetan Pontiff we have already referred, as also to his missions to Russia in 1900 and 1901. Attention may be drawn here to a few other relevant facts. By far the most significant of these is that at no stage did his influence over the Lama seem to diminish; nor for that matter did that of the Tsar. Thus on his flight from Lhasa, hard on the heels of the advancing British, the Dalai headed straight for Urga, where the Russian Consul carefully shepherded him,[62] while the Tsar's Minister at Peking brought him an extremely friendly and informal telegram from his master, in addition to other valuable presents.[63] Again, it was from Urga that the Dalai once more despatched Dorjieff, early in 1906, to the Great White Tsar to beseech his (Tsar's) "protection from the dangers that threaten my life"; that is, in case he returned to Lhasa, as was "my intention and duty."[64] Later, when the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian entente (August, 1907) settled the question of Tibet to the mutual satisfaction of the British and the Russians, the Dalai still turned towards the latter. Indeed, it is revealing that neither Russia nor yet the "faithful" Dorjieff suffered to the slightest degree in his estimation. Thus in his first interview with the Viceroy in Calcutta, early in 1910, after he had sought refuge and protection from the Chinese, His Holiness assured Lord Minto that Dorjieff, "of whom the British were so suspicious," was "purely" a spiritual adviser.[65] And while in India as a guest of the British, who had given him asylum, the Dalai still continued to seek Russian aid against the Chinese. Great indeed were his embarrassments and deep his blushings when the Tsar sent his courteous, yet non-committal, replies to the Lama's entreaties for help, through the British.[66] Again, as late as January, 1913, when the Chinese Revolution had already toppled over Manchu rule, it was Dorjieff who concluded on behalf of his master the "alleged" Tibeto-Mongolian treaty.[67]

What, then, was the mystery enshrouding Dorjieff and Tserempil and their missions? What, above all, was the secret of the former's great influence on the Dalai? The harder one essays to unravel the hidden

mainsprings of these men's activity the stronger grows the conviction that, all told, there was nothing much to it.[68] Basically, Russian interest in Tibet around this turn of the century period could rest only on a very peculiar and somewhat precarious footing. It could be hardly economic or political, as in Persia, nor yet could it be strategic, as in Afghanistan. At best it was an "exotic"[69] interest whose underlying aim appears to have been to create a "situation" for the British. The brilliant Lord Curzon fell into the trap—a shrewder man with fewer obsessions might have reflected more seriously over the practical difficulties which a real or fake Muscovite invasion of India through the barren wastes of Tibet would present, and might have given up the whole idea as extremely fantastic. The parallel with the Second Afghan War under Lord Lytton has often been drawn and appears to be an apt one.[70] In 1903-4, as in 1878, the Russians proved the cleverer and the British the more gullible.

An interesting interpretation, more suggestive than concrete, has been put forth by a Russian writer.[71] According to him, it was not Dorjieff whose role needs study but the Dalai's. The former had widened the latter's mental horizon and the amazed Lama saw before him, with a clearer understanding, the two great empires, the British and the Russian, contending for Asia's supremacy. Fearing the British along his southern borders, the Dalai chose to play upon their rivalry with the Russian potentate. Under circumstances not dissimilar Sher Ali, too, had leaned on Russian support. The Dalai's was an astute move. It was not his fault—but his misfortune—that the rulers of the Kremlin proved unreliable.

REFERENCES

[1] Owen Lattimore in his *Sinkiang, Pivot of Asia* (Boston, 1950) makes two interesting observations which deserve reproduction here:

"If statesmen were efficiency engineers and no more than that," most of Sinkiang will be gravitated towards the Soviet Union for, "in terms of the affinities of peoples, languages and cultures, geographical accessibility, the most economic laying out of modern communications and the rapid promotion of material progress, the natural orientation of Sinkiang is towards Mongolia and the Soviet Union, rather than towards China." (P. 221.)

Again, "The geographical centre of gravity of the non-Chinese territories of China lies in Sinkiang. The frontiers of Sinkiang touch the Inner Asian Soviet Republics, the most important block of territory in the Soviet Union inhabitated by peoples who are not Russian, and not Slavs." (Pp. 220-21.)

[2] J. Dallin, *The Rise of Russia in Asia* (New Haven, 1948), p. 149.

Talking of Russia's place in Asia, Sardar K. M. Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance* (London, 1953), makes two points which deserve to be constantly kept in view:

"Russia is permanently in Asia, a geographical fact, the influence of which will become increasingly apparent as time goes on. . . . The three major states in the East, India, China and Japan, border on Soviet territories. Also the Soviet influence is continental and not maritime, and in this respect it differs fundamentally from the influence that Europe exercised over Asia for 400 years." (Pp. 16-17.)

[3] In his speech to the Chinese State Council in Peking, *The Statesman*, March 15, 1955.

[4] P. B. Henze, "The Strategic Significance of Recent Events in Tibet," *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* (London), Vol. XL (April, 1953), pp. 169-73. In subsequent references abbreviated as *JRCAS*.

[5] O. Edmund Clubb, "Tibet's Strategic Position," *Eastern World* (London), Vol. X, No. 12 (Dec., 1956), pp. 18-19.

For recent Chinese building activities in Tibet, see Theodore Shabad, *China's Changing Map* (Methuen, 1956), pp. 261-70.

[6] A 12 clause Sino-Russian Agreement was said to have been concluded in July-August, 1902. For details see East India (Tibet) *Papers relating to Tibet* (London), Cd. 1920 (London, 1904), Nos. 48 and 49, pp. 140-41.

[7] Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, 2nd edition (New York, 1951), pp. 236-37, expresses the view that the aim of the Younghusband Mission was "not to prevent a Russian military threat" (to India) but to put an end to what he calls "the spread of the prestige of the Tsarist empire." It was necessary to destroy this prestige in order to secure and maintain Britain's hold on India.

[8] "The Political Diary of the Mission," extracts from which appear in the East India (Tibet) *Papers relating to Tibet* (London), Cds. 1920 (1904), 2054 (1905) and 2370 (1905) abounds in such references. These Papers are henceforth referred to as *Tibet Papers*.

[9] "We could understand," Younghusband told the lamas, "their being friendly with both the Russians and us or being unfriendly with both; but when they were friendly with the Russians, and unfriendly with us, they must not be surprised. . . ." *Tibet Papers*, Cd. 2054, No. 37, pp. 18-19.

Guru is situated some thirty-five miles up from Yatung.

[10] *Tibet Papers*, Cd. 1920, No. 158, p. 306.

[11] *Ibid.*, No. 66, p. 309.

Dorjieff was a Buriat Mongol who was a Russian subject and played an important part in the Russo-Tibetan drama. A detailed note on him appears later in the narrative. Colonel Chao was the representative of the Chinese Amban (at Lhasa) who had been sent to dissuade the British Mission from advancing to Lhasa.

[12] A. Maccallum Scott, *The Truth About Tibet* (London, 1905), pp. 24-5.

[13] Perceval Landon, *The Opening of Tibet* (London, 1905), p. 21.

[14] Sir Charles Alfred Bell, *Portrait of the Dalai Lama* (London, 1946), p. 62.

[15] Wei Kuo Lee, *Tibet in Modern World Politics*, 1774-1922 (New York, 1931), pp. 129-30.

[16] *Loc. cit.*

[17] Earl of Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon* (London, 1927), 3 Vols., Vol. II, p. 37.

[18] The Russian concept of the Chinese "Empire" was different from that of the Western nations. Apart from the fact that they (the Russians) had come into contact with the Manchus at the beginning of their rule in China and that this contact was on a land frontier where the differences among the Chinese, Manchus and Mongols were obvious, the Russians had from the beginning a concept of the Manchu Empire *over* China and *over* Mongolia and Tibet. And they retained this concept long after the Western nations approaching China from the sea-ports were using such expressions as "Chinese Empire," "Chinese Emperor," and thinking of outlying territories such as Tibet as "Possessions of China" rather than possessions of the Manchu dynasty which also possessed China.

[19] J. Dallin, *Russia in Asia*, p. 39.

[20] Harold M. Vinacke, *A History of the Far East in Modern Times* (New York, 1950), pp. 155-58. See also Dallin, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

[21] Vinacke, *op.cit.*, pp. 151-53 and Dallin, *op. cit.*, p. 59. It will be recalled that the ostensible purpose of the Scott-Muravieff agreement was the building of railroads in China, though in reality it delimited the Russian and British spheres of influence.

[22] The best known of the Russian explorers was N. M. Porjivalsky who, from 1871 to 1888, explored Mongolia and northern Tibet—he succeeded in coming within a distance of 170 miles of Lhasa. During the years 1899-1901 his assistant, P. K. Kozloff, headed a team to explore Tibet under the auspices of the Russian Geographical Society. Other Russian explorers included Sosnoffsky (1872 and 1874-75), Kropotkin (1876-77), Ivanoff (1883), Benderesky (1883) and Grombchevsky (1889). Their British counterparts were W. H. Johnson (1865) and Martin Conway (1892), who contributed valuable geographical knowledge of the mountainous route from Kashmir to Tibet. In 1896-97, H. H. P. Deasy surveyed north-western Tibet up to

Sinkiang. Among Indian explorers, sponsored by the Survey of India, Sarat Chander Das and Pandit Nain Singh came to Lhasa in 1866 and 1874, Kalian Singh came to Shigatse in 1868 and Kishan Singh entered Tibet in 1871, '74 and '78 and visited both Shigatse and Lhasa. In 1891-92, H. Bower, another noted British explorer, traversed Tibet from Leh to China.

[23] Andrei Lobanov-Rostovsky, *Russia and Asia* (Michigan, 1951), pp. 206-7.

[24] J. Dallin, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

In fact "Willy" (Kaiser William II) in a letter to "Nicky" (Tsar Nicholas) advised the latter to begin military demonstrations on the Perso-Afghan border, for the "loss of India would be the hardest blow to England." Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 43.

[26] Count Witte enjoyed during this period (1894 to 1902) "the complete confidence" of the Tsar, V. I. Gurko, *Features and Figures of the Past* (Stanford, 1939), p. 5. This writer also throws some interesting light on Russia's domestic problems during these years.

[27] Prince Ukhtomsky, who headed the Russo-Chinese Bank, was a writer and a poet and his thoughts are thus said to be the expression of many thinking Russians. "Essentially there are not, and there cannot be," he is reported as having said, "any frontiers for us in Asia." Quoted in Dallin, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

[28] The lack of any authoritative account of Dorjieff who played so important a part in Russo-Tibetan relations, and the events leading to the British Millitary Expedition to Lhasa, is indeed pathetic. The well-known Russian Tibetologue, Dr. Badmeyeff, wrote some biographical details of him in the Russian press at the time of Dorjieff's visits, in 1900 and 1901. How far these could be relied upon, however, is doubtful for Count Lamsdorff, the Russian Foreign Minister, regarded Badmeyeff as "an eccentric character."

Bell's mention of him is intriguingly brief. See *Portrait*, pp. 61-2. For more details see Wilhelm Filchner, *Sturm uber Asien* (Berlin, 1926), and A. Popov in *Russia and Tibet* (Novyi-Vostok, Moscow), No. 18, (1927), pp. 101-19. Panikkar's *Asia and Western Dominance* (p. 162), reference to the Buriat's later history "as dispenser of wisdom at Fontainebleau," is both clueless and somewhat misleading.

According to Professor W. A. Unkring, who teaches Mongol and Tibetan in Frankfurt am Main (Western Germany), the correct spelling for Dorjieff's name is Nag-dhan Dorje, the gifted orator, thunderbolt. (From a personal letter dated March 25, 1954). The above variants are from the Russian press in 1900-1901, *Tibet Papers, op. cit.*, pp. 113-18.

[29] Bell, *Portrait*, pp. 61-62.

[30] Wilhelm Filchner, *op. cit.* In two articles under the caption, "A Story of Struggle and Intrigue in Central Asia," the *JRCAS*, XIV (1927), pp. 359-68 and XV (1928), pp. 89-103, summed up Filchner's book. Apart from a friend who translated parts of the book for the writer, these two articles have been drawn upon.

[31] In 1899-1900 Lord Curzon made three determined attempts to communicate directly with the Dalai Lama. The latter, however, returned his letters unopened, and refused intercourse. *Tibet Papers, op. cit.*, Nos. 41 and 42, p. 125.

[32] Quoted in Bell, *Portrait*, p. 62.

[33] *Tibet Papers, op. cit.*, No. 31, p. 113. This was a dispatch from Mr. C. Hardinge and was dated St. Petersburg, October 17, 1900. The title Transit Hamba is believed to be a mutilation of Tsa Nyi Kenpo, which was Dorjieff's title in Tibet.

[34] *Loc. cit.*

[35] See the extracts from *Odesskia Novosti*, of June 12, 1901. *Ibid.*, No. 33, pp. 113-14 and the interview with Dr. Badmeyeff, published in the *St. Petersburg Gazette, ibid.*, Enclo. No. 34, pp. 114-15.

[36] *Novoe Vremya* of June 17, 1900. *Ibid.*, Enclo. in No. 34, p. 115.

[37] See Badmeyeff's interview published in the *Novoe Vremya* of June 18, 1901, as also that paper's comment of June 20. *Ibid.*, Enclo. in No. 34, p. 115 and Enclo. in No. 35, p. 116.

[38] *Ibid.*, Nos. 36 and 43, pp. 117 and 125. The reception by the Tsarina, was the subject of a special official announcement in the *Messager Official*. Curiously enough the *Memoirs of Count Witte* (New York, 1921) make no mention either of Dorjieff, or of his visits, or even of Tibet.

[39] *Tibet Papers, op. cit.*, No. 35, p. 116.

[40] *Ibid.*, No. 36, p. 117.

A British writer's comment on Count Lamsdorff's assurances was: "We were asked to believe that these Lamas travelled many thousand miles to convey a letter that expressed the hope that the Russian Foreign Minister was in good health and prosperous, and informed him that the Dalai Lama was happy to be able to say that he himself enjoyed excellent health." Edmund Candler, *The Unveiling of Lhasa* (London, 1905), pp. 12-3.

[41] *Tibet Papers, op. cit.*, No. 39, p. 124.

[42] Letter from Secretary of State, July 11, 1901. Earl of Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon*, Vol. II, p. 207.

[43] Letter to Secretary of State, dated May 28, 1902, *ibid.*, p. 208.

[44] These rumours were first mentioned in a dispatch from Sir E. Satow, in Peking, dated August 2, 1902. Three days later Satow sent a clipping from the *China Times*, of July, 1902, giving the text of the Agreement. *Tibet Papers, op. cit.*, No. 48 and 49, pp. 140-41.

[45] *Ibid.*, No. 52, p. 141, and No. 55, 143.

[46] *Ibid.*, Nos. 51 and 53, pp. 141-42. The frontier had been laid down in the "Convention between Great Britain and China relating to Sikkim and Tibet" of 1890. Certain points were further amplified in the Trade Regulations of 1893 which were to form a part of the earlier convention. For the texts see Bell, *Tibet*, Appendices V and VI, pp. 280-81, and 282-84.

[47] A possible explanation of Russian behaviour could be that there were a few Russians, who were willing to go far afield in intriguing for the possible expansion of Russia's interests and (eventually perhaps) territory; but there was always also a group that believed in conservation and consolidation within Siberia and Central Asia, without pushing further. Invariably the "conservatives" won over the "adventurists." To this it may be added, however, that until responsible people restrained them, the more adventurous-minded often stirred up quite a lot of uneasiness through getting access to the Tsar and the Tsarina, both of whom were weak, credulous and easily influenced.

[48] Filchner, *op. cit.*, p. 360.

[49] Filchner, *op. cit.*, p. 363. Filchner's account is corroborated by two reports which appeared in the London *Times* towards the end of October, 1900: "The rising of the tribes of Swat and Bajaur has been suppressed" and "A magazine in the Chitral military area has blown up, probably from spontaneous combustion."

British concern to counter these activities was reflected in their engaging a large number of "Pundits" (secret agents) in Russian and Chinese Turkestan.

[50] *Ibid.*, pp. 364-65.

[51] Apart from the factory which Tserempil may have set up, the Martini Henry rifles had been, for many years, made in Lhasa by a Punjabi who had escaped there in the nineties, or perhaps earlier. According to one of Younghusband's army officers several cases of these rifles were found in the Tibetan camp at Guru—all neatly packed and wrapped in oily calico. The Tibetans did not issue the rifles until after the fighting at Guru because they thought they could defeat the British with their matchlocks—and the lamas' much more potent charms. Obviously they did not wish to waste their precious and invincible weapons on such feeble people as their British adversaries!

[52] *Supra*, p. 15. Reference may also be made to footnotes Nos. 40 and 41.

[53] The action fought at Guru, on March 31, in the Tibetans' attempt to resist the advance of the Mission to Tuna, was the first armed encounter which the "peaceful" Commercial Mission of Younghusband had to face. The fighting which cost the British two ("wounded") and "native ranks" ten ("two wounded severely, eight wounded slightly"); casualties claimed a heavy toll from the Tibetans —700 men, dead and wounded. An eye-witness' account described it: "not a battle but a shambles, not a stand-up fight but a massacre." Edmund Chandler, *The Unveiling of Lhasa* (London, 1905), p. 109. For details see *Tibet Papers*, Cd. 2054, Nos. 10, 11 and 25, pp. 5-6 and 10 respectively.

[54] The attack took place on May 5, 1904. For details of the fighting see *Tibet Papers*, Cd. 2370, Part II, Enclosure No. 71, p. 130, and Part I, No. 6, p. 3.

[55] In the fighting here "Lhasa-made and foreign rifles" were used, and the Tibetan troops, 2,500 of them, were led by "influential lamas" and "officials" from the capital. For details see *ibid.*, Part I, No. 11, pp. 5-6, and Part II, Nos. 75-6, pp. 131-132.

[56] For details see *Tibet Papers*, Cd. 2370, Part I, No. 77, p. 26; No. 80, p. 27; and No. 82, p. 28. Also see *ibid.*, Part II, Encl. No. 193, p. 179; No. 196, p. 180; and No. 202, p. 184.

[57] The Tibetans had built a wall across the narrowest part of the Karo-la and thereby threatened the British line of communications. Younghusband left with only 500 men (with two guns and two maxims), and a squadron of mounted infantry entrusted two-thirds to Colonel Brander, who was asked to proceed to Karo-la, 42 miles away on the road to Lhasa. The action there was fought on May 6. Meanwhile, left with only about 150 men, the Commissioner, in the small hours of May 5, was completely surprised by a large Tibetan force investing his camp.

[58] *Ibid.*, Part I, No. 99, p. 40, and Part II, Encl. No. 221, pp. 192-93.

For the account of an actual participant in the fighting see Lt.-Col. L. A. Bethel ("Pousse Cailloux").

"A footnote," *Blackwoods Magazine* (London, February, 1929), pp. 147-76. Lt.-Col. (then Lt.) Bethel was a Gurkha officer and, with pardonable exaggeration, claimed that they were "his" men who climbed a glacier and fought "a crisp, little battle at 19,000 ft." Actually there was not much of fighting here for the Tibetans had, during the night, abandoned their positions.

[59] Shramana Ikai Kawaguchi, *Three Years in Tibet* (London, 1909), pp. 505-6. Kawaguchi's date conflicts with Filchner's, who mentions November, 1902.

Bell, *The People of Tibet* (Oxford, 1928), p. 156, compares Kawaguchi to the American diplomat Rockhill, both of whom he regards as "the leading foreign authorities on Tibet."

[60] *Loc. cit.*

[61] *Supra*, p. 15, footnote No. 49.

[62] A. Popov, *op. cit.*, p. 116, maintains that the Russian Consul received him (the Dalai) amiably, but with restraint, for he was anxious to keep out of trouble with England. Also see Bell, *Portrait*, p. 67.

[63] The Tsar's telegram to the Dalai read:

"A large number of my subjects who profess the Buddhist faith had the happiness of being able to pay homage to their great High Priest, during his visit to northern Mongolia, which borders on the Russian Empire. As I rejoice that my subjects have had the opportunity of deriving benefit from your salutary spiritual influence, I beg you to accept the expression of my sincere thanks and regards."

To the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg the telegram was explained as an expression of Russian assurance in return for the Dalai seeking protection. See Bell, *Portrait*, p. 68, and Younghusband, *India and Tibet* (London, 1910), p. 378.

[64] Bell, *Portrait*, p. 68.

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 94.

Dorjieff, who met David Macdonald, the British Trade Agent at Gyantse, in March, 1912, denied that he was either anti-British or responsible for the Dalai's flight from Lhasa in 1904. See David Macdonald, *Twenty Years in Tibet* (London, 1932), p. 98.

Macdonald did not believe in Dorjieff's story. His comment: "Despite his protestations, Dorjieff was certainly responsible for a lot of trouble leading up to the 1904 Mission. . . . Russia at that time was certainly regarding Tibet with covetous eyes, as influence there would have meant an open road to India. . . ."

[66] Bell recorded:

"He (the Dalai Lama) was struck with amazement that the Tsar should reply not direct but through the British. For a few moments he could say nothing. This was the only occasion on which I saw the Dalai Lama blush, but now he blushed deeply." Bell, *Portrait*, p. 117.

[67] Bell, *Tibet*, pp. 304-5, gives the text of the "alleged" treaty "said to have been signed at Urga" in January, 1913.

[68] Bell's comment on Dorjieff's scheming is at once brief, laconic, and perhaps

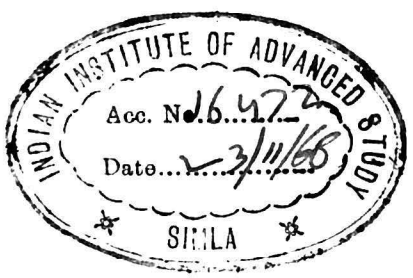
hard to better: "The professor of theology was clever and pushful, and the god-king was cut off from contact with the outside world." Bell, *Portrait,* p. 62.

[69] Popov, *op. cit.,* p. 102.

[70] Drawing a comparison between events leading to the Younghusband expedition and the Second Afghan War fought in 1878-79, one may say that in place of the Dalai Lama one could read Sher Ali; for Kaufman and Stolietoff, Dorjieff and Tserempil could be substituted; in place of Lytton, we had the equally vigorous Curzon. Just as the Dalai Lama was suspect for his intimate dealings with the Russians, so was Sher Ali. The war took place to break the suspected intrigue in the one case as in the other. It was a reluctant Government which was led into the path charted for it by Lytton, it was a no less reluctant Government which was dragged willy-nilly into Curzon's proposals. In the one case the occupation of the Kurram valley was to serve as a "material guarantee" for the granting of the British demands, in the other it was to be the Chumbi valley. Sher Ali fled on the approach of the British forces, so did the Dalai Lama.

[71] Lobanov-Rostovsky, *op. cit.,* p. 102.

New Delhi, 1957.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