

September 3, 1952

**The Second Secretary at London (Marvin) to the
Department of State, 'Records of Indian Agent at
Lhasa for Periods Ending May 15 and June 15, 1952'**

Citation:

"The Second Secretary at London (Marvin) to the Department of State, 'Records of Indian Agent at Lhasa for Periods Ending May 15 and June 15, 1952'", September 3, 1952, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Record Group 59, Central Decimal Files, 1950-1954, Box 4227, 793B.00/9-352, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD. Contributed by Charles Kraus. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/176578>

Summary:

Reports of the Indian Mission in Lhasa for May-June 1952.

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AIR POUCH
PRIORITY

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SECURITY INFORMATION
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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, London

1161
DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

September 3, 1952
DATE

REF : Embassy's Despatch 6165, June 27, 1952

9 For Dept. Use Only hh	ACTION FE	DEPT. EUR NEA OLI S/S G R
	REC'D SEP 15	OTHER CALCUTTA NEW DELHI

SUBJECT: Reports of Indian Agent at Lhasa for Periods Ending May 15 and June 15, 1952

793b.00/6-2752

There are enclosed the following:

*FE AIR EUR NEA
OLI S/S B R Calcutta
New Delhi*

1. A summary of the report of the Indian Agent at Lhasa for the period April 16 - May 15, 1952.

2. A copy of the Indian Agent's report for the period May 16 - June 15, 1952.

In view of the possible repercussions should the Indian Government learn that a copy of this report has been made available to the Embassy by the Foreign Office, it is requested that this despatch should be treated as Eyes Only - U.S. Officials material.

The Department is requested to forward copies of this despatch to Calcutta and New Delhi.

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.8

NW 26577

By *HRM/AL* Date *8/11/08*

David K. Marvin

David K. Marvin
Second Secretary of Embassy

Enclosures:
As stated.

STATE DEPT. DECLASSIFICATION REVIEW
 Retain class'n
 Declassify
Change/classify to
with concurrence of *STAT*
after *CONCURRENCE OF IND*

Action Assigned to *CA*

Action Taken *None*

Approved:

EO 12958, 25X
IPS/CR/IR by *CLARK* Date: *3/25/99*
Bourne

Date of Action *9/17/52*

Action Office Symbol *CA*

Name of Officer *[Signature]*

Direction to DC/R *[Signature]*

Arthur R. Ringwalt
Arthur R. Ringwalt
First Secretary of Embassy

DKMarvin/mr
REPORTER

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ACTION COPY - DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SEP 8 1952

The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

FILED
OCT 28 1952

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~~SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION
(Classification)

Page 1 of
Encl. No. 1
Desp. No. 1161
From Amembassy, London

Summary of Report from Indian Agent at Lhasa
for Month Ending May 15, 1952

Following the affray on April 1st, the Chinese launched a frontal attack on the two Prime Ministers, behind whom the Tibetan Government and the Dalai Lama had lodged themselves. The Prime Ministers were accused of a number of crimes: anti-national, treasonable views (they believed in the independence of Tibet), a policy of rigid opposition to the Chinese in disregard of the true interests of Tibet, and giving aid and comfort to rebels. The above was given to the Kashag with the remark that had the Prime Ministers been Chinese they would have faced the gallows or firing squad. Since they weren't Chinese, the Chinese were giving them a chance to efface themselves from public life. Sentence was duly passed, the Prime Ministers being condemned without the formality of an inquiry. The blatant ferocity of the Chinese accusations, and the manner in which they were carried into the monasteries and bazaars, fairly left many Tibetans gasping. None, despite the prevailing confusion and fear, gave credence to the accusations. The irony is that the very reasons for which they were accused endeared the Prime Ministers with the people. The Tibetans know them for their integrity and devotion to duty, and will remember them for their noble and courageous efforts to preserve Tibet from a subsidiary position to China. However, they admittedly often had opposed the Chinese out of mere blind respect for tradition.

For days the highest in the land, the Kashag, Trungtsi, and the abbots of Sera, Drepung, and Ganden, begged the Chinese for compassion for the Prime Ministers, asking for a period of grace during which they could retire. Messengers and envoys from the Dalai Lama, among them Gyalo Dondup and the Chikyap Khempo, hurried to the Chinese, but nothing availed against their irrevocable decision. This had the marks of finality, and the Chinese were prepared to back it with force. The emissaries went back with the alarming news that the Chinese had summoned an additional 5,000 men to Lhasa. The Tibetan choice was between acceptance of the Chinese will and a slight modification in the Sino-Tibetan Agreement of May 1951, involving the liberation of Tibet by force. The threat lay heavily on them and more obviously on the Dalai Lama, who for a whole day faced Chinese gunmen from the Potala. Steady and unrelenting pressure of the cloak and dagger type eventually forced the Tibetan Government to accept the resignations of the Prime Ministers on April 27th.

Chan Kuo-hua played a leading role in these events. He has unexpectedly blossomed into an artful schemer. From his unorthodox roof-scaling visit to Ragashar, to his equally unorthodox visit to the Dalai Lama at the Potala on April 25th, when he grimly unfolded some unpleasant consequences that might follow resistance, one can see his guiding hand in the whole affair.

~~SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION

~~SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION
(Classification)

Page 2 of
Encl. No. 1
Desp. No. 1161
From Amembassy, London

The scheme was neatly executed by him when he administered a personal threat to the Dalai Lama. He held the Dalai Lama personally responsible for the actions of the Prime Ministers, and warned that a delay in dismissal would involve him in similar charges. Although the Prime Ministers have left the administration, the Dalai Lama is still not above suspicion, and his position vis-a-vis the Chinese is not comfortable. Despite extenuating circumstances (his age, etc.) he may never be able to clear himself of the charge of aiding and abetting the Prime Ministers, and may well have to vie with his own subjects for the affection of the Chinese without ever being certain that the Chinese will not some day return to the charge.

This one adroit stroke eliminates all official opposition in Tibet. Village assemblies are less vocal, the monks no longer strut and fret in anger, and among the higher official families there is a growing sense of insecurity, fear and anxiety. But for possible Chinese reactions there would be a second exodus to India. Among those anxious to leave for good is Yutho Dyaza.

The Panchan Lama arrived on April 28th with a long retinue. He was received by the Chinese enthusiastically, and by the Tibetans in correct traditional style. Long before his arrival the Chinese had had to tutor the Tibetan Government to make special arrangements. But for Chinese prompting the Tibetan Government would never have issued official notices asking the people to turn out and accord him the welcome normally given the Dalai Lama.

The first problem was one of etiquette - whether the Panchan Lama should prostrate himself to the Dalai Lama. The Tibetans were indignant at the Chinese suggestion that the Panchan Lama should be excused. Chang Ching-wu approached the Dalai Lama for a special dispensation, and was referred to the Ecclesiastical Department. He later approached Ngapho Shape but was refused support. It is not clear from conflicting reports whether or not the Panchan Lama did prostrate himself.

Tibetan curiosity about the Panchan Lama has been amply satisfied. His glory in Tibet was short-lived. He is now the target of popular ridicule, for he wags a tongue few understand and looks older than he should if he is the true re-incarnation of his predecessor.

May Day celebrations engaged the Chinese from May 1st to 4th. It was an opportunity to carry the Communist message to the Lhasa laboring population. Education was ingeniously interspersed with entertainment, and on the whole everybody concerned found it not too boring.

Nepal

The Nepalese representative issued a notice forbidding Nepalese subjects to participate in the May Day celebrations. The Chinese

~~SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION

~~SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION
(Classification)

Page 3 of
Encl. No. 1
Desp. No. 1161
From Amembassy, London

... keeping Dr. K. I. Singh and his followers under a veil of secrecy.

Internal

On May 8th a Tibetan laborer flaunting a Chinese liberation badge was badly beaten by a few monks. He was taken to the Chinese hospital where his condition is said to be grave.

The Tibetan Government has been persuaded by the Chinese to take a census in Lhasa. The Nepalese representative has been asked by the Chinese to furnish similar information for Nepalese nationals in Lhasa.

The Chinese are offering a 5 Dayang loan to all villagers near Lhasa on condition that they supply the Chinese with one Khe of barley at the end of a year. The villagers are not responding well.

The Tibetan Government has prohibited the making or sale of Chang (local beer made of barley). This action has been taken to relieve the acute scarcity of food grains.

The Chinese are interested in improving the sewage and sanitation in Lhasa. They have offered to cooperate with the Tibetan Government in extensive repairs to the system.

The Dalai Lama struck a shrewd counter blow when, with Ngapho's help, he dismissed Lhalu Shape on May 13th. Lhalu will now have to face charges of misrule in Kham as the Commissioner of the Province. Although the charges were originally preferred by the Chinese about a year ago, they have latterly been quite fond of him, because he furnished inside information about the Tibetan Government and particularly about the Kashag. The Dalai Lama's swift action took the Chinese by surprise. It is also a warning to other Tibetan officials who might be inclined as Lhalu was.

Economic

Exploratory talks have been taking place about the sale of wool to China. The Chinese agreed to buy at 204 Rs per maund FOB Shanghai. To promote the wool trade, Pangdatsang, Sadutsang, and Reteng Labrang have formed a syndicate operating at Kalimpong. There has been a slight drop in the exchange rate, presumably due to the prospects for wool sales.

~~SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION

~~SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION
(Classification)

Page 1 of
Encl. No. 2
Desp. No. 1161
From Amembassy, London

(COPY)

From: The Officer in Charge, Indian Mission,
Lhasa, P.O. Gyantse, Tibet.

To: The Political Officer in Sikkim,
Gangtok, Sikkim.

Memorandum No. 3(10)-L/52.

Dated Lhasa, Tibet, the 16th June, 1952.

Monthly report for the period ending 15th June, 1952.

EXTERNAL

Sino-Tibetan Relations

Having dislodged the two Prime Ministers from their office and broken the back of Tibetan opposition, the Chinese took time off from their busy programme to indulge in a bit of self-felicitation. Their achievements in Tibet were brought under spotlight, and Tibetans asked to applaud the wonders achieved within a year of signing the Sino-Tibetan Agreement at Peking. The first anniversary of that fateful event fell on 23rd May, 1952, and the occasion was duly observed at public meetings organised for the day, where speeches were delivered on the benevolence of the People's Government of China which had undertaken the onerous task of regenerating Tibet. Tibetans were exhorted to reform, to abandon their out-moded habits of thought and to discard notions which had taken root in them as a result of "Imperialist influence". In humble and penitent mood, Tibetan officials promised to do the necessary brain-washing; they recanted former errors committed under imperialist influence, and pledged their loyal support to the Sino-Tibetan Agreement. The local Muslims, mostly from Ladakh, took part in this public demonstration of loyalty to the new regime. The show ended, as is customary in this land, with two days of mutual feasting.

Chinese propaganda, sometimes carried on in the undertones of social gossip and more often with the histrionic blare of public crusaders, received visual assistance when the Kashag, accompanied by their staff, were shepherded to Nortyo Lingka to witness the farm-work done by liberation troops. Later, Tibetan ladies were taken on a conducted tour of the same farm, where soldiers are raising a crop of assorted vegetables, keeping pigs and rearing captured Brahmani ducks and wild geese. The spectacle, it appears, was not too pleasing to sentimental Tibetans, and the result eluded Chinese expectations. To the majority of Tibetans it is sacrilegious to capture and

~~SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION

~~SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION
(Classification)

Page 2 of
Encl. No. 2
Desp. No. 1161
From Amembassy, London

incarcerate birds, and some of those who visited the farm were hard put to it to conceal their sense of horror. The demonstration evidently has not done the Chinese any good. On the contrary, the story has gone round that the Chinese captured a family of Brahmani ducks, which had for years been roosting near the Lhasa Cathedral, and was therefore particularly holy. These profane acts of a sincerely irreligious people have deeply wounded the religious sentiments of Tibetans.

Chinese propaganda does not discriminate between young and old; it has apparently an universal appeal. On June 1st, they summoned children of the local Chinese school to a party at Trungchi Lingka, and treated them to a political harangue against the two ex-Prime Ministers who were described as "enemies of the people and state". This party served a dual purpose; it was occasion for violent propaganda, and it was also good advertisement for the school. School children had to turn out for the occasion in dark blue uniforms with liberation badges pinned on their tunics which served to tempt children who were not attending school. The school in Lhasa has not evoked popular enthusiasm. It caused distress and consternation among Tibetan parents who hastened to buy their children monastic outfits and pack them off to the relative safety of monasteries and nunneries. To relieve popular anxiety about the school, the Chinese issued a notice assuring parents that they had the option of not sending their children to school.

Incidentally, the present Director of the Chinese Bureau of Propaganda is A Lo, who is shrewd and efficient but has not much culture or education in the formal sense.

While on the subject of Chinese propaganda, a word may be said about Tibetan counter-propaganda which runs on the usual religious lines. From 6th - 8th June, His Holiness called the faithful to a 3-day "Kachho" ceremony during which he preached sermons and read texts from the scripture "Lamrim". According to our reports, public response to the Dalai Lama's call was most encouraging.

Chinese anxiety over the transport of food grains through India to Tibet became even more acute during the month, despite the Government of India's decision to allow these supplies to pass through. Evidently the Chinese were not happy to leave transport arrangements in Indian territory entirely to Indians, and so they got up a delegation of 3 men, viz. Wu Li-ping (leader), Wang Wei-Ju (Secretary) and Chao Jui-kwang (Attache) to visit New Delhi "for negotiations on the problem of food transportation from India to Tibet". These men are said to be on the staff of a mysterious "National Tibetan Trading Company". However, under instructions from the Government of India official entry visas were issued on 17th June to the 3 delegates for 3 months' stay in India.

~~SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION

~~SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION
(Classification)

Page 3 of
Encl. No. 2
Desp. No. 1161
From Amembassy, London

Incidentally, the Chinese asked me to give Mr. Wu Li-ping a letter of introduction to our authorities, but when I asked to see Mr. Wu before giving him the letter, they told me he was "somewhere near Gyantse". Only a day earlier, they told me that he was in Lhasa. Anyhow I did not give the letter of introduction, despite a good deal of wheedling.

Ostensibly to facilitate the despatch of food supplies to Tibet, the Chinese sent Yin Fa-tang, Political Commissar of the 52nd Division of the Chinese Army, to Gyantse to supervise the construction of a motorable road from Gyantse to Nathula. A similar road is now under construction from Giamda to Lhasa with hired Tibetan labour.

It is not fortuitously that Tibetans dubbed the Panchen Rimpoche as the "Chinese Panchen"; while in Lhasa, he placed himself entirely in the hands of his Chinese patrons who assumed full responsibility for his welfare and safety. Visitors called on him with Chinese permission.

Apparently the Chinese will not tolerate a situation where the Panchen is weak, made subordinate to the Dalai Lama and controlled by Lhasa; they are bent on resuscitating a Panchen who will be one of the two religious potentates of Tibet with extensive authority and power of his own. To this end they have set about energetically to restore and rehabilitate the fortunes which the late Panchen left in Tibet, and which will not belong to the Chinese protege. Under pressure from the Chinese a Joint Committee of Lhasa and Tashilhunpo officials has been set up to consider, among other things, the extent of the assets left in Tibet by the late Panchen, the restoration of such properties as were confiscated from officials who fled to China in the train of the late Panchen, the amount of tax to be levied hereafter by the Tibetan Government on Tashilhunpo estates, and the grant of a loan to Tashilhunpo for the repayment of debts incurred by the Panchen Rimpoche in China and the rehabilitation of Tashilhunpo estates.

The Panchen himself claims, on the basis of a deed granted by the Seventh Dalai Lama, that Lhasa has no right to levy taxes on Tashilhunpo estates. It will be recalled that this favour which was granted by the Seventh Dalai Lama was promptly withdrawn by the Eighth Dalai Lama, and that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama imposed higher taxes on all Tashilhunpo estates. In present circumstances, the Tibetan Government would be too happy to levy only those taxes which were fixed by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama which led to the flight of the late Panchen to China. It is expected that a settlement on all the issues referred to the Joint Committee will be reached at an early date.

Even when the Chinese were busy with the Panchen, they did not lose sight of the 6 representatives of the People's Meetings

~~SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION

~~SECRET~~
 SECURITY INFORMATION
 (Classification)

Page 4 of
 Encl. No. 2
 Desp. No. 1161
 From Amembassy, London

(Village Assemblies), who came to Lhasa late in March to present a petition to the Kashag. They have now set up a Board of Enquiry with 2 Tibetan officials (Sampho Dzasa and Khenchung Lobsang Namgyal) on it to cross-examine the People's Representatives. The Board's proceedings are being closely followed by 2 Chinese officials as observers.

It is clear that the Chinese are now directing Tibetan affairs, but they are doing so through Tibetan agency. The Government of Tibet, as was feared earlier, has become a subsidiary organ of the Chinese Government.

INDIA, CHINA AND TIBET

The claims of the two Sikkim prisoners regarding their unpaid dues from the Tibetan Government has been taken up with the Tibetan Government. The matter will in due course be referred to the Chinese before a final decision is reached.

NEPAL, CHINA AND TIBET

K.I. Singh and his followers arrived in Lhasa under Chinese escort sometime in the last week of May. They are being kept in strict seclusion at Pangdatsang house. Singh is reported to have launched his appeal for Chinese help on the specious ground that Americans are pouring into Nepal and converting the country into a base for future operations against the Chinese. He has thus emphasized the urgency of liberating Nepal. We understand that he asked for facilities to present his case personally to Mao.

The Nepalese Officer has not yet despaired of tilting his arms against a windmill; he is still continuing to press for K.I. Singh's extradition. He was, however, informed by the Kashag that Chinese law does not allow the extradition of political prisoners.

A report has been received here that a hundred Chinese soldiers have been despatched from Shigatse to Shekar Dzong.

INTERNAL

The present Tibetan Government resembles an army which has lost all its generals after a series of tactical defeats on the field; they are leaderless, without morale and rapidly disintegrating. Sometime ago Lhalu Shape was forced to resign. Now Katsap Thupten Rabyang has been allowed to go into voluntary retirement, and Katsap Tombo has been granted long leave of absence on grounds of ill-health. Tombo's departure has converted the Little Kashag (now with only Ngapho and Shasur on it) into a willing instrument of the Chinese. With divergent views and incompatible interests, the 5 remaining Shapes in the Kashag manage to carry on by shirking and shifting

~~SECRET~~
 SECURITY INFORMATION

~~SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION
(Classification)

Page 5 of
Encl. No. 2
Desp. No. 1161
From Amembassy, London

responsibility. The dominant tendency among them is to escape responsibility, and ultimately to avoid public criticism, which, however, they are unable to do because situations arise which are highly embarrassing for them all. One such situation arose when the Chinese invited the Kashag to nominate one of the Shapas as Chairman of the Council of Education. None dared to accept the post and each in turn pressed a colleague to accept it. Finally a few got together and pressed Ragashar to accept the post. This is interesting because among the Shapas, Ragashar still maintains, albeit precariously, a reputation which is both high and untarnished. A similar situation arose when the time came to decide which of the Shapas should represent the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government at the Panchen's installation ceremony at Shigatse. Once again the Shapas pressed Ragashar to perform the duty; but His Holiness decided otherwise and firmly ordered Rampa Kalon Lama to prepare for the journey.

While the Kashag is powerless and ineffective, the Foreign Bureau has practically gone out of existence. The Lay Foreign Secretary (Surkhang Dzasa) is dead and the Monk Foreign Secretary is on long leave. The office itself has been left in the charge of a junior monk official.

The situation here sadly reminds one of the last days of the Kuomintang in China.

Gyalo Dhondup found his presence in Tibet a source of embarrassment to his family. He told me that the Chinese were trying to use him against his brother, the Dalai Lama. In the circumstances, he felt that it would be advisable for him to escape. He fully realises the risks involved but has carefully laid his plans with the active help and support of the Dalai Lama. For some time before he left Lhasa, he was going round inspecting the Dalai Lama's estates and the Chinese did not raise objections. It happens that the Dalai Lama has an estate at Chayul which is close to Tawang. So Gyalo went on a tour of inspection to Chayul with the hope that he would be able to take the Chinese unawares and slip into India. Meanwhile, if and when the Chinese get to know of his escape, the Dalai Lama would express surprise and say that his brother Gyalo Dhondup has always been an irresponsible nomad.

Prior to his departure, Gyalo assured us that he would not make either Darjeeling or Kalimpong his headquarters in India and that he would scrupulously avoid involvement in politics.

The Panchen left Lhasa on 9th June for his installation ceremony at Shigatse. He is expected to return here in time for the opening of the Administrative and Military Committee. This Committee for which provision was made in the terms of the Peking Agreement will meet in a building which is still under construction inside the

~~SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION

~~SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION
(Classification)

Page 6 of
Encl. No. 2
Desp. No. 1161
From Amembassy, London

compound of Yuthok House, which is General Chang Ching-wu's headquarters in Lhasa. General Chang can in fact watch the proceedings of the Committee from his drawing-room window.

ECONOMIC

A Chinese-sponsored Tibetan Trade Mission consisting of Lo Gedun Sadutsang and Kusho Goshampa left Lhasa for Peking on 18th May. It was reported from Gyantse that three Chinese officials were accompanying the Tibetan delegates. It is likely that two of these three Chinese officials belong to the party which is proceeding to Delhi to discuss the problem of transporting food grains to Tibet.

Sgd: S. SINHA

Officer-in-Charge

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SECURITY INFORMATION