

open Chinese policy on overseas education. Yet Beijing's concern over brain drain will continue to threaten such programs. Unless the problem is correctly assessed by Chinese decision-makers and effective measures are designed to deal with it, the future of foreign study will be far from certain. This author hopes that more studies on Chinese brain drain will be done and more policy suggestions be put forth by students of this subject in years to come.

## CHINA'S REFORMS IN TIBET: ISSUES AND DILEMMAS\*

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### Abstract

*Since the visit of Hu Yaobang to Tibet in 1980, which precipitated a series of changes in China's policies toward Tibet, the following years have been marked by China's reforms in Tibet, considered by many highly controversial. In general terms, living standards rose, and economic reforms and political liberalization achieved what appeared to be a remarkable success. Yet, at the height of the period, in 1987, the reforms, instead of enhancing Tibetan loyalty to China, precipitated demonstrations in Lhasa on a scale never before seen by the outside world. The demonstrations indicated the general failure of the reforms.*

*Some scholars argue that the reforms are highly successful and that the demonstrations and the instability in their wake are the result of outside instigation rather than rooted in the reforms themselves. This paper argues that the failure of the reforms is due to a far more complex set of circumstances that are the result of the historical legacy, the nature of the reforms themselves, and the instability of political process in Beijing. This paper examines the reforms, their implementation, and their failure in the economic, political, and social arenas to gain a deeper understanding of the complexity of the environment in which China instituted the reforms in Tibet and to investigate the underlying reasons for the unrest. The paper argues that the problems in Tibet are far beyond the creation of outside "instigators" and far beyond the capacity of the reforms to solve.*

IN SEPTEMBER 1987, a pro-independence demonstration by some two dozen Tibetan monks in the streets of Lhasa met with the severity of the Chinese authorities. The event led to continuing pro-independence demonstrations which allegedly have created an atmosphere that has interrupted the success of the reforms; in fact, the incident marks a turning point in the Chinese reforms in Tibet, first implemented in 1980. These

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demonstrations indicate an important failing of the reforms that represents yet another miscarriage of policy by the Chinese Government in its many attempts to establish legitimacy in Tibet<sup>1</sup> since launching the invasion of Tibet in 1949-50.

The explanation for the lack of success of the reforms, both the official Chinese line and even that of some Western scholars, is that the demonstrations and the subsequent unrest have been "instigated" from the outside. The theory is that because "Beijing's reform policy was winning the struggle for the mass of Tibetans and gaining international respectability," the Tibetan exile community was threatened. "Suddenly Dharamsala [the seat of the exiled Tibetan Government in India] found itself in danger of becoming irrelevant to the political process in Tibet. Dharamsala responded by launching a major counterattack...."<sup>2</sup> Although there has been an undoubtedly strong influence from the outside since the Open Door policy in the late 1970s, the demonstrations are due to a far more complex set of circumstances that are the result of the historical legacy, the nature of the reforms themselves, and the instability of the political process in Beijing. In an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the complexity of the environment in which China undertook to institute the reforms in Tibet and to investigate the underlying reasons for the demonstrations and unrest which first signaled the failings of the reforms, this paper will examine the reforms, their implementation, and their failure in the economic, political, and social arenas. The problems in Tibet are far beyond the creation of outside "instigators" and far beyond the capacity of the reforms to solve.

### THE ORIGIN OF THE REFORMS

Following the take over of Tibet and especially in the late 1950s after Mao had launched the Anti-Rightist Campaign and inaugurated the Great Leap Forward, Chinese policies turned increasingly irrational and repressive. The Seventeen Point Agreement had been signed by the Tibetans in 1951 under duress after the Chinese had marched through the eastern and northeastern parts of Tibet. The decisive defeat of the meager and ill-equipped Tibetan army at Chamdo in 1951 by the newly victorious Chinese communists marked the end of the sovereignty of the isolated Buddhist theocratic country that until then had maintained its distance from the aggressive permutations of modern nation-states. Although the Seventeen Point Agreement had promised the

<sup>1</sup> Due to the limited availability of sources, in this paper, Tibet refers to the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), but I have strong reason to believe that the analysis applied can be extrapolated to the whole of Tibet which includes those areas of traditional Tibet annexed into the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu, and Qinghai.

<sup>2</sup> Melvyn C. Goldstein, "The Dragon and the Snow Lion: The Tibet Question in the 20th Century," *China Briefing* 1990, ed. Anthony T. Kane (New York: The Asia Society, 1990), p. 150.

maintenance of certain freedoms and the continuance of the governing system,<sup>3</sup> treating Tibet as a special case, the wave of irrationality and repression sweeping China could not be held back by the now-permeable border, which had been forcibly opened both militarily and politically. The assurances of the Agreement were swept away in the tide of leftist fanaticism; the tide took Tibet full force: the Tibetans responded in 1959 with "the Tibetan uprising." This turning point in the history of Tibet is marked by the flight of the Dalai Lama, the spiritual and political leader of Tibet, and his government to exile in India. The uprising was quelled only by an enormous loss of life that precipitated the flight of some eighty thousand more Tibetans to India. The imprisonment and torture of those who had participated in the rebellion and the "reeducation" of their families and the remaining members of the Tibetan population, was carried out under an extremely repressive policy. In addition, for the first time in their history, from this point forward, the Tibetans suddenly were thrust fully, directly, and harshly into experiencing and sharing the heavy burdens of the turbulent Chinese state, including the massive famine and other political disasters. The wounds from the deaths and the oppressive campaigns which followed never healed and the Chinese were left with a smoldering population that rose in resistance in the ensuing years in larger or smaller pockets again and again, each time to further repression and loss of life, and each time more seeds were planted for the next confrontation. In particular, in the 1969 rebellion, a massive armed resistance was entrenched in more than eighteen counties and ended with a loss of life in the TAR reportedly even greater than that of the aftermath of the 1959 uprising. "After the two repressions in fifty-nine and sixty-nine, almost every family in Tibet had been affected in some way. One, two, or even more members of each family were imprisoned or killed..."<sup>4</sup>

The suffering was not limited to the loss of life. Those who lived were subjected to the extreme shame of being Tibetan. As part of a long-standing and profound crusade against the "old Tibetan system," an insidious campaign against the supposedly inferior Tibetan culture and religion was effected. Chinese media and literature, movies and films, are filled with the favorite themes of Tibetans as hideous savages who ravaged each other in the monstrous darkness and brutality of their barbaric land. Every inhuman and ugly image that can be invented has been falsely attributed to Tibetan customs and traditions. These gruesome themes were a graphic, vivid extrapolation of Mao's "scientific theory and conclusions" on Tibetan society: that it was "the most brutal, backward, dark, and ruthless." These devils were supposed to be grateful to their "saviors" who had "liberated" them from the "darkness of slavery." This assault on the "old Tibetan system" through unremitting attacks on Tibetan character and society served China's purposes of validating its legitimacy in Tibet. Every Tibetan under Chinese rule

<sup>3</sup> As stated in point four of the Seventeen Point Agreement: "The Central Authorities will not alter the existing political system in Tibet. The Central Authorities also will not alter the established status, functions, and powers of the Dalai Lama. Officials of various ranks hold office as usual."

<sup>4</sup> Jigme Ngapo, "Xizang dongluan de beihou" (Behind the Unrest in Tibet), *Zhongbao*, October 1969, reported and reviewed.

bears the shame of his heritage and lives separately with the certainty of his extreme inferiority. The daily humiliations were endless: many state-owned worker units maintained separate cafeterias, with the higher-quality food and equipment allocated for the Chinese; Tibetans were allowed to eat in the Chinese cafeteria only after studying in China for some period of time. These kinds of humiliations doled out to the Tibetans in daily, galling proportions from every angle of Chinese society have engendered a pervasive and underlying hatred of Chinese rule.

The wake left in the ebb and flow of the successive political campaigns caused chaos in the economic system as well as the political system. During the People's Communization Campaign and the Campaign to Study Dazhai, a model brigade in China, production methods from China were copied wholesale without consideration for conditions in Tibet. In an effort to achieve large and quick production, farmers were forced to plant more Chinese-imported winter wheat and less of the staple crop, barley. Unrealistic production quotas, and high, unsubstantiated estimates of output, and the resulting levels of tax collection, contributed to the extreme poverty that became widespread.<sup>5</sup>

In the decades under Chinese occupation, the bitter experiences of loss of life, discrimination, and impoverishment combined to create the most difficult period in Tibet's history. The bitterness from this domination and humiliation, deeply rooted in the Tibetan mind, became the driving force which shaped the hostile political attitude and confrontational behavior in the ensuing years. It was on this unstable emotional foundation and in this unequal society that the reforms were constructed.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE REFORMS

In November and December of 1978, after the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Party Central Committee in Beijing, the reformers gained power as the political liberalization and economic reforms sweeping China won ascendancy over the rigid interpretations of Mao's doctrines. Yet, "the leftist policy still continued [in Tibet] even after the Third Plenum for a considerable period of time."<sup>6</sup> Tibet continued to suffer from the extremes of Maoism.

However, in Beijing, many changes were taking place and the United Front's new strategy was put on the agenda: in an effort to gain support for the reforms, a major outreach was extended to the Taiwanese and overseas Chinese. In January of 1979, the National People's Congress released a letter to the Taiwanese which proposed a peaceful,

<sup>5</sup> Li Wei-han, "Xizang minzu de jiefang daolu" (The Path of the Liberation of Tibetan Nationalities), *Xizang ribao*, May 25, 1981, p. q. The author was one of the masterminds of Chinese minority policy in the 1950s and was the head of the Chinese delegation of the Seventeen Point Agreement in 1951.

<sup>6</sup> Li, *ibid.* In addition, the May 23, 1981 editorial in *Xizang ribao* had noted the entrenched resistance by the cadres in Tibet to the policies of the Third Plenum prior to Hu Yaobang's visit in 1980.

equal negotiation between the Beijing government and the KMT to solve the Taiwan problem. "In October 1979, the Central Government widely released the document of the national United Front Work Meeting, and reeducated those within the Party about United Front policy."<sup>7</sup> In an initiative similar to the Taiwan letter, the Beijing government invited various overseas Chinese groups to visit China. As part of the United Front Work Department policy,<sup>8</sup> Beijing invited a delegation from the Dalai Lama to travel to Tibet to observe conditions in late 1979. There were far-reaching consequences to the visit which the United Front group had failed to consider in overlooking the fact that the new relaxed policies had not yet been implemented in Tibet as they had in most parts of China. The spontaneous, impassioned welcome that the delegation received from the Tibetan population brought to the surface the crisis that the astonished Chinese authorities could no longer afford to ignore: after years of China's attempts to establish its legitimacy in Tibet on "liberation from the backward and brutal old system," the Tibetans still looked to the Dalai Lama, the embodiment of the "old system," as the authority and a symbol of hope for freedom from Chinese cultural and political domination. This crisis of legitimacy was met with great deliberation by Beijing. In the aftermath of the delegation's visit, a special work meeting on Tibet was closed on April 7, 1980, in Beijing; it called for a rethinking, a reunderstanding of Tibet. The meeting concluded: "We have been established for thirty years. Now the international situation is very complicated. If we do not seize the moment and immediately improve the relationship between the nationalities [Chinese and Tibetan], we will make a serious mistake. All the members of the Party must recognize the seriousness and we must reach a consensus."<sup>9</sup> As a follow-up to this meeting, Hu Yaobang made an historic visit to Tibet. It would seem that his ostensibly spontaneous outrage at conditions was to appease the Tibetans and regain Chinese legitimacy by presenting the new face of the reformers. There were a number of new policies in Hu's six-point reform package:

- 1) Under the unified leadership of the Central Government, the autonomous region's autonomy should be fully exercised;

<sup>7</sup> Report of the National United Front Work Conference, January 23, 1982, *Minzu zhengce wenxuan (Selected Documents of Nationality Policy)* (Urumqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1985) p.32.

<sup>8</sup> "Under the new circumstances prevailing, we should actively strive to make the Dalai Clique return to the motherland. We should henceforth no longer use the expressions 'the Dalai's Renegade Clique' ['Dalai Panguo Jituan'] and 'renegade bandits' in our propaganda... To make the Dalai Clique return is very important ... It would greatly benefit... our efforts to make Taiwan reunite with the motherland, as well as the achievement of the grand unification of the motherland." From "Jinhou buyao zaijia 'Dalai panguo jituan'" (Henceforth, No Longer Refer to the 'Dalai's Renegade Clique') in the internally circulated *Xuanchuan dongtai*, No. 1 (1979)

<sup>9</sup> Report of the National United Front Work Conference, January 23, 1982, *Minzu zhengce wenxuan (Selected Documents of Nationality Policy)*, (Urumqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1985), p. 10.

- 2) In light of Tibet's seriously difficult situation, the policy of rehabilitation should be firmly implemented so that burden on the masses may be reduced;
- 3) Regarding economic issues and policies, Tibet should be treated as a special case and with flexibility according to Tibet's own conditions;
- 4) A substantial portion of the subsidies should be used for the development of agriculture, animal husbandry, and the essential needs of the Tibetan people;
- 5) Under the direction of socialism, Tibetan's science, culture, and education should be developed;
- 6) The Party's cadre policy for nationalities should be correctly implemented and Chinese and Tibetan solidarity must be greatly enhanced.<sup>10</sup>

The implementation of the policies was to include the elimination of taxes in the rural areas, the withdrawal of large numbers of Chinese cadres, and the eventual breakup of the communes and the return to the traditional household forms of production. Hu's official line became the foundation of the reform program in Tibet.

The reforms resulted in an almost immediate rise in the standard of living, especially in the rural areas. In tandem with the political liberalization in China, the reforms also reduced the more visible of the Chinese government interventions in Tibetan daily life. It is important to note that Hu's new policies and their implementation, however incomplete,<sup>11</sup> served to alleviate the immediately explosive nature of the crisis.

### RELIGION AS POLITICAL MEANS

In order to continue to avert the crisis and avoid explaining the failure of the policies in terms of political conflict between the Chinese and Tibetans, it can be surmised that Beijing chose religion as an avenue for the release of the built-up pressure. The steps to lift the prohibitions on religious practice were taken most likely because this concession appeared less costly than the inconceivable compromise of allowing greater political participation that would lead inevitably to nationalistic expressions. Official instruction refers to the importance of ignoring for a time the Marxist maxim of religion

<sup>10</sup> The Planning Bureau of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, "Xizang jingji jianshe de weida chengjiu" (The Great Achievements of Tibetan Economic Development), *Xizang yanjiu*, No. 3 (1985), p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> The instatement of the autonomous region's rights to autonomy was never implemented and the region continued to be autonomous in name only; the withdrawal of the Chinese cadres was never fully realized; and the subsidies continued to flow for the needs and benefits of the immigrant Chinese workers, both to the Chinese-populated urban areas and the Chinese-employed state-owned enterprises. See below for full discussion.

as the opiate of the masses.<sup>12</sup> Beijing allocated special funds for the rebuilding of a few of the major destroyed monasteries and approved not only the rebuilding of 230 of the more historically significant monasteries but the reconstruction of 900 of the smaller religious structures.<sup>13</sup> The new policy also allowed a limited number of monks in each monastery and permitted open participation in religious activities and rituals which had been prohibited for decades. While these new, limited freedoms were offered to alleviate the crisis, the deep-seated need for political participation remained unmet and unthinkable from the point of view of the authorities. Even the smallest complaint or resentment of the unfair policies to the Tibetan population or criticism of the past decades of unsuccessful Chinese rule could not be tolerated; it would be viewed as "destroying the unity of the nationalities and splitting the motherland" which required immediate and serious punishment.<sup>14</sup> Because the Tibetans had no real access to power and no way to express their political or social concerns, their energies turned toward the monasteries where they could at least indirectly express their aspirations.<sup>15</sup> Many of the Tibetans, in spite of the decades of state prohibition of Buddhism and the absence of its omnipotent influence in Tibetan social life, had remained devout practitioners and they flocked to the reopened monasteries with passion. This break in the floodgates allowed an intense outpouring of energy and emotion to flow into the monasteries where it intensified anew. "According to incomplete statistics, from 1981 to 1984, the Jokang temple [the holiest temple in Tibet] was visited a total of 4.27 million times per year, with an average of approximately 90,000 per month which was far more than before the socialist reform."<sup>16</sup> Tibetans of all ages converged on the monasteries and looked to Buddhism as both a source of national identity and the site and consolidation of the challenge to China's rule. In Lhasa, in a show of solidarity, young Tibetans with no

<sup>12</sup> Pema Namgyal, "Xian jieduan xizang zongjiao de diwei he zuoyong" (The Status and Function of Tibetan Religion in the Present Time), *Xizang yanjiu*, No. 1 (1989), p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Namgyal, p. 8. It should be noted, however, that most of the money and labor for the rebuilding of the monasteries came from the Tibetan people. See below.

<sup>14</sup> In the early 1980s, a school of fictional literature developed in China that became known as wound literature (shanghen wenxue). The writers were explicit in their depiction of pain, hardship, and the "Cultural Revolution." This school of literature was absent in Tibet, not as has been suggested by some Chinese literary critics that Tibetans were not sufficiently "wounded" during those times to have created the scars or the desire to describe their suffering, but specifically because this kind of public frankness and airing of emotion would be taken as overt criticism of the Chinese authorities in Tibet. Clearly the issue was too sensitive for the realm of literature and even the more "liberal" policy could not tolerate this kind critique.

<sup>15</sup> The monasteries were, in the urban areas, the one place where a Tibetan could feel totally Tibetan; Chinese were rarely seen in the monasteries and almost never present.

<sup>16</sup> Zhao Zhen-yin, "Xizang shehui de juda bianhua" (The Great Changes in Tibetan Society), *Zhongguo zangxue*, No. 2 (1989), p. 9. It should be noted that the Tibetan population, including that of the annexed territories of ethnic Tibetans, is less than 5 million, so this figure, even allowing for repeat visit, is staggering.

grounding in Buddhism rebuild a monastery which has come to be known as the "Youth Monastery." As the focus of so much energy and rebuilding, the monasteries received ever-increasing contributions and volunteer labor from a people starved for religious practice and --- desperately in need of a symbol of their survival --- for their identity. "According to the Tibetan Autonomous government, the monasteries of Drepung and Sera in Lhasa, in 1980, the donations were as high as 1000 yuan for a single monk. In 1985, the donations reached to more than 2000 yuan."<sup>17</sup> Because of the size of the donations, the monasteries were economically self-reliant and, as such, intervention from the state was far less effective than in other sectors of society. Large numbers of monks survived in the monasteries without official state permission. This concession to religion proved costly to the Chinese politically, as they later learned to their regret. They realized that "we did not follow up on the administrative work and we did not establish an effective system of neighborhood monastery committees; we did not follow up on the political education of those frequenting the monasteries. ..."<sup>18</sup>

The role and importance of the monasteries increased in every sector of the society. Because of the shortage of teachers and the resentment at the primarily Chinese content of the state schools, the monasteries quickly regained their traditional role in education. More and more parents sent their children to the monasteries rather than to the state schools. As an example, in the village of Bakar in Biru county, there were 74 children of school age in the local school and an equal number in the monastery. There were many more areas where the population of young monks in the monastery was even greater than that in the state school.<sup>19</sup> This had serious implications for the society. The teachers in the monasteries came from the ranks of the old monks who had borne the worst of the repression. The content of the education, independent of the official state-dominated line, was markedly different: the teachers remembered and described old Tibet in terms very different from that of the state. They talked of a society without the Chinese and of a time when Tibet was proud and strong. They still retained fresh and bitter memories of the physical and mental abuse to which they had been subjected since the Chinese occupation, and they made no attempt to cover this bitterness. Perhaps most importantly, the students discovered an ideology other than the Marxist doctrines of the state schools; the deep-rooted but dormant traditions of their society expressed through Buddhist thought, now relatively unchecked, grew and intensified.<sup>20</sup> And grow the ideas did, particularly in the large monasteries in Lhasa which had received young monks from

17 Zhao, p. 9. These figures are sizeable; the average per capita income for a rural Tibetan in 1985 was only 325 yuan.

18 Namgyal, pp. 7-8.

19 Namgyal, p. 8.

20 Personal conversation with Tenzing Norbu, who, although a rimpoche (high-ranking reincarnated monk) who been imprisoned during the Cultural Revolution, worked for the official Buddhist Association of the Tibetan Autonomous Region in Lhasa in the early 1980s; he also maintained close contact with many of the major monasteries in Tibet during that time.

many corners of the country.<sup>21</sup> These monks were a vital communication link with the outlying areas and brought to a central location the many stories of repression and difficulties. As the people of each area discovered, they were not alone in their experiences or feelings. On returning to their home towns and villages, the young monks, in turn, spread the emotions and ideas of those who were now articulating the resentments and bitterness so long held back.

The reform itself, coming as it did at the forefront of change in the atmosphere of a secular and political vacuum, inadvertently gave religion the opportunity to occupy a very large place of power. As noted by the Chinese officials: "Many of the religious activities go too far. For example, some local Communist Party members organized a mass political study meeting. People do not come; if people come, they argue with and curse the cadres and make the cadres feel isolated and antagonized. But when a rimpoche comes to talk, no matter if he is correct or not, one hundred percent listen without any reservation and they put into practice everything he says."<sup>22</sup> Because the monasteries were the only entities which encompassed Tibetan identity and political activity, they were supported financially and morally in great degree by the Tibetan population. The monasteries represented the beginnings of a reemergence of a civil society, the first since the Chinese takeover, and they had within them had the potential to challenge the Chinese rule.

However, the transition to the beginnings of the civil society was not smooth by any sense of the term. Each time a political campaign started, the first targets were the monasteries; in particular, a confrontation was set in motion by the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign which in China was targeted at the intellectuals in 1983-84. In Tibet, the authorities took direct aim at the monasteries and religion. Work teams of cadres were sent to the monasteries to "investigate the situation" and, particularly as reported in Ganden, police were sent in to arrest the head monks and the organizers of the rebuilding efforts.<sup>23</sup> The Chinese authorities also, with limited degrees of success, frequently tried to intervene in the affairs of the monasteries. They tried to reassert their authority by restricting the number and the background of the monks entering the monasteries.<sup>24</sup> Because the atmosphere of the political arena had already changed, notably with the collapse of the effectiveness of the *hukou* and the *chengfen* system<sup>25</sup> as the mechanisms

21 Note that one of the restrictions placed on the monks was that they should come only from within the Tibetan Autonomous Region, not from the whole of Tibet.

22 Namgyal, p. 8.

23 Personal conversation with Sonam, from the eastern Tibetan area of Kham, who was at Ganden during this time. He escaped arrest at this time, although many in the rebuilding efforts were taken in by the police.

24 *Forbidden Freedoms: Beijing's Control of Religion in Tibet* (Washington, D.C.: International Campaign for Tibet, 1990), pp. 58-59.

25 *Chengfen* is the rigid system of categorization of the entire population according to their class level as defined by the communists - it was one of the most important methods of social control during Mao's period; *hukou* is the legally required household registration book, listing

of social control, the Chinese authorities were limited by the fact that the monks could now survive in the monasteries without official permission. Most important, their authority was also limited by the instability of the political climate in Beijing; often by the time a campaign was in motion in Tibet, an abrupt shift in direction in Beijing in the struggle between the conservatives and the reformers would signal the end of that campaign and the beginning of a new policy. This unstable political process in Beijing cost the authorities in Tibet power and control as the confusion backfired into the implementation of each new policy. The monks and the Tibetan population would be relatively free for a time before a new campaign was yet again attempted, and the hatred and distrust of the government grew ever faster and stronger.

### ECONOMIC REFORM

By the 1980s, there were two major components to the Tibetan economy: the agricultural sector and the state-owned enterprise sector. The agricultural and animal husbandry sector, which comprises approximately 90 percent of the Tibetan population,<sup>26</sup> received a much smaller portion of the subsidies to raise output.<sup>27</sup> This sector remains in a largely primitive condition with the economy dependent on hand-crafted goods or agricultural products produced mainly under natural conditions. In the state-owned enterprises, situated in the urban areas, output is in essence fabricated by the large infusions of subsidies.<sup>28</sup> In this sector, approximately 95 percent of official Chinese immigrants<sup>29</sup> are employed.<sup>30</sup> Each sector of the economy is essentially discrete from the other; there is little to exchange between them: neither goods, capital, nor labor.

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each persons' vital statistics and *chengfen* - it is kept by the head of the household and filed with the police

26 *Zhongguo renkou, xizang fence (Chinese Population, Tibetan Volume)* (Beijing: Zhongguo caizheng jingji chuban she, 1988), p. 292.

27 According to official Chinese figures from 1952 to 1984, only fifteen percent of the subsidies were allocated for the rural areas (Wang Danu, "Guanyu xizang jingji shehui fazhan zhanlue de jidian sisuo" [Some Thoughts on the Strategy of Social Development in Tibet], *Xizang yanjiu*, No. 1 [1988], p. 26). It would follow that since the figures given for the urban area include Chinese administrative costs, the figures given for the rural areas include costs for many party branches and their administrative costs, most of which are for social control rather than economic investment. Therefore, the actual subsidy totals to the rural areas are even much less than fifteen percent would indicate.

28 Zhen Ran, "Xizang jingji de jiannan zhuanbian" (A Burdensome Transition for the Tibetan Economy), *Zhongguo xizang*, (Fall 1989), p. 26.

29 Official immigrants are those sent to Tibet officially (i.e. with *hukou*) by the Beijing government; I believe that only these immigrants are counted in the figures released by Beijing of the Chinese population in Tibet.

30 *Zhongguo renkou, xizang fence*, p. 293.

In the aftermath of the First Work Meeting and Hu Yaobang's visit, most taxes were eliminated and land was distributed to individual households. Decisions on the planting of crops was left mainly to the individual producers who were then free to sell or exchange their products at the market. The rise in the standard of living was immediate. "In 1979, the average income was 127 yuan; in 1982 it had risen to 220 yuan."<sup>31</sup> However, these policies, rather than representing a new long-term strategy, did little more than return the rural areas to the conditions of the early 1960s before the collectivization and communization period. The rise in the standard of living was due mainly to the elimination of the taxes; actual output in 1984 compared to 1980 declined considerably. Some agrarian methods introduced earlier, such as irrigation works and other programs to boost output, were reduced or dropped. The use of fertilizer and farm machinery decreased after the implementation of the reforms. In 1986 as compared to 1979, there was a seventy-four percent reduction in sales of fertilizer, with an equal percentage reduction in sales of farm machinery.<sup>32</sup> Beyond an initial jump, the rise in the standard of living was very limited and, by 1987, the average rural annual was only 361 yuan, which after adjustment for inflation (in Tibet one of the highest rates compared to China),<sup>33</sup> actually represents a negative increase between 1985 and 1987. The return to traditional agrarian methods, while generally better for the population in comparison to the period under the communes, has in fact returned the rural areas to an almost subsistence level of living, not the goal of a progressive economic policy.

In the urban state-owned enterprises, the implementation of reforms made even much less of a visible impact on the economy largely because many of these industries had been established to serve political purposes and as part of the campaigns of Filling-in-the-Blanks and Self-reliance. These political campaigns have been instituted with economic posture rather than economic viability as the prime motivation. As with many of the investments from the 1970s, given in principal to create the "independent and comprehensive industrial system" to achieve "self-reliance," the investment subsidies were distributed to particular industries with no consideration of their economic potential. Subsidies were distributed to the units without regard for their efficiency, capacity for production, or for output. A vicious cycle had developed: the more the units lost money, the more subsidies they received, and the more they became dependent on the subsidies.<sup>34</sup> The economic reforms, implemented on top of a politically motivated

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31 Yin Fatang, "Yiqie cong xizang de shiji chufa" (All Things Should Start from Tibet's Own Conditions), *Xizang minzu wenti lunwen xuan* (Lhasa: Xizang renmin chuban she), p. 25. Yin was the First Party Secretary of the Tibetan Autonomous Region from 1980 to 1985.

32 Dawa Samdup, "Xian jieduan zhiding xizang jingji fazhan zhanlue zhi silu" (Some Thoughts on the Development Strategy of the Tibetan Economy in the Present Time), *Xizang yanjiu*, No.3 (1989), p. 7.

33 See Table 4. As prices rise, the government adds an adjustment to the wages of the state-owned-enterprise employees; while official figures for inflation in Tibet are not available, the high rate of inflation can be seen in the precipitous rise in wages.

34 Zhen, p. 26.

industrial system already in place, could not alter the fundamental dilemma of "infusion economics"<sup>35</sup> without overturning the political reality of social control. The urban state-owned enterprises, so dependent before on the subsidies, were now continuing in the same downward spiral and were made even more dependent on the subsidies than ever before (see Table 1).

Another major factor in the urban economy that has direct political implications is that because a large number of the employees in the state-owned enterprises are Chinese, massive amounts of the subsidies are required in the form of benefits or extra wages as incentives to keep them in Tibet. Chinese immigrants have been enticed to and kept in Tibet since the Chinese takeover<sup>36</sup> in order to gain political control, dilute the Tibetan social structure, and implement Chinese policy. This huge influx of Chinese immigrants has been brought or enticed into Tibet at significant subsidized cost. In 1985, the average state-owned-enterprise employee received an annual wage 87.6% higher than his counterpart in China (2143 to 1442 yuan).<sup>37</sup> An additional extraordinary benefit for Chinese workers is a liberal all-expenses-paid three-month vacation back to China for every 18 months of employment. "Up to one-fourth of a unit in Tibet is on vacation or is for other reasons in China at any given time."<sup>38</sup> A large portion of the wages, spent in China during the long vacations, causes considerable sums of the economic subsidies to Tibet to be siphoned from the Tibetan economy and returned back to China.

Also, almost without fail, the state-owned factories and enterprises are over-employed in order to create a job market for the Chinese immigrants so needed for long-term political control. A typical example is the Naching Power Plant: based on the level of power output, a sister plant in China would need only forty workers to operate the plant; Naching employs more than three hundred.<sup>39</sup>

The state-owned enterprises are highly inefficient, wasteful, and losing money; industry profits have been consistently negative since 1967.<sup>40</sup> Thus, in spite of

35 As described by Chinese economists with particular reference to Tibet, the situation whereby an economy can survive only with continuing and increasingly massive infusions of subsidies.

36 In the early 1950s, the number of Chinese in Tibet was so small as to be counted by hand. Mao's marching order to his troops entering Tibet included a reference to going to a "special area of almost no Chinese." See *jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao (Mao Zedong's manuscripts Since the Formation of the PRC)*, III (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1989), p. 384.

37 Guan Puan, "Shitan yu xizang jingji fazhan xiangguan de fei jingji yinsu" (The Impact of Some Non-economic Elements on Economic Development in Tibet) *Xizang yanjiu*, No. 1 (1987), p. 20.

38 *Zhongguo renkou, xizang fence*, p. 155.

39 Li Zhuqin, *Xizang jingji de fazhan yu duice (Strategies of Economic Development in Tibet)*, (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1990), p. 137.

40 Li, *ibid.*, p. 232.

continuing huge subsidies and the implementation of the reforms, the state-owned enterprises have hailed dismally. Additionally, however, it should be noted that since 1980, the growth of the much-celebrated private entrepreneurial activity has been rapid; nevertheless, this activity still contributes only a small portion to the total gross output. Highly dependent on the subsidies and on political stability, the overall economic viability and strength of this sector remains in question.

The heavy burden of administrative costs, long a drain to the economy, has become an increasingly difficult obstacle particularly after the reforms. After the takeover of Tibet in 1951, the Beijing government allocated increasing subsidies for the Chinese bureaucratic system that was to supplant the existing Tibetan system and personnel. Structures in place in Chinese provinces were copied wholesale in Tibet without consideration of Tibetan requirements or conditions. Although the entire Tibetan population totaled only one-eighteenth of that of the average province in China, the one-to-one match of the Central Government bureaucratic institutional structure with that of a densely populated province in China, created a burgeoning administration that would require ever-increasing subsidies to support.<sup>41</sup> From 1952 to 1984, the cost of direct administration was more than 15 percent of the total subsidies expended,<sup>42</sup> and since the reforms, the increase in administrative costs has risen at a rate higher than that of the subsidies themselves (see Table 2). In actuality, the real cost of administration is even greater than these figures show, because of the ancillary costs of servicing personnel and their families, such as health care and hospital service, housing, education, and imported food and goods from China.

Of particular notice, while an increasingly large percentage of the subsidy allocation has gone to support the direct cost of administration, the single greatest percentage of the total subsidies, more than 30 percent, has been spent on "Capital Construction Investment." What this percentage hides is that often the majority of the allocation is for nonproductive construction such as administrative buildings and housing for state-owned enterprise employees. In recent years, "the sites of office buildings for many units have grown more and more, the office equipment and furniture in them has become more and more elaborate, and many units have torn down the plain doors and walls of the buildings and replace them with fence versions. In Lhasa, the average office and auditorium space [for the unit] per bureaucrat is the highest in all of China."<sup>43</sup> Ironically, since the start of the economic reforms, the percentage of nonproductive construction is increasing (see Table 3). It should be noted that bureaucracies in general are difficult to dismantle; the difficulties in this case are greater since it would require either a massive exodus of Chinese workers back to China or an outflow of bureaucrats

41 Guan, p. 21.

42 *Xizang shehui jingji tongji nianjian 1989 (Social and Economic Statistics Yearbook of Tibet 1989)*, compiled by the Department of Statistics of the Tibetan Autonomous Region (Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, 1989), p. 474-75.

43 Wang Danu, "Guanyu xizang jingji shehui fazhan zhanlue de jidian sisuo" (Some Thoughts on the Strategy of Social Development in Tibet), *Xizang yanjiu*, No. 1, p. 22.

to entrepreneurial or industrial positions. Clearly, the top-heavy burden has become an important obstacle to economic development. However, the reforms not only did not lower the administrative costs but actually encouraged their increase given the realities of maintaining political and bureaucratic control in Tibet. The reform did not change the situation of infusion economics nor make Tibet more self-reliant. The reforms failed to stimulate growth in the rural areas beyond the initial jump and the gap in income distribution between the majority of the Tibetans and Chinese in Tibet increase alarmingly (see Table 4).

### THE ROLE OF THE EXILE GOVERNMENT

Since 1979, when the first delegation from the Exile Government visited Tibet and was given such an overwhelming welcome by Tibetans, the Tibetan population no longer felt isolated and forgotten. What had been hidden from them during the long years was suddenly tangible: the Dalai Lama. Emboldened by the communication between the two communities and since the Open Door policy of the reform in 1980, many Tibetans visited exiled relatives in India; the inevitable comparisons between life on each side of the Himalaya pointed out a number of things. Not only could Tibetans survive without the Chinese, they could survive even better. The visitors to Dharamsala as that exile schools were better than the Chinese-run schools in Tibet. They saw the preservation and exercise of Tibetan culture and religion without the discrimination and humiliation by the Chinese. In particular, the Chinese-educated younger generation, who had grown up after the takeover, had been taught that the Dalai Lama was a "monster" who "such the blood of the people"; they discovered in Dharamsala that the Dalai Lama was not only a kind man, but that he was a modern and capable leader who was respected throughout the world. With their perceptions so radically changed, to them the Dalai Lama became a powerful symbol of hope and the challenge to the Chinese rule. The Tibetans became palpably conscious of the two opposing authorities of Dharamsala and Beijing, and each time Beijing instituted policies particularly unfavorable to Tibetans, the result would be to precipitate further loyalty of the Tibetans toward Dharamsala.

Since the reforms, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile itself has been an active, if indirect, participant in the political process inside Tibet. The first relaxed policies were instituted in part as a result of the visit of the first delegation to Tibet. The second delegation a few months later was more radical and even made several impromptu speeches to crowds gathered in Tibet. The overwhelmingly enthusiastic response of the Tibetan people to the delegations was becoming an important factor in indicating the gravity of the situation in Tibet; the Chinese were sufficiently influenced to create new policies an effort to ameliorate conditions. Although the Chinese Government never seriously considered proposals made by the new policy initiatives in Tibet by Beijing; these actions suggest that Beijing was competing with Dharamsala for the loyalty of the Tibetans. Many new policies attempted or implemented in Tibet would most likely have not been forthcoming without indirect pressure from the Exile Government. Beijing created policy having acknowledged that "Tibet was a different case from the interior

part of the country and also different from the other nationalities areas."<sup>44</sup> Since the reforms, each time a policy has been implemented, the "international sensitivity" of the Tibetan issue is taken into account.<sup>45</sup> In 1983, during the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign, when the first of the renewed repressions against the monasteries occurred and political prisoners were once again taken, pressure from the outside was organized and swift. In the form of media attention, demonstrations, and other activities, the Tibetans in exile and their supporters immediately drew the attention of Beijing. As China was no longer an isolated "self-reliant" count, it was now starting to be increasingly concerned with its international reputation. Beijing soon leaned on the leadership in Tibet to subdue their Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign zeal and restrain their crackdown.<sup>46</sup> When repressive practices were activated elsewhere, such as in Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia, similar pressure from the outside was not present to influence Beijing, and there was no attendant pressure from Beijing to mitigate the actions of the regional authorities.<sup>47</sup> Throughout the reform period, Dharamsala continued to exert pressure indirectly on Beijing to improve conditions for the Tibetan population.

However, from the beginning, the most important goal of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in dealing with Beijing has been to secure a fundamental solution to the problem of Tibet. In spite of many attempts, Dharamsala has not achieved this goal. Dharamsala sent a total of four delegations to observe conditions in Tibet and, further, in 1982 and 1984, sent two secret high-ranking delegations for serious discussion to Beijing.<sup>48</sup> Apparently, Beijing never entertained serious notions of negotiating to solve the Tibetan problem but rather used the opportunities to court the favor and loyalty of the Tibetan population. The first three delegations came to Tibet in quick succession in the early 1980s. Alarmed at the great popularity of these delegations and with its authority deeply threatened,<sup>49</sup> Beijing temporarily discontinued this visits until the mid-1980s. Although the public posture of the Chinese Government has always been that, aside from the

44 Yin, p. 26.

45 See the summaries of the Tibetan Work Meetings of 1980 and 1984; in both of these major meetings, the importance of "international sensitivity" in terms of designing policy in Tibet was stressed.

46 The Panchen Lama was put on the radio in Beijing and emphasized the distinction to be made between "spiritual pollution" and "norma" religious activities.

47 During this time, an oft-repeated refrain from my Mongolian, Uighur, and Kazak schoolmates at the Central Nationalities Institute was, "If only we had a 'Dalai Lama' on the outside like you do, the Beijing would care about us, too."

48 Tibetan Review, December (1984), p. 6.

49 Ren Ren, a high ranking official in nationalities affairs in Beijing, had officially accompanied the three delegations to Tibet. At a meeting in Beijing which I attended, he gave a report that indicated the seriousness with which the authorities were suddenly viewing the situation in Tibet. On Ren Ren's visit to New York in the fall of 1990, in personal conversations, Ren confirmed this.



question of independence, it would be willing to discuss any issues and proposals regarding Tibet, in actuality this would seem not to be the case; Beijing has never presented a meaningful proposal for a settlement of issues.<sup>50</sup> In October 1984, the second secret delegation from Dharamsala arrived in Beijing armed with a proposal and details to an already discussed arrangement for the Dalai Lama to make a visit to Tibet. When the delegation arrived in the Chinese capital, on orders from Dharamsala, they asked for a meeting with high ranking Tibetan officials to review the proposal prior to the formal presentation to the Chinese.<sup>51</sup> Alarmed by the possibility that the Tibetan cadres would have divided loyalties, the Beijing Government told the delegation that the officials they were to meet were not in the capital; the delegation was sent on a month-long tour to Southern China. In addition to their concern at the Tibetan delegation's request to meet with leading Tibetans in Beijing, it would appear that the Chinese government, with input from different parts of the leadership, was buying time as it was uncertain of its posture toward the delegation. Most importantly, it is likely that it had not yet solidified the direction and tone of its new policy regarding the Tibetan Government-in-Exile since early 1984 after the Second Working Meeting on Tibet. It was not until November 27 that the delegation finally met with Yang Jingren, then head of Nationality Affairs. Before the Tibetans had a chance to put their proposal on the table, Yang voiced the previous line of Chinese: the Dalai Lama was free to come home, live in Beijing, and visit Tibet from time to time.<sup>52</sup> This "offer" was, from the Tibetan point of view, as unrealistic and unworkable as ever. It would seem from Yang's stance that Beijing had swayed back to its old position and was signalling its retreat from negotiations and the previous year's relative thaw in relations with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. After this meeting, the welcome for the fourth and last delegation from Dharamsala, which represented little more than a residue of the previous willingness on both sides, was such that Beijing would not even permit the delegation to enter central Tibet.

### THE SECOND WORKING MEETING

From February 27 to March 6, 1984, Beijing held a Second Tibetan Work Meeting which became yet another turning point in Chinese policy toward Tibet. This meeting

<sup>50</sup> The Chinese proposals have been to offer a welcome to the Dalai Lama should he wish to return home yet then to state that he would live in Beijing, which is an offer that is not an offer. P. T. Taklha, who was present at the Seventeen Point Agreement, and was a member of the delegations to Beijing in 1979, 1982, and 1984, and who made a private trip in 1987, related in personal conversations that the Chinese stated that while they would not talk about Tibetan independence, they would be willing to discuss other things. Yet every detail in the discussions was dismissed by the Chinese as insignificant with the promise that "we will take care of these things."

<sup>51</sup> Personal conversations with Lodi Gyari, one of the three members of the delegations.

<sup>52</sup> "Yang Jinren huijian Dalai sanren daibiao tuan" (Yang Jinren Meets with the Three-member Delegation of the Dalai Lama), Renmin ribao, November 28, 1984, p. 1.

was of paramount importance: three hundred cadres were called from Tibet to Beijing and each of the ten morning sessions were officiated by Hu Yaobang. The sessions indicate the vital importance of the control of Tibet to China. The First Work Meeting in 1980 had taken place in reaction to the crisis, and by 1984, the Beijing government apparently felt that the Tibetans had been placated. There was less direct Chinese intervention in daily Tibetan life, fewer political meetings, an opening of the monasteries, the lifting of the prohibitions on religious practice: the situation was deemed more normal. Yet, from 1980 to 1984, in general, all economic indicators had dropped; the Second Work Meeting was to focus then on one thing: economics. Then-First Party Secretary of the TAR, Yin Fatang, on his return to Tibet from the meeting, commented at the airport, "We must do everything possible to promote the economy, to make Xizang [Tibet] rich as soon as possible.. The conditions are now ready."<sup>53</sup> On the invisible powderkeg of Tibetan alienation, a major undertaking of forty-three projects were planned. Many of the projects were to promote tourism and, to construct the projects, a massive influx of Chinese workers was set in motion. In only three months in 1985 alone, more than 60,000 official Chinese workers entered Tibet.<sup>54</sup> After the projects were completed, a large percentage of these workers remained in Tibet to benefit from the higher wages and to work on other projects. In addition to the workers, huge influxes of entrepreneurs were called to Tibet. In contrast to the First Work Meeting, which had restricted the number of Chinese entering Tibet, the Second Work Meeting changed this policy and called for "widely opened doors." To implement this new policy, the Second Work Meeting decided to "make a simplified procedure for applying for a license to open shops, and to relax market controls, load privileges, and other regulations to make it easy for the interior [Chinese] entrepreneurial households to come to Tibet."<sup>55</sup> According to incomplete statistics, from the summer of 1984 to early 1985, at least 10,000 individual entrepreneurs came into Tibet.<sup>56</sup> The Tibetan Autonomous Region continually urged the entrepreneurs to come; the red carpet treatment even included a cordial greeting by Yin Fatang: "You are welcome to run stores and do business in Xizang [Tibet]. You have become rich and the market in Xizang has become invigorated. It benefits everyone."<sup>57</sup> Such a massive influx of immigrants to Tibet could not fail to be a threat to the Tibetan population. In 1984, shortly after Tibet was first opened to entrepreneurs from China, there were 5,746 entrepreneurial households from China established in Tibet; by 1988, the number had increased to 11,884 entrepreneurial

<sup>53</sup> FBIS *China Daily Report*.

<sup>54</sup> Zhongguo renkou, xizang fence, p. 153.

<sup>55</sup> Lin Enxian, "Jin liunian lai xizang xiankuang paodo fenxi" (An Analysis and Report on the Existing Status of Tibet for the Past Six Years), *Xizang yanjiu wenji*, I (1988), p. 165.

<sup>56</sup> Lin, p. 165.

<sup>57</sup> FBIS, *China Daily Report*, February 25, 1985, PRC Regional Affairs, p. Q1.

households from China.<sup>58</sup> Thus, the tourist industry from the start, from which the Tibetans were hoping to gain benefit, was snatched out from under them by the new Chinese immigrants. The Tibetans found it very difficult to compete with the Chinese. The head of most government units that were filling contracts were controlled by the Chinese, and the societal camaraderie between the Chinese cut the Tibetans out of an important loop of opportunity. The Chinese were often more experienced than the Tibetans at the running entrepreneurial enterprises. Most of the goods for sale at this level were imported from China and the supply was more accessible to the Chinese. Many of the Chinese entrepreneurs were affiliated with high Chinese officials, including many of whom were supported by officials in the army.<sup>59</sup> In addition, most of these Chinese entrepreneurs, largely uneducated, often discriminate against the Tibetans in a more visible manner. Confrontation with the Chinese, now visibly competing with the Tibetans in their own streets and even in some of the rural areas, was inevitable. The Tibetans felt an almost immediate economic, culture, and political threat from this immense influx of Chinese immigrants.

It was into this simmering brew that the flood of mostly Western tourists began. The tourists were in the main informed about the Chinese occupation and sympathetic to the Tibetans; often, these tourists would hand out pictures of the Dalai Lama to the Tibetans and would visit the monasteries and show great respect. For the Tibetan people, the humiliations and prejudices of the Chinese were in marked contrast to the political and cultural sympathy that they felt from the tourists. The Tibetans were heartened and encouraged; these Western tourists for them were not simply individuals, but represented what the Tibetans felt surely was support from the entire Western world. In 1987, almost 45,000 tourists came to Tibet and the Tibetans, now no longer experiencing the shame of their heritage but rather feeling anger at the open discrimination and denigration of the Tibetan culture by the Chinese, no longer felt alone.

### THE LEADERS AND THE PEOPLE

After the Third Plenum at which Deng Xiaoping began to replace personnel in the Chinese government and bring his faction into power, he tried particularly to oust those who had gained power during the Culture Revolution, known as the "three categories of people." It was at the height of this campaign to oust these people that Hu Yaobang visited Tibet. In early 1980, the leadership of the Tibetan Autonomous Region fell into two major categories. Most of the Chinese were conservative, military types from the 1950s who persisted in the right ideology of Maoism. "Few of them have learned

<sup>58</sup> Zhuang Yongfu, "Luexi xizang geti gongshan hu de fazhan duice" (A Brief Analysis of the Development and Strategy of Tibet's Entrepreneurial Households), *Xizang yanjiu*, No.3 (1990), p. 8.

<sup>59</sup> Document of Tibetan Autonomous Region, No. 33, 1988, Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference; see Section 1, paragraphs 3 and 15.

Tibetan, nor do they identify with Tibet or Tibetan people."<sup>60</sup> Most of the leaders who were Tibetans from the border areas to be swept into the advancing army. Most of these Tibetan leaders had been rigidly indoctrinated in the Maoist orthodoxy in the military or in the cadre schools; they tended to be leftist and conservative and, having early identified with the power taking over, rarely used their Tibetan language in public and little identified with the Tibetan people. Most of this leadership in the TAR were among the "three categories of people" who were supposed to be ousted from power. However, Hu saw that had the campaign to sweep out the "Three Categories of People" been implemented in Tibet, most of the Tibetans would be ousted and there were no Tibetans immediately trusted by the Chinese to replace them. Hu, therefore, decided that there would be no implementation of the "Three Categories of People" Campaign in Tibet. As a result, the Tibetan leaders were retained, and this leadership, conservative and largely vested with keeping the status quo, had little interest in and received very little respect from the Tibetan population. The more liberal policies then at sway in Beijing were aimed at overturning the previous "wrongdoings"; these liberal policies were carried out with little vigor by the former "wrongdoers" whom necessity had forced to leave in power in Tibet. These leaders, barometrically sensitive to the conservative hardline, switched policies back to the left the moment the political climate in Beijing changed.

Soon after the implementation of the reforms, Beijing conducted a second leadership policy that was put in motion by the United Front. This policy put back the "rehabilitated" former Tibetan government officials, religious leaders, and well known intellectuals into non-Party government positions, particularly in the TAR People's Political Consultative Conference and the TAR People's Congress. This policy of manipulating respected Tibetans in these types of non-Party positions had been skillfully used during the beginning days of Chinese rule in the 1950s and early 1960s. When the tide turned during the Cultural Revolution, however, all of these people had borne the brunt of the purges and campaigns, often serving time in labor camps or "reeducated" at the nightly session. The policy of utilizing these formerly respected and now "rehabilitated" Tibetans was not as successful in the 1980s since many of them had lost their previous enthusiasm for Chinese rule. The attitude of the population to these people had also changed; after years of living among the people, and as the target of the study sessions, the elevation of these rehabilitated leaders now engendered more resentment than respect. Even the influence of the spiritual leaders was now no longer dependent on their lineages or personages, but rather was dependent on the immediate content of their public perspectives. The Panchen Lama was a prime example: when he conducted a campaign to respect Tibetan religion and culture, and urged the use of Tibetan language and the return to Tibetan dress, the Tibetan people followed his lead.<sup>61</sup> As soon as his policy was not to their liking, as in his reiteration of the statement, "Han nationalities cannot be separated from the minority nationalities and the minority nationalities cannot be separated from the Han nationalities," they would abandon his lead without difficulty.

<sup>60</sup> Ronald David Schwartz, "Reform and Repression in Tibet," *Telos*-No. 80, Summer, 1987.

<sup>61</sup> Thousands of people voluntarily flocked to the street to welcome him on his first appearance in Tibet since his release from prison.

Their derisive statements about him in public in the sweet tea shops of each town would not be denounced by even the most religious among them.

The policy by the United Front to put these leaders "in power" was correctly perceived as window-dressing by the general population and these leaders thus received only lip-service; it was clear to the Tibetans that these leaders, with the sometime exception of the Panchen Rinpoche, had no true role in the process of decision-making.<sup>62</sup>

With each successive change in policy, it became more clear that the Tibetan Autonomous Region was autonomous in name only; in a region so economically dependent on Beijing's subsidies and under special military control, policy was fought out and set in Beijing and handed down to the bureaucrats in the TAR. Even as late in the reform as 1987, Jiang Ping, Vice Chairman of the United Front Work Department, noted in regard to Tibet that while small matters no longer had to be reported and reviewed by Beijing so that instruction could be handed back down, still "matters of policy and important plans must be reported" for review and instruction.<sup>63</sup> Because Tibet was a strategic border area, and because of the continuing controversy over Chinese sovereignty, both the military and the foreign ministry played a role in the bureaucratic process of decision-making. The power left the Tibetan Autonomous Region, far from being autonomous, was less that of the average province in China.

From their inception, Hu Yaobang's new reform policies were unpopular with the conservation leadership in Tibet; his ostensible outrage at conditions was a virtual slap in the face to their years of effort at building a "new socialist Tibet." The new policy calling for the withdrawal of the Chinese cadres in particular was met with resistance. One faction after another in Tibet sent petitions to Beijing denouncing Hu Yaobang; when Hu Yaobang became the head of the Party, the leadership eventually abandoned their public efforts to evade the reforms. The withdrawal of the cadres, though, was never fully effected as both sides probably made quiet concessions to the other. By 1984, the decline of leading economic indicators created a condition of increasing factionalism among the leadership of the Tibetan Autonomous Region as each group blamed the other. Yin Fatang, then-First Party Secretary, and the conservatives of the Chinese military faction in Tibet sent a very strongly worded secret petition to Beijing, placing the blame for the lack of progress and the factionalism among the leadership at the feet of the "too strong" influence of the Panchen Lama, the Dalai Lama, and because of sub-factionalism among the Batang Tibetans.<sup>64</sup> The contents of this top secret petition were deliberately leaked by the then head of the confidential Xinhua News Agency branch in Tibet, a Tibetan, to

62 Lhasan wags referred to the "three responsibilities" of these leaders: to raise their hands at meetings to support Party policies, to eat dinner at banquets, and to provide photo opportunities to the press.

63 Jiang Ping, "Lun shenzhong wenjing fongzhen" (A Cautious Policy of Carefully Moving Forward), *Xizang yanjiu*, No. 1 (1988), p. 6.

64 Those Tibetans, long since in the TAR hierarchy, who had come in the 1950s from the farthest eastern border areas of Kham, joining the invading army as it swept westward.

the Panchen Lama and others Tibetans in leadership in Beijing. The confrontation brought the extreme factionalist infighting to the fore. Subsequently, in secret, Beijing expressed disapproval of the petition, claimed not to adhere to Yin Fatang's viewpoints and, in particular, denied that the Dalai Lama had any influence whatsoever among the Tibetan leaders; also, the Tibetan leader of the Xinhua News Agency was ousted from his influential post. Leadership infighting did not abate, the lack of economic progress continued, and Ying Fatang was finally replaced in 1985 by an outsider, Wu Jinghua, a Yi minority from Sichuan province. Reaction from among the Chinese TAR leadership to the posting was not favorable; this, the first time a minority and non-military official was to hold the leading role in the TAR, was an anomaly that gave rise to their distrust, prejudice, and disaffection. Reaction from the Tibetan leadership to Wu's appointment was equally unfavorable; the posting of a minority was deemed by most Tibetan leaders as a direct and humiliating affront to their loyalty and abilities.<sup>65</sup> However, Wu was an open-minded and capable man, who had moved through the ranks in his home area and then risen as a minority leader in the provincial and Central Government levels; he appeared to empathize deeply with the feelings of the Tibetan people against the Chinese cultural domination. On his appointment, he first refused the position and recommended that a Tibetan leader be chosen. When his refusal was not accepted, he took his post in Lhasa wearing on his first public appearance the full Tibetan dress.<sup>66</sup> His appearance at religious ceremonies, ritual donations to the monks, and the renaming of the streets of Lhasa back to their old Tibetan names gained him much respect among the Tibetans. His support of the instatement of the Tibetan language as the official language of the Tibetan Autonomous Region and other Tibetanizing policies brought him both respect and disdain: the conservative Chinese leaders of the TAR were dismayed and many of the Tibetan leaders, whose language and culture had long since lapsed, were caught in the middle. Although Wu initiated many new programs and attempted to gather around him some well-educated younger Tibetans, he was generally isolated from the roots of the leadership and gained little ground with the military and other conservative factions. He remained during his tenure essentially without a powerbase, and his programs, thus difficult to implement through the ranks, had only a limited effect.

"The conservatives [in Beijing] were particularly active from late 1986 onward, when they began stepping up their pressure on the reform group. With the support of Deng, they managed in January of 1987 to oust Hu Yaobang."<sup>67</sup> Wu, having lost his backing from Beijing, was now in an awkward predicament. Three days after Hu was ousted, Lhasa was rife with the rumor that one of the reasons for his downfall was his policy in Tibet. Therefore, with the conservatives on the ascendancy once again and

65 Contemporary personal conversations with Tibetan cadres in Tibet.

66 A Chinese economist, Wang Xiaoqiang, remarked in an article in *Zhishe feenci* on the continuing confrontation between Chinese and Tibetans that Wu's appearance in the Tibetan dress bought him more political ground than had the spending of millions in subsidies the previous year to rehabilitate the roads and sewer system in the Tibetan section of Lhasa.

67 Huan Guocang, "The Roots of the Political Crisis: China after Tiananmen," *World Policy Journal*, VI, No. 4 (1989), p. 613.

ready to make the most of the opportunity, within days of Hu's ouster, at a struggle meeting to announce the Anti-Bourgeois Liberalization Campaign, Wu was left in a lame duck position. The conservatives became extremely active in 1987 and began using terms such as "splittist" to describe those disaffected with the Chinese policies. By the middle of the year the reformers in Beijing had again regained a foothold, and in an effort to restrain these activities by the conservatives in Tibet, Beijing sent word to Tibet that policy had not changed. "These words clearly show that the central authorities' policies will not be changed following a change of some personnel [the ouster of Hu Yaobang], that the central authorities guiding principles and policies on the work of Xizang [Tibet] were not formulated by a certain individual, and that they were formulated on the basis of the decision made by the collective leadership of the central authorities."<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, Wu was forced to take the defensive rather than the initiative, and his plans for the entire year were essentially blocked.

Meanwhile, more and more Chinese immigrants had poured into Tibet: the open doors had turned to open floodgates. With the dramatic increase and daily visibility of the Chinese immigrants, the Tibetans felt continuously threatened and became more and more outraged at the policies. By 1987, conditions had heightened to the point that the confrontation between the Chinese and the Tibetans was now inevitable. As the conservatives ascended to power in both Beijing and the Tibetan Autonomous Region, new policies of compromise to reduce the build-up of tensions were unlikely to be established. Instead, a study campaign was initiated so that "Han nationality and minority nationalities must learn from each other, respect each other, and jointly build a united, civilized, and rich new Xizang [Tibet]."

### THE DILEMMA OF THE REFORMS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

In 1987, the long-repressed and growing anger of the Tibetan people, both from lack of participation in the decision-making process of government and from the overwhelming economic and cultural threat from the massive Chinese immigrations, could no longer be contained. The Tibetans had grown weary of the inability of the much-vaunted reforms to solve the problems in Tibet. The increasingly conservative leadership, insensitive to the growing feelings of the Tibetan population, had created the environment for and hastened the political crisis that was to follow. The Dalai Lama spoke to the Human Rights Subcommittee of the United States Congress in September of 1987. His testimony on human rights abuses in Tibet occasioned an angry denunciation from the Chinese government; at the weekly press conference for the foreign ministry several days after, a spokesman for the Chinese Foreign Minister strongly denounced the Dalai Lama as not being a representative of the Tibetan people, harshly condemned the Congressional hearings as "intervention in China's internal affairs," and proclaimed the Tibetan people happy in Tibet. The media broadcast in Tibet of the denunciation of the

<sup>68</sup> Lhasa Xizang Regional Service, in Mandarin, April 7, 1987, FBIS, *China Daily Report*, May 1, 1987, p. Q5.

Dalai Lama had the effect of setting fire to the dry grasslands of the Tibetan people. The monasteries, as the locus of semi-civil society and the most concentrated site of Tibetan political and cultural interests, responded. In response to the Chinese government's strong denunciation of the Dalai Lama, a small group of monks in the Drepung monastery in Lhasa vowed that the next day they would march through the streets calling for support of the Dalai Lama.<sup>69</sup> They took to the streets and the Chinese government not only beat and severely punished the monks but immediately and harshly denounced the monasteries and the "Dalai clique."<sup>70</sup> The actions of the monks and the brutality of the Chinese authorities on the twenty-seventh of September added more fuel to the fire. Television reports broadcast in Tibet the evening claimed that the monks, who were alleged to number only a few, were operating in isolation without the support of the people. This Claim proved more tinder to the Tibetans; in the immediate hours and days following the broadcasts, many resolved to take to the streets themselves to show their support for the monks who had been beaten by the People's Armed Police and for the Dalai Lama. On October 1, another small group of monks took to the streets to demonstrate; again, they were beaten by the police and were detained at the police station in the center of Lhasa. Thousands of angry Tibetans appeared at the doors of the police station demanding the release of the beaten monks and denouncing the police. The police and the People's Armed Police were faced with an escalating crisis. The demonstrators stormed the police station in a spontaneous effort to release the monks. The police opened fire indiscriminately on the crowd, leaving many dead and wounded in the streets. As with the many previous confrontations, this incident held within it the seeds of ever-greater hostility and hatred of Chinese rule. The Chinese government blamed the incident on the Dalai Lama and the U.S. Congress. Yet, to blame the outside is obviously yet another in a series of convenient fictions utilized by the Chinese authorities in an effort to deny responsibility of the failure of their policies. As the 1989 death of Hu Yaobang became the rallying point of the deep-rooted crisis that had been long in the making in China, so the Dalai Lama's testimony and his subsequent denunciation by the Chinese authorities merely sparked the social, economic, and political crisis that had become inevitable.

Although the Beijing government had not intended to alter the reform policy in Tibet, there was now a different set of circumstances. Official propaganda against the "old Tibetan system" began to appear in the press. Work teams of cadres were sent again to the monasteries to restrict and monitor activities, and at night, people were dragged from their homes and from the streets. These renewed repressions gave way to more protests and demonstrations which, in turn, were met with increasingly organized repression on the part of the authorities. These repressive policies and the killings and massive violence perpetrated by the People's Armed Police drew not only the anger of the Tibetans but also even provoked the outrage of many of the conservative Tibetan

<sup>69</sup> Personal conversation in March 1991 in New York with Lobsang Jinpa, a monk now in exile, who was an early participant in the protests in Lhasa.

<sup>70</sup> This propagandist and derogatory term for supporters of the Dalai Lama was especially resurrected for the occasion; it had not been used for several years.

leaders who had been so long removed from the people. This new policy of repression, put in motion after the first demonstrations in 1987, marked a turning point of China's reforms in Tibet.

The inadequacies of the reforms as a whole in China are amply evidenced by the widespread support for the student demonstrations in Tiananmen Square in 1989. "The Chinese government is weaker today than it has been in the four decades since the communists came to power, and it is likely to become even more enfeebled in the months and years to come."<sup>71</sup> The repressive policies all over China are the most visible manifestations of a weak government's attempts to maintain control. A weak government, being insecure, is unlikely to take any new initiatives or respond to decisive proposals on a negotiated settlement of the Tibetan issue. However, since the health of the Chinese economy has become more and more dependent on the outside, China has become more vulnerable to pressure from the West, particularly the United States. The United States is now in a more advantageous position to influence China. The exiled Tibetans and their supporters are likely to continue their successful methods of campaigning to use this unique moment in history to gain further support from the international community to improve human rights conditions inside of Tibet. There are those who maintain that placing pressure on China from the outside now would cause the Chinese conservatives to become even more repressive. This would seem unlikely since the economic leverage that the West now holds is tangible. This kind of pressure, now visible to the Tibetans,<sup>72</sup> gives the Tibetans more hope of fundamental change.

During the time of this regime in Beijing, however, there is little hope for a fundamental change in attitude toward the Tibet question. Given a scenario where a future China will be moving toward the transition to democracy, Tibetan efforts will be extended to address the next generation of players in Beijing. This younger generation, more educated and open-minded, is watching the events in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union with particular interest; they are increasingly open to reconsidering their views on the issues of Tibet.<sup>73</sup> With the increasing viability of the Tibetan issue in the international arena, prospects for Tibet are more hopeful than they have been at any time since the Chinese invasion and occupation.

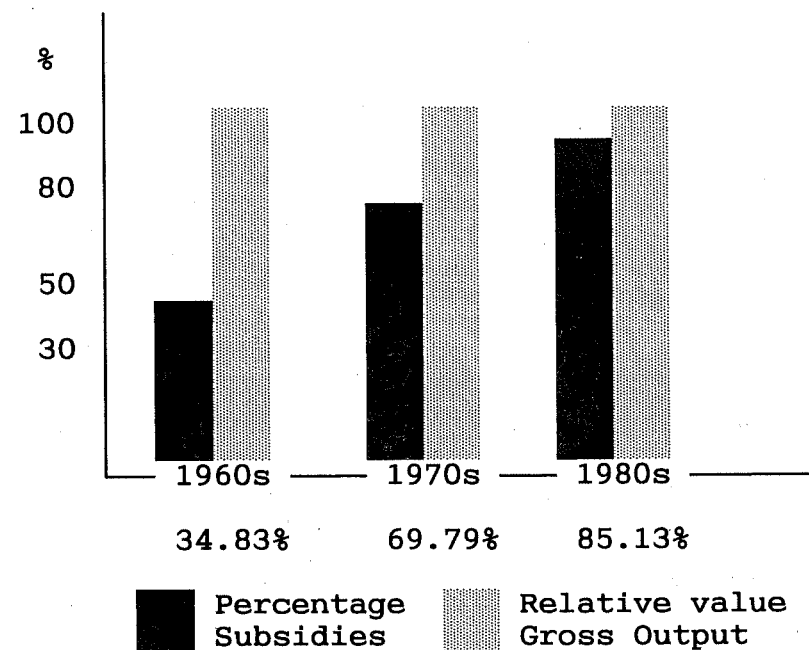
<sup>71</sup> Huan, p. 609.

<sup>72</sup> Through increased communications to Tibet, such as Voice of America's Tibetan and Chinese broadcasts, and other channels that have opened in recent years.

<sup>73</sup> Tseten Wangchuk, "Xizang yu zhongguo minyun" (Tibet and the Chinese Democracy Movement), *Xizang luntan*, No.4 (1990), p. 3.

Table 1.

**PROPORTION OF SUBSIDIES TO GROSS OUTPUT  
(COMBINED AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL)**



Source: Zhen Ran, "Xizang jingji de jiannan zhuanbian" (A Difficult Transition for the Tibetan Economy), *Zhongguo xizang* (Fall 1989), p. 26.

Note: The agricultural sector, which has received a much smaller portion of the subsidies, accounts for up to eighty percent of the total output.

Table 2.

**COMPARISON OF DIRECT ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS IN TIBET TO TOTAL SUBSIDIES FROM BEIJING**

| YEAR | ADMINISTRATION COST |                   | BEIJING'S SUBSIDIES |                   |
|------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
|      | TOTAL RMB (/10,000) | ANNUAL % INCREASE | TOTAL RMB (/10,000) | ANNUAL % INCREASE |
| 1970 | 2494.4              | N/A               | 18344.1             | N/A               |
| 1975 | 3873.1              | 9.2               | 27291.1             | 8.3               |
| 1980 | 7598.8              | 14.4              | 60104.0             | 17.1              |
| 1984 | 13749.5             | 16.0              | 77704.2             | 5.3               |

Source: Xizang renkou 1989.

Table 3.

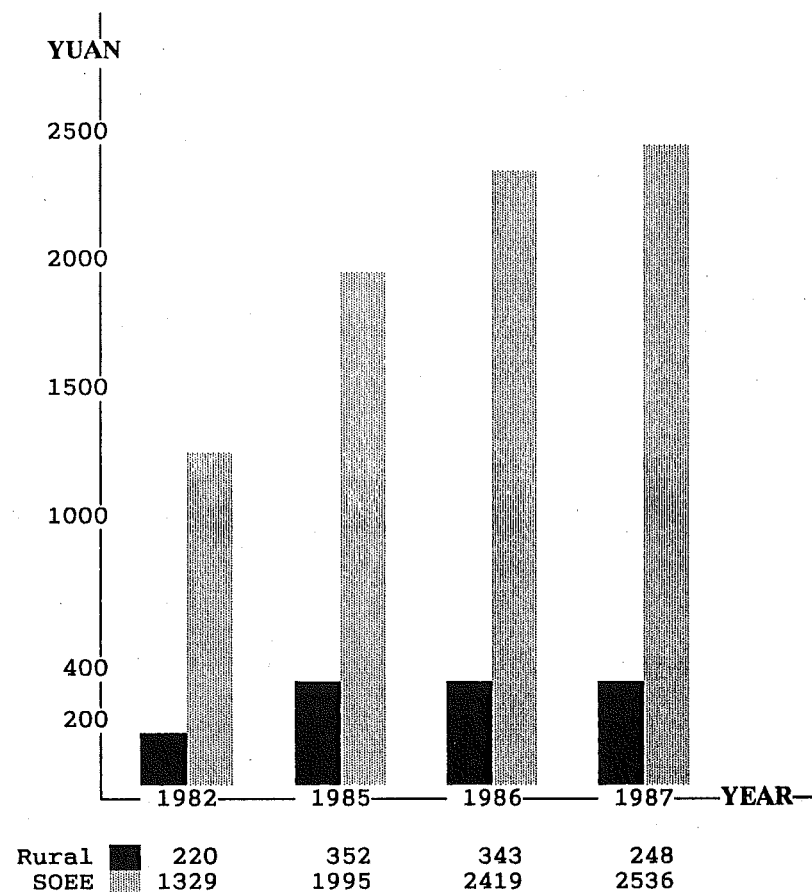
**COMPARISON OF PERCENTAGES OF PRODUCTIVE TO NONPRODUCTIVE CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION INVESTMENT IN TIBET AND CHINA**

| YEAR | % PRODUCTIVE |       | % NONPRODUCTIVE |       |
|------|--------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
|      | CHINA        | TIBET | CHINA           | TIBET |
| 1982 | 54.5         | 54.5  | 45.5            | 45.5  |
| 1983 | 58.3         | 49.6  | 41.7            | 50.4  |
| 1984 | 59.7         | 31.5  | 40.3            | 68.5  |

Source: Xizang shehui jingji tongji nianjian 1989 and Zhongguo renkou, xizang fence.

Table 4.

**AVERAGE INCOME RATIO BETWEEN THE RURAL REARS AND THE STATE-OWNED-ENTERPRISE EMPLOYEE (SOEE)**



Note: Rural areas comprise ninety percent of the Tibetan population; the workers are all Tibetan. More than ninety-five percent of the official Chinese immigrants work in the state-owned enterprises.

Source: Xizang shehui jingji tongji nianjian 1989 and Zhongguo renkou, xizang fence.

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*Andrew Nathan*, Foreword

*Ying-shih Yu*, Foreword

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