

Jan Vinař

Tibet – a Country Where People Have Leapt a Thousand Years Forward

Luboš Bělka & Kamila Hladíková (eds.)



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vanished horizons





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Translation: Lenka Bělková / Kamila Hladíková / Martin Špírk

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This book is dedicated to Martin Slobodník
who stood at the beginning of this project



Foreword

Luboš Bělka / Kamila Hladíková

(transl. Kamila Hladíková)

A few years ago, one of our unforgettable friends and long-time collaborators found a completely unknown text entitled *Tibet – země, kde lidé dohánějí celé tisíciletí jediným skokem* (Tibet – A Country Where People Have Leapt a Thousand Years Forward)¹ and we immediately realised that it was an exceptionally precious historical source. The friend was Martin Slobodník, a Slovak professor of Sinology and outstanding Tibetologist, long-time head of the Chinese Studies department and newly appointed dean of the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University in Bratislava, who passed away prematurely shortly after his forty-ninth birthday in April 2019. He presented the text at the 12th Czech-Slovak Sinological Conference in Prague in November 2018. In his abstract he wrote:

This unknown text provides historical evidence about Chinese policy in Tibet after the rapid shift towards ‘democratic reforms’. This paper analyses the text from a comparative perspective, because Anna Louise Strong’s well-known book *When Serfs Stood Up in Tibet* (1959) was written based on the same propagandist expedition to Tibet, organised by the Beijing government.

The Czech journalist Jan Vinař completed the text in 1960, but it was not published during his lifetime. Three months after his death in September 1983 in their Zurich exile, his wife Věra Vinařová published the report without any editing, explanation, or comments in the form of 15 numbered samizdat copies. They

were intended to commemorate the memory of the late Jan Vinař for family and friends, as we were told. Martin Slobodník received one of the copies 35 years later from the author’s grandson, Tomáš Vinař who was at the time associate professor and vice-dean of the Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics of Comenius University in Bratislava. Therefore, our first words of gratitude are directed to this closest living relative of Jan Vinař, because without his initiative, this book would not exist.

Unfortunately, Martin Slobodník was prevented, by his untimely death, from carrying out his plan to publish the original text in a critical commented edition accompanied by relevant academic studies. Due to the nature of the text, it was apparent that cooperation with a Sinologist-Tibetologist was *conditio sine qua non*. After some time, this important and irreplaceable role was taken up by a Sinologist focusing on contemporary Tibet, Kamila Hladíková, who joined Luboš Bělka as a co-editor of this book.

A critical edition of a historical source is a specific genre, different from other academic works. Both editors did their best to present the original text with annotations and in its comprehensive context. It is important to note that we always made a clear distinction between the original text of Jan Vinař and our edits and comments, including the footnotes. Vinař’s original Czech language text was written in 1960 and is thus over 60 years old. The Czech language has understandably undergone some changes since then and we had to adjust the original for the Czech edition (2022), in

accordance with some of these changes. We kept, however, numerous specific words used by Vinař, because we considered them expressions of his individual authorial style. These could not be reflected in the English translation, which makes the text more up to date regarding vocabulary and style than the Czech original. Vinař's text also included footnotes, which we kept and marked in order to differentiate them from the editor's notes and comments.

Note on the transcription of Tibetan and Chinese

This publication includes a number of terms as well as personal and place names in two mutually very different languages: Tibetan and Chinese. These two languages use two different writing systems: Chinese, unlike Tibetan, does not use an alphabet. Chinese characters, which mostly serve as self-standing morphemes, are also syllables that can be used for phonetic transcription regardless of the original meaning of the morphemes. This can be confusing when terms and names from foreign languages are written in Chinese, making them at times difficult to identify. Since Jan Vinař's access to Tibetans was through the Chinese organisers of the expedition, the information he received was based on the Chinese language and then translated into several European languages (Jan Vinař was able to communicate in all of those used by the interpreters on the expedition from Russian to French and German to English). In many cases, we were unable to reconstruct the original Tibetan names from his hybrid forms and these were consequently maintained with only slight phonetic adjustments for the English translation. When we were able to identify them, we used the English transcription based on the THL Simplified Phonetic Transcription of Standard Tibetan by David Germano and Nicolas Tournadre, as it is the easiest way to record standard Tibetan pronunciation for non-Tibetan speakers. There are only two exceptions, when we keep the more common form of a frequently used name: Tashi (instead of THL's Trashi) and Dolma (instead of Drölma). As a rule, we kept the orig-

inal form of the transcription in citations and in the bibliography, which is often different from the THL. With the first occurrence of each term, we also added the Wylie transliteration and Tibetan script wherever possible. The correct Chinese form in pinyin, with simplified characters, is provided on certain occasions as a source of Vinař's information.

Eg. trülku (*sprul sku* ལྷུན་གྲུབ་; *huofo* 活佛)
Drepung (*'bras spungs* འབྲས་ལྷན་དགའ་; *Zhebang si* 哲蚌寺)

Note on the illustrations

It is important to explain the origin of the images used in this book to clarify their lower definition. Several sources were used to extract the illustrations to the text as the original photographs from Tibet made by Jan Vinař have, unfortunately, not been discovered. The author's biography is accompanied by photographs and scanned documents primarily from the National Archives of the Czech Republic. Several photographs from Jan Vinař's travels during his stay in China in the late 1950s and from his life in Swiss exile after 1968 were provided by Adéla Stouililová, whose mother and namely grandmother were close family friends of Jan Vinař and his wife Věra. We know that on his trip to Tibet, Jan Vinař not only took pictures, but – as a radio reporter – also made audio recordings with a bulky tape-recorder. Neither his photographs nor audio tapes have, however, been located as yet. He himself did not write about his journalist work in his Tibet travelogue, but his older colleague, the American journalist and writer Anna Louise Strong in her book describes a scene at the Beijing airport before the expedition's departure to Xining. Although Jan Vinař does mention her name with admiration right at the beginning of his text, she did not record the name of the incriminated Czech journalist:

Being officially six whole kilos underweight, we felt gloatingly virtuous over the Czech with the two big cameras and the tape-recorder, who was really in

desperate circumstances. If anyone is worried about the Czech news services, I can report that a special dispensation was finally granted to him.²

It is possible that in this case it was not Jan Vinař, but Zbyněk Málek, the second Czechoslovak participant in the journalist expedition in 1959. He published several articles in *Rudé právo*,³ some of them with photographs indicating his authorship.⁴ Málek was a correspondent, however, and we can thus assume that he was not the one who used the tape recorder. The size of the equipment is evident from a photograph published by Eva Siao – Sandberg; the tape recorder was the size of a medium-large suitcase.⁵

Although no photographs from Tibet taken by Jan Vinař have been discovered, it was possible to use other unpublished material from this 1959 expedition. There is an unidentified 16 mm/21 min. film material, located in a private collection in Prague, where it has been in all probability since 1959. *Šoty z Tibetu 1959* (Shots from Tibet 1959), as we call it, is a unique visual material recorded during the second international journalist expedition to Tibet in August and September 1959. This material was not even used in the Chinese 1959 propagandist black and white documentary *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet* (*Pingxi Xizang panluan* 平息西藏叛乱),⁶ as *Shots* was filmed between August 12 (when the expedition departed from Xining) and September 9 (the departure from Lhasa), while the said documentary premiered on May 10 in Beijing. This material is thus unique as it was not used in any known film depicting the 1959 events. Almost all the frames could be located and identified, although the film fragment has no sound and does not provide any explanatory information. It is namely thanks to Jan Vinař's travelogue that we can decode *Shots*.

Additional important published sources, concerning the second journalist expedition to Tibet, include books by the Soviet citizens, Mikhail Domogatskikh⁷ and Vsevolod Ovchinnikov,⁸ the American writer Anna Louise Strong,⁹ and journalists from the German Democratic Republic, Eva Siao Sandberg and Harald Haus-er.¹⁰ About one third of the members of the expedition

were Chinese functionaries from various external propaganda organs, as is apparent from Vinař's description on p. three of his samizdat copy:

There were nearly thirty of us who arrived in Tibet in four Ilyushins of the Air Force of the People's Republic of China on 12 August 1959. [...] There were eighteen correspondents from ten countries; an American writer, Anna Louise Strong, as well as Comrade Dan Li, the General Secretary of *Renmin Ribao's* editorial board, which organised the trip, six comrades from the Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who comprised the expedition staff, and a doctor.

It is not known who filmed *Shots*, but in all probability it was a Chinese cameraman. There were eighteen foreigners, most of them from the Central and Eastern European countries of the so-called Eastern Bloc, such as Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Eastern Germany, and the Soviet Union, but there were also individuals from the USA, Canada, the UK and France. All the foreign journalists, who the expedition was organised for, had their own cameras and were shooting their own materials, but the fate of this material is unknown. It is not clear whether any film documentary emerged out of this expedition. Apart from film and photographic material, some journalists made audio recordings, however, *Shots* does not have a soundtrack. It is not all that probable that some of the foreign journalists would have provided their film material to Beijing and Beijing would have passed it on to the Czechs without any editing. We cannot therefore be sure about the origin and purpose of *Shots from Tibet 1959*.

The question therefore arises as to why and how this material was brought to Prague? A plausible hypothesis is that the Chinese side might have sent it together with the Chinese version of *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet* for the Czechoslovak party to use for production of their own propagandist materials about Tibet. It is not clear if it was supposed to be with the help of either Jan Vinař or Zbyněk Málek, but only those two actually knew what was in the shots. Regardless of what

was actually planned, it never finally happened and the Czechoslovak-produced propagandist documentary *Zrada v Tibetu* (Betrayal in Tibet) did not include any footage from *Shots*. But why? We can only speculate, but with some certainty. At the time when both film tapes (with the documentary *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet* and *Shots from Tibet 1959*) arrived from China to Prague, i.e. in the fall or winter of 1959, Jan Vinař was still in Beijing. There is no information regarding Málek's whereabouts, but neither of the two participated in the production of *Betrayal in Tibet*. Karel Beba, who figured in the production of the 11 min. black and white cut and who himself visited Tibet twice in 1955 and 1956, did not use *Shots*, because he could not be certain as to what it depicted. He could have recognised, for example, the tenth Panchen Lama, but from the propagandist point of view it was much more convenient to use the footage of his arrival to Lhasa and visit to Jokhang Temple on 7 April 1959¹¹ and from the meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region the following day, which was the first meeting after the suppression of the uprising (the next one was on 28 June 1959).¹² All these scenes were included in the Chinese film *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet* and also appeared in the Czech cut of *Betrayal in Tibet*.

Despite its propagandist nature, *Shots from Tibet 1959* is a valuable piece of historical evidence as it documents specific historical circumstances. Although many of the depicted scenes were staged (as were the scenes in *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*), it was not mere “performance for foreign correspondents”, because it had enormous local implications. These events as such were authentic and were not only staged for the foreign audience. The primary target audience was the Tibetans themselves and the role of foreign journalists was nothing more than to report about them for the

international community. Some of the most valuable scenes in the film are the footage from the Drepung Monastery, both from the satirical theatre performance prepared by monks for their peers under the guidance of Chinese cadres, and the other ‘theatre’ which the expedition members could watch twice, for the first time in the monastery and later in the town below it. It was the so-called struggle session, in Tibetan known as *tamdzing*. In Drepung, it was held against three senior lamas under the guidance of low-rank monk representatives supported from behind by the Chinese army and police. Another one targeted a member of the Tibetan aristocracy Lhalu. The footage shows many details of these struggle sessions to which Jan Vinař provides a written commentary.

This publication thus includes images from March 1959 and subsequent months, extracted from the Chinese version of *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet* and *Shots from Tibet 1959* discovered in the Prague private archives.

This book is first and foremost dedicated to the memory of Martin Slobodník who originally came up with this project and to Jan Vinař's grandson, Tomáš Vinař whose idea it was to give the text to Slovakia's only expert on Tibet. They were not alone, however, in terms of contributing to this publication and the editors would like to extend their sincere gratitude to many colleagues and acquaintances of Jan Vinař (listed alphabetically and without academic titles):

Sylva Amos, Robert Barnett, Daniel Berounský, Lenka Bělková, Tom Grunfeld, Martin Hanker, Jiří Holba, Jakub Hrubý, Aleš Chalupa, Pavel Křepela, Radek Kundt, Martin Lavička, Ondřej Kučera, Olga Lomová, Nicholas Orsillo, Tomáš Pavlíček, Jaroslava Picková, Françoise Robin, Martin Špírk, Tsering Woesser, David Sís, Petr Sís, Adéla Stoužilová, Jan Vaniš.

Notes:

- 1) A critical edition of this source with accompanying texts has already been published in Czech. This book is a revised English version, for the Czech text, see Luboš Bělka, Kamila Hladíková, ed., *Jan Vinař: Tibet – Tibet. kde lidé dohánějí celé tisíciletí jediným skokem* [Tibet – A Country Where People Have Leapt a Thousand Years Forward] (Olomouc: Vydavatelství Univerzity Palackého, 2022).
- 2) Anna Louise Strong, *When Serfs Stood Up in Tibet* (Peking: New World Press 1960), 8.
- 3) *Rudé právo* (*Red Justice* or *Red Right*), founded in 1920, was the primary press organ of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the leading newspaper in socialist Czechoslovakia after 1948.
- 4) For example, Zbyněk Málek, “Setkání ve Lhase. Z cesty našeho zpravodaje do Tibetu 1” [An Encounter in Lhasa. From Our Reporter’s Rip to Tibet 1], *Rudé právo* (November 15, 1959): 3.
- 5) See Eva Siao – Harald Hauser, *Sterne über Tibet* (Leipzig: VEB F. A. Brockhaus, 1961), fig. 80.
- 6) The propagandist documentary was produced by the Propaganda Department of the Communist Party of China shortly after the uprising in 1959 and was released in Chinese, Tibetan, English, and Russian in the late summer of 1959. The English version was previously published by the Tibetan writer, historian and activist Jamyang Norbu on his web page M10 Memorial; see “Putting Down the Rebellion”, *M10 Memorial*, accessed March 13, 2024, <https://m10memorial.org/videos/putting-down-the-rebellion-in-tibet/>.
- 7) Mikhail Domogatskikh, *Utro Tibeta* [Sunrise in Tibet] (Moskva: Molodaja gvardija, 1962).
- 8) Vsevolod Vladimirovich Ovchinnikov, *Puteshestviye v Tibet* [Trip to Tibet] (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoye izdatelstvo detskoy literatury, 1957); Vsevolod Vladimirovich Ovchinnikov, *Vozneseniye v Shambalu. Sto dney v Tibete piatidesiatykh i devianostykh* [Flight to Shambhala. A Hundred Days in Tibet in the 1950s and 1990s] (Moskva, 1997).
- 9) Anna Louise Strong, *Tibetan Interviews* (Peking: New World Press, 1959); Strong, *When Serfs Stood Up in Tibet* (Peking: New World Press, 1960; or San Francisco: Red Sun Publishers, 1976).
- 10) Siao – Hauser, *Sterne über Tibet*.
- 11) Strong, *Tibetan Interviews*, 158.
- 12) *Ibid*, 190.



Tibet

a Country Where People Have
Leapt a Thousand Years Forward

Jan Vinař

(transl. Lenka Bělková)

Chapter 1

The story began in Brno. I wouldn't have believed the journey from Beijing to Lhasa led via Brno, but by odd coincidence it did.

After some difficulties, I found a hotel room. When I checked in, the receptionist looked at me and said, "Mr. Vinař? I have a message for you."

I shot him an incredulous glance. Ten minutes before, I didn't know myself I would end up in Morava Hotel; I didn't even know if I would find a room at all. I had no idea the comrades from Radio Brno had taken the pain and telephoned every hotel to find me. Nevertheless, I got the message and that was the end of my holiday before it even started. I went to Beethoven Street, the location of Czechoslovak Radio Brno, to get in touch with the Prague office and learned that a telegram had arrived in Prague from Beijing half an hour after my departure from Prague: "I recommend returning immediately. Xie Guangyu." I knew right away what this was about. Barely two months before, during a break at the National People's Congress, I was sitting with Comrade Xu Huang, the deputy head of the Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We were drinking tea, and I casually mentioned I was going on holiday after I return from the congress. Comrade Xu was silent for a while and then all of a sudden asked, "Have you heard that the editorial board of *Renmin Ribao*¹ is considering organizing a trip to Tibet for foreign correspondents?" He knew just as well as I that there was no way I could have heard about it; at the time, it was not clear whether the trip could be made, and therefore no one told us. He only subtly warned me so that I would have the possibility to postpone my holiday.

That's what I did, of course. A trip to Tibet! The dream of every journalist since long time ago, and especially now in 1959, shortly after the Tibetan aristocracy's rebellion was suppressed. We knew that big changes were in store for Tibet. The old medieval system was crumbling, and reforms that would liberate the ninety-six percent of Tibetan people living in

serfdom were introduced. Such an opportunity occurs once in a journalist's lifetime. To heck with my holiday! So, I waited for instructions. Two weeks, three weeks passed; from time to time, I asked whether the comrades knew any details. In the end they said the trip would be possible, but later. So, I left China but instructed my translator, Comrade Xie Guangyu, to send me a telegram immediately in case the issue was finally decided.

I spent a month attending meetings at the radio and taking exams at the university,² and then left for Brno. The telegram arrived on the very first day of my holiday! The wheels had started to turn. The airline ticket was purchased before I got to Prague. I left for China, but the flight took three days due to bad weather. Would they leave without me?

They didn't, and it took some time before we all set out on the journey. There were the inevitable preliminary consultations and medical examinations. I was a bit afraid because I knew that they were not inclined to let people with high-blood pressure into Tibet, but it was fine. Finally, the much-awaited day came, and the special aircraft carrying our expedition took off from Beijing airport. Three more days of waiting in Xining, the capital of the Qinghai province, till the gale storming over the mountains subsided – and we landed in Tibet.

Before I start my story about Tibet, I would like to tell you something that doesn't quite fit into it. It doesn't belong here because it is a plea made by a man in shabby dungarees, with whom we sat around the table the first day we arrived in Tibet and then again shortly before our departure from Tibet. If you met him on a busy Chinese street, you wouldn't notice him; nevertheless, he is worth listening to. His name is Zhang Jingwu,³ and his full title is "Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party Tibet Work Committee, Representative of the Central Government in Tibet, Major General and the Commander of People's Liberation Army Tibet Military Headquarters".



Fig. 1 / On board the plane during the flight to Tibet — seats on the right side.

View of the cabin of the plane during the flight to Tibet. All passengers were wearing oxygen masks. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 2 / On board a plane during the flight to Tibet — seats on the left side.

One of the journalists (probably Alan Winnington) on board of plane with an oxygen mask during the flight to Tibet. Jan Vinař wrote about the flight: "It was probably my fault, as I took off the oxygen mask on the plane to have a smoke. Now, the oxygen tube was in my mouth, together with my heart. Never mind the nausea, you can survive that. However, when I had to walk twenty meters down the yard to the toilet, my legs felt like lead, my head was spinning, the road seemed endless, and I asked myself, 'Will I be able to work here at all?'" Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 3 / View from the cabin of the plane during the flight to Tibet.

The mountain tops along the journey were covered with eternal snow. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.

He was speaking with us for a long time; he openly answered all our questions, and in the end he said, “Please write about the things I told you. They are no secret, but I don’t want you to write about them because of me. Go and see for yourselves. If something is not clear, ask me and I will explain. Write mainly about things you saw with your own eyes. Otherwise, your long and difficult journey would make no sense. I often travel to Beijing, and I could have told you the same things there.”

I tried to accommodate the wishes of Comrade Zhang. Before I begin to tell you about what I saw, I must thank him and the other comrades who enabled us to travel to Tibet and who, despite difficulties, tried to provide us with the best working conditions as well as such comfort and such care that probably had not been enjoyed by anybody before us. It is my sincere wish that this book faithfully reflects what they enabled us to witness: a country where people have leapt a thousand years forward.

Chapter 2

There were nearly thirty of us who arrived in Tibet in four Ilyushins of the Air Force of the People’s Republic of China on August 12, 1959. We had to fly by so many aircrafts not because we had so much luggage but because the Ilyushin is not accustomed to the altitude of 6,500 meters, where its engines cannot run at full throttle, and therefore, the plane has to be as light as possible. There were eighteen correspondents from ten countries; an American writer, Anna Louise Strong; as well as Comrade Dan Li, the secretary general of *Renmin Ribao*’s editorial board, which organized the trip; six comrades from the Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who comprised the expedition staff; and a doctor. As we sat in the airport lounge, we tried to catch our breath; I must admit, I compared very unfavourably with the others. It was probably my fault, as I took off the oxygen mask on the plane to have a smoke. Now, the oxygen tube was in my mouth, together with my heart. Never mind the nausea; you could survive that. However, when I had to walk twenty meters down the yard to the toilet, my legs felt like lead, my head was spinning, the road seemed endless, and I asked myself, “Will I be able to work here at all?”

As I said, my condition was the worst of us all. Even the seventy-four-year-old Anna Louise Strong sat calmly at the table, sipping tea and conversing with the

comrades who came to welcome us. I admired her for venturing to join the expedition, even though later she had to stay in Lhasa when we went out into the field; she had overestimated her fitness a little.

But there you go. I had to get up, cover the terrible distance to the car that was assigned to me, and our fleet of GAZ-69⁴ vehicles got moving. The tour of Tibet had begun, and the fresh air blowing through the windows helped me quickly recover. I still felt weary and light-headed, but these were normal initial ailments faced by everyone. Thanks to my initial weakness, I became the target of special attention from our doctor; he kept measuring my blood pressure, insisted on my traveling in the most luxurious car right in the front seat beside the driver, and I did not object. Only ten days later, I was running about, filming and photographing on Shokbula⁵ Pass, a full 1,000 meters higher than the airport where we had landed.

So much for my problems and feelings. Let us look out of the window instead. The distance from the airport⁶ to Lhasa is 180 kilometres, and the first part of the journey leads through the plateau sparsely dotted with sedge. We can see the first yaks – the Tibetan Mountain buffalos. Strange animals they are, somewhat lower and longer than our cows, covered with black or black-and-white fur that almost touches the ground. Although they seem heavy-footed and clumsy,

when our fleet approaches, they trot across the road with astonishing agility. They stop after a while and calmly stare at the unusually long row of vehicles. The yak owners standing along the road watch us with similar curiosity, wave, and smile. This is quite common in the People's Republic of China, but here it seems interesting: all the travelogues about Tibet that I had quickly devoured over the past months spoke about the Tibetans' distrust of foreigners. Moreover, it is August 1959, and the people standing near the road and cheerfully waving are the subject of great interest of Western propaganda, which sheds crocodile tears over their fate.

We constantly meet and overtake large trucks; the road is one of two main roads connecting Lhasa with the inland. This is the road from Lhasa to Qinghai, which witnessed our *Tatras*⁷ going to Lhasa in the same direction three years ago. Each truck has a wooden cross attached to the front of the body. It is not an expression of piety: on the cross hangs an inner tube filled with water from which a tube with a tap leads directly to the radiator. When the radiator needs to be refilled and no river or creek is in sight, you turn the tap and the truck can continue its steep climb.

After about two hours of driving, the relatively low chain of hills skirting the horizon on the right, the south, begins to recede, and a wide plain appears as do the white outlines of the *Tanglha*⁸ mountain chain and the cone of *Jomoganga*,⁹ towering more than 7,000 meters above sea level. The road turns off toward the mountain, and we shall take it in a few days to travel to *Zhikatse*. Right after the turn-off we arrive at a river whose waters are still muddy and turbulent after the recent rainy season. The name of the river is *Yangpa*; in several minutes we arrive in *Yangpachen*, the seat of district authorities governing a county with no permanent settlement; all the inhabitants live in tents scattered over the pastures.

The landscape's appearance has changed rapidly. The *Yangpa* has carved a path through the rocks, creating steep cliffs. The road follows it closely. Hairpin turn after hairpin turn, a precipice next to the truck's wheels, the water raging below with such force that if you fell

into it, you would be a dead man. But the drivers are at home; they descend safely, turn after turn. The air is becoming more and more breathable; we are feeling better with each dozen meters lower. The cliff walls open up about half an hour later, and we enter a wide valley. The landscape looks completely different. The low sedge is replaced with fields mostly planted with barley. Small settlements begin to appear along the road, and the traffic becomes denser. All of a sudden, I notice that we are not going downstream anymore; the river, which we had ceased following a while ago, was now getting closer, but its water is flowing in the opposite direction. The explanation is simple: it is not the *Yangpa* anymore. The *Yangpa* had already reached the place where it empties into the *Kyichu*, also called the *Lhasa River*, several kilometres before. The streams flow together at the confluence at an angle of almost 180 degrees, and the current then heads toward the south, into the *Brahmaputra* valley. We are now driving in the valley of the *Lhasa River*, which forms an outcrop of the *Milk Plain*,¹⁰ where *Lhasa* lies.

Among the colourful Tibetan clothes on the road there is a growing number of red robes. The number of *lamas*¹¹ suggests a monastery is nearby. A side valley opens on the right, and at its end, clinging to the slope, is a vast tangle of white and red walls and golden roofs above them. This is the first Tibetan monastery we see, and at the same time, the largest in Tibet – *Drepung*. Below stands a smaller monastery¹² as if copying the giant above. As soon as we pass, the driver points ahead. Two hills appear in the distance, looking very small when compared with the mountains skirting the *Milk Plain* on all sides. On one of them, in the last rays of the evening sun, the same colours we admired a while ago – white, red, and gold – appear. They do not cling to the mountainside like *Drepung*; they crown the top of the hill, and the magnitude of their outlines increases as we approach. We have reached our destination. The castle of *Lhasa*, *Potala*,¹³ and on the right the *Iron Hill*, another outstanding landmark of the *Lhasa* panorama, tower above us. We cross the bridge, make a sharp turn, and arrive at the foot of the hill, where the giant walls of *Potala* reach the road.

We cross a hollow space opening in front of us, enter a gate, and the truck stops. In a few minutes, we are sitting in a parlour drinking tea, which tastes delicious after the long, dusty drive. It tastes even better when we find out that it is plain Chinese tea without the ran-

cid yak butter. We look at Potala through the window and experience the same emotion as probably all the travellers who have come here before us: a sense of wonder that we are really in Lhasa. This is about all we can manage tonight.

Chapter 3

You sleep well in fresh mountain air – and I had not slept in many years as well and as much as I did in Tibet. I woke up fully refreshed, and at breakfast learned that all the others were feeling great, too. The truth is that we had not gotten used to the thin air – even in the Lhasa “lowland”, we were still a thousand meters higher than Stalin Peak,¹⁴ the highest summit in Czechoslovakia. All of us were hungry, particularly in the first period, when we still enjoyed the never-changing cuisine of the Lhasa hotel, which we thought was Chinese and that, as we learned later, our Chinese comrades considered European. The mood was excellent, and although it was still difficult to climb stairs, the beautiful weather called for a slow walk, which everyone was strong enough to take.

Although this entire day was planned as a rest day, group after group of us scattered on the People’s Square.¹⁵ This is a large, unpaved area below Potala with a row of new buildings on one side, among them our hotel, a department store, a cinema, and a theatre. A path leading through the old city gate to Norbulingka¹⁶ Park starts on the left of these buildings. Diagonally opposite stands Potala, and the town itself stretches to the right. We slowly turned at that point, but as soon as we took a few steps, a GAZ-69 caught up with us and its driver urged us to hop on; he would take us. We weren’t much inclined to get into the truck, but there you go: it was the first day of our trip, and we remembered the promises we gave for the sake of our health and safety. Anyway, the ride didn’t last long. The truck turned right from the People’s Square, then went to the left across the bridge where the building of

the Chinese Communist Party Tibet Work Committee was situated. This was one of the targets of the rebels’ attack. We turned to the right beyond the bridge, and after a few hundred meters we saw something unexpected: a traffic policeman. He stood, as in Beijing, on an elevated platform, majestically directing the movement of donkeys, horses, and pedestrians, all of whom, however, rather disregarded his gestures.

The road that we took to the city in fact ended here: it led to the ring road, a sacred inner circle, called Barkor.¹⁷ When we stepped outside, we could see that it did not look very sacred. The gate to Jokhang,¹⁸ around which the whole circle winds, was on the left. Its golden roofs glistened through the gaps between the other buildings, and several pious men, probably pilgrims, held their arms up to the sky and then threw themselves to the ground face down again. They wore rags on their hands, and the polished streaks on the stone slabs of the small place in front of the gate testified to the many thousand times they and their predecessors performed this sacred gymnastic act. This place is probably the only spot in all of Barkor Street where there were no merchants. Shops, large and small, stalls, large and small, display the most diverse and strangest selection of goods you can find anywhere in the world. Yet, we arrived in Lhasa when the fame of the Lhasa market was waning, and the luxury goods that used to be transported here from India were running short because most of the wealthy feudal lords had fled after the uprising, and the average Lhasa citizen could not buy an advanced camera with an exposure meter – he wouldn’t even know what it was for – or an automatic



Fig. 4 / Chinese traffic police standing on Barkor in front of Jokhang Temple.

A policeman in a white uniform is standing on a round platform protected by a roof directly in front of the main entrance to the temple with the Chinese flag on top. The only traffic there were carts, not many cars were on the streets of Lhasa at that time. A photograph from April 1959, taken from the roof of a house south-west of Jokhang Temple, depicted three Chinese electrotechnicians repairing electric wires on a high pole. Behind the police stand is the so-called smallpox column — at that time unfenced. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 5 / Busy marketplace in front of Jokhang Temple.

The photograph captures a scene from the marketplace on Barkor. Three Tibetans — two monks and a man wearing a fur hat — examine traditional Tibetan books, printed on long stripes of handmade paper, *pecha* (*dpe cha* དཔེ་ཆ་), exhibited for sale. Buddhist texts and images were a common commodity sold on Barkor. Both monks hold prayer beads, *trenywa* (*phreng ba* ཕྲེང་བ་), consisting of one hundred and eight beads on a string. The owner of the bookstall looks toward the nearby police stand in front of the main entrance to the temple. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 6 / Shopping on Barkor in the centre of the old Lhasa.

The goods are sold directly next to the entrance of a house on Barkor. The sellers protected themselves from the shining sun with awnings. As Jan Vinař described: "Shops, large and small, stalls, large and small, display the most diverse and strangest selection of goods you can find anywhere in the world. We arrived in Lhasa, however, when the fame of the Lhasa market was waning, and the luxury goods, that used to be transported here from India, were running short because most of the wealthy feudal lords had fled after the uprising. The average Lhasa citizen could not buy an advanced camera with an exposure meter. He would not even know what it was for, or an automatic watch that showed the day, month, and the constellation the Sun is currently in. You can find a wide selection of silk scarves of all colours, printed with sacred signs and entire prayers; cashmere sweaters; various patent medicines; cosmetic products of brands that I remember from my childhood; films whose warranty period has long expired; Indian cigarettes and matches; Tibetan hats of brocade with fur-lined brims; moustache belts; Nescafé; worn boots; various spices, Tibetan and foreign. In short, everyone can find something they like." Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 7 / A furnace for burning incense at the Barkor circumambulation circuit near Jokhang Temple.

The photograph shows one of many large clay furnaces for burning incense on Barkor. Various kinds of smoke offerings were burned inside, namely natural fragrant materials like juniper wood or powder, but also yak butter (which is in fact made from milk provided not by yaks — the Tibetan word (*g.yag* གཡག་) relates only to the male of the species — but by *dri* ('*bri* འབྲི), the female cattle). The burning of these offerings serves for ritual purification of a sacred space near important religious buildings and sites. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 8 / A corner of the Barkor circumambulation circuit near Jokhang Temple.

There is a big clay furnace for burning incense on the right side and a group of Tibetans stands on the left side. The Chinese and Tibetan slogans written on the wall of the stone house behind them are remarkable. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 9 / Giant vessel on Barkor.

There is a big poster on the wall on the left side. There are seller-stands protected by large sunshields in front of the photo. On the corner behind them, is a smaller white furnace for incense burning and a huge metal vessel, probably with water that could be used in case of fire. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.

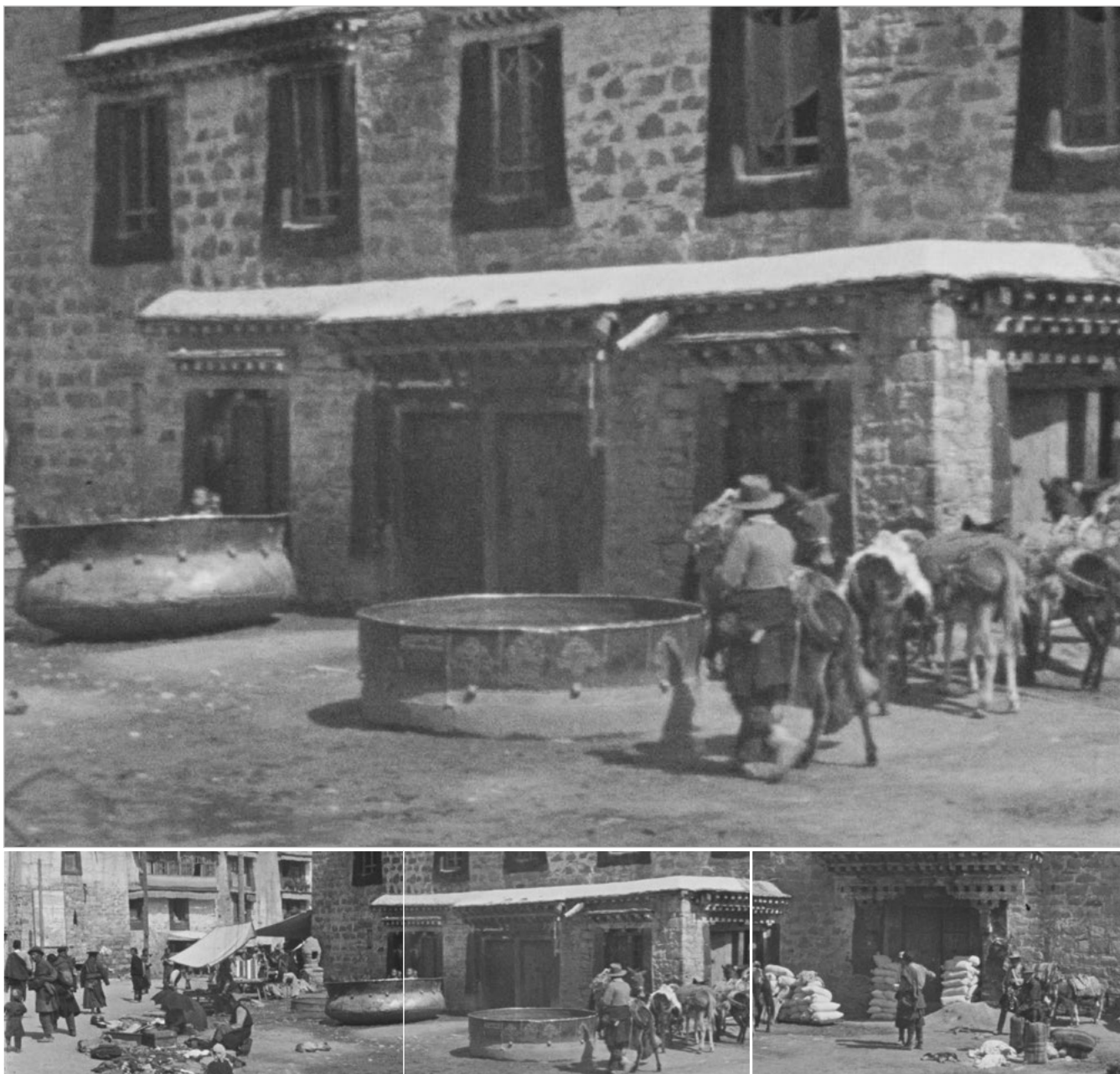


Fig. 10 / Giant vessels on Barkor.

This photo clearly shows two giant metal vessels, each of a different shape. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.

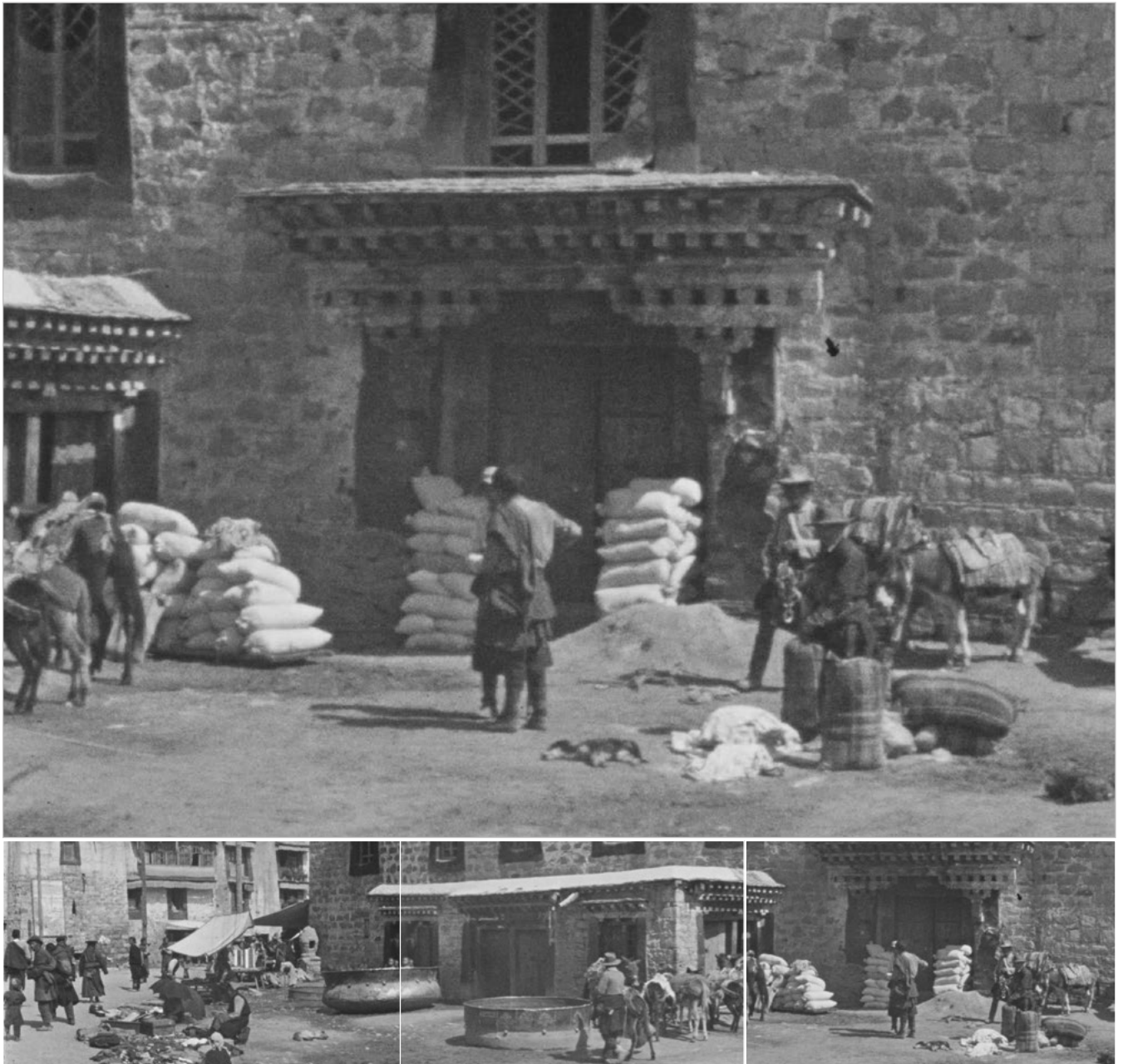


Fig. 11 / Entrance to a house on Barkor with piled sacks.

The sacks are probably filled with *tsampa*, roasted barley serving as the main item of the Tibetan diet. Mills (mostly powered by water, animals, or humans) were located outside the town, thus *tsampa* was brought to Lhasa already ground. Another, although less probable, hypothesis is that the sacks were filled with sand and used to protect important buildings during the uprising in March of that year. As *Shots* was recorded in August and September, these would probably had been removed before the journalists' visit. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 12 / Tibetan woman holding a copy of the Chinese newspaper *People's Daily*.

Scene from Barkor; the Tibetan woman in the centre of the photograph is touching the head of a little child next to her and is holding in her second hand a copy of what is in all probability the major Party newspaper *Renmin ribao* 人民日报. The familiar logo with these Chinese characters on the front page is clearly discernible and, although the first issue of the Tibetan-language newspaper *Tibet Daily* (*bod ljongs nyin re'i gsar 'gyur* བོད་སྐད་སྲིད་རེའི་གསར་འགྱུར་) was published already on 22 April 1956, the colour-printed copy of the Chinese newspaper was in all probability an import from inland China. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 13 / Busy streets of old Lhasa.

A scene of the bustle on the streets surrounding Jokhang Temple. The posters or public announcements placed on the walls on both sides of the house entrance and on its wooden door are remarkable details. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 14 / Posters on a street corner in Lhasa.

Inhabitants of the capital read public announcements in the form of posters pasted on the walls around Barkor. Along with official newspapers like *Tibet Daily* and street loud-speakers, posters were the third most important communication channel for Chinese authorities when they needed to announce new policies and instructions to the Tibetan public. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 15 / A street stall in Lhasa.

The sale of traditional hand-woven decorative strips of cloth, *truk* (*phrug* ཕུག; Chin. *pulu* 氍毹), in Lhasa. The female shopper is holding new Chinese *yuan* banknotes in her left hand. Original Tibetan currency was already no longer valid in the fall of 1959. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 16 / A street stall on Barkor.

A street stall selling incense sticks and other Buddhist paraphernalia. It was a traditional way of selling goods in old Lhasa that was still common in the 1950s. In fact, it remained almost unchanged until the mass protests of March 2008 after which the stalls were purged from Barkor, and only stone shops were allowed to continue running their business. These kinds of stalls were all around Barkor and on the adjacent narrow streets running radially to the main circumambulation road. In the past, most of the sellers were Tibetans, however, in the 1950s there were also businessmen from Nepal and India. Many sellers were either Tibetan Muslims (*kha che* ཁ་ཇེ) or Chinese Muslims (*Hui* 回) who were recognised as one of “the minority nationalities” of the PRC in the 1950s. The Hui currently form the majority of shopkeepers on Barkor along with Han Chinese and Tibetans mainly from the Amdo region. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 17 / A street view in Lhasa.

Quotidian bustle in the centre of old Lhasa on a street with a shallow sewer ditch. Electric poles were already common at that time. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.

watch that showed the day, month, and the constellation the Sun is currently in. You will find a wide selection of silk scarves of all colours, printed with sacred signs and entire prayers; cashmere sweaters; various patent medicines; cosmetic products of brands that I remember from my childhood; films whose warranty period has long expired; Indian cigarettes and matches; Tibetan hats of brocade with fur-lined brims; moustache belts; Nescafé; worn boots; various spices, Tibetan and foreign. In short, everyone will find something they like. The variety of sellers corresponds to the variety of goods. There are mostly Indians, Nepalese, Sikkimese, and other foreigners in the shops. The Nepalese are the most striking sort: they sit on low stools, large enough to accommodate crossed legs; they smoke huge hookahs that emanate a bubbly sound with each draw. When a customer enters the shop, they won't have their peace disturbed; they just nod solemnly and go on smoking. The old Moslem traders are even more dignified, with their white goatees perfectly matching their white caps. The striped khalats they wear are of every colour of the rainbow. These exotica are in sharp contrast with the European suits of Indian shop owners.

The stalls are mostly owned by Tibetans, predominantly women. They sit in groups, killing time because people look more often than buy. They only perk up when a customer appears and touches and tries an article; then an endless transaction starts with bargaining on both sides. We are in a country where almost everything can be made at home, and people do not buy things except probably tea and salt; when they come to the city, they see that the value of products can vary greatly. Despite everything Marx wrote, the value of goods in Tibet is simply determined by the maximum price you can get for them. It always depends on the skilfulness and persistence of both parties to the transaction. We are watching a lama who is shopping, squatting in front of a stall with holy books. Religion is one thing, but business is something entirely different. When we got out of the truck, he was sitting there and bargaining – that was about twenty minutes ago – and when I look back now, he is still

negotiating. Unfortunately, his bald head is being scorched by the August sun, while the vigorous merchant is comfortably hidden under an umbrella. In the end, he just waves it off, takes out a greased rag from under his robe, unwraps it, and pulls out crumpled paper money. I can see it's Chinese money – the first sign of new times in this ancient bustle of the marketplace. Tibetan money had been withdrawn from circulation only a few days before our arrival. It was to the great relief of the local inhabitants; after the collapse of the reactionary uprising, the value of the Tibetan currency, which was only backed by the Dalai Lama's authority, plummeted, and inflation exploded. Everyone was happy to get rid of the worthless pieces of paper. Besides Chinese paper money and small metal coins, they use only "big *yuans*",¹⁹ that is, silver *yuans* minted in various periods, mostly after 1911, during the government of Yuan Shikai.²⁰ The introduction of a new currency also meant the possibility to shop in the Chinese state store, which had opened right on Barkor Street. There is always a long line to get into the store, the only line I ever saw during my stay in Tibet. This expansion of the trading network must have put great demands on transport – each Chinese item travels along the road for eight days. The Chinese state trading company buys some articles in India or from private merchants; I saw not only Indian cigarettes, spirits, and Nescafé, but also notebooks and other trifles in the store.

Barkor Street turns to the left a short way behind the state store; it suddenly strikes me that we are going in a forbidden direction. I read many times that the holy Jokhang must be walked around clockwise; otherwise, it's wrong, but that is probably another thing of the past. People do not notice our transgression, and even the locals walk in both directions as they please. However, this doesn't mean they have forgotten their religion – pilgrims surround the entrance to the temple, and on the corner stands an oven for burning prayers to help them fly to heaven. Smoke is rising from the oven, and a young woman is feeding the fire. The oven, made of stone, looks like a small tower with a belly, and its upper part reminds me of the glass chimney of a kerosene lamp.

The famous prayer wheels we read so much about are scarce. I notice a beggar sitting at the temple gate turning a small wheel, and on the street, we meet an old lama with a prayer wheel. When we turn the next bend of Barkor Street, we finally see a worthy prayer wheel. It stands in a kind of a chapel in the vicinity of another prayer oven, and it is in the form of a huge cylinder about five meters tall and a good three meters in diameter. An older woman is walking around the wheel and is turning it with one of the handles attached to the lower rim. How powerful such a wheel must be! We are approaching

the last bend, and we've come full circle. We've had enough – the sun, the thin air, the new experiences – it all has exhausted us. This time, we are happy to see the truck waiting. The engine revs up, and the policeman frees our way with an elegant wave of his red-and-white pointer. How many opportunities a day does he have to wave off a car with such an elegant gesture? The outline of Potala appears again – a sign leading us home. So, we have seen Lhasa, the dream of many a traveller come true. For us, it's just the beginning; there is work to be done. And interesting work, too, it seems.

Chapter 4

Whenever we go to town, we must travel through an intersection where the majestic figure of the only Lhasa traffic policeman stands. I didn't find any mention of him in older records, but I learned of an interesting sight nearby his stand called "uncle's and nephew's column".²¹ It is one of those numerous old memorials testifying to Tibet's subordination to China. In this case, "uncle" is the Chinese emperor and "nephew" is the Tibetan king. The memorial dates to 400 years before the Dalai Lamas began ruling over Tibet. It is not imposing and reminds me of the columns still standing at many crossroads in my country; only the crucified figure is missing.

A short way beyond the column, at the entrance to Jokhang, the praying pilgrims are gone – they were probably chased off – and a group of monks is waiting to welcome us. All is proceeding precisely according to the tradition. Misha Domogatskikh²² from *Pravda* (The Truth) in Moscow and Allan Winnington from the *Daily Worker*, whom we unanimously elected the chairmen, are ready for the ceremony. They know exactly how to offer and accept the "*khatag*", a ceremonial scarf, and they even stick out their tongues. We are passing through the gate, and for the first (but not the last) time, we can smell the strange odour of burned yak

butter from 2,000 lamps that are burning in front of the statues of the Buddha and saints. The consumption of butter in Jokhang – the most sacred temple of the Lamaist church – is two tons daily!

The tour begins! Jokhang is built around an inner courtyard similarly to most Tibetan houses. The courtyard is surrounded by wooden columns forming a cloister, which is not entirely dark, as some spaces in between the columns are not enclosed. In the cloister stand statues of lesser saints and deities, in front of them bowls with holy water, always in groups of seven, and butter lamps, which are simple large vessels filled with butter and a wick burning on the surface. More important deities have more lamps. Most of the lamps are located inside small cells; the stifling heat inside is unbearable, and because no one has aired out the spaces since the temple was founded and hundreds of little flames are burning incessantly, the rooms are bright but very smelly. We are walking from cell to cell – I have read many descriptions of the temple,²³ and I quite admire their authors. I wouldn't be able to describe the statues; my poor memory remembers only the group representing the temple founders: King Songtsen Gampo and his two wives, the Chinese princess Wencheng and the Nepalese princess Bhrikuti,

both of whom largely contributed to the spread of Buddhism in Tibet. Wencheng also brought a statue of the Buddha called *Jo*,²⁴ “master”, which is Jokhang’s greatest religious treasure and gave the temple its name. As I said, I admire the authors of all the descriptions; my general impression of the tour is a miserable one. Darkness, a stench, thousands of lights, thousands of kilograms of butter burned in vain – that’s the outward appearance. The gloomiest impression could be summarized in two words: Middle Ages. I was glad we climbed to the second story; this was my first climb on Tibetan “stairs”, which rather resemble a ladder, and we continued on our way to the roof. The fresh air tasted like honey.

Jokhang was built like a typical Tibetan house: a courtyard in the centre; a strong gate outside; stairs that are difficult to climb, even when no one stops you; a flat roof that defenders can hold even if attackers have seized the stories below. In short, a fortress. Unlike other houses, the flat roof of the temple holds up superstructures with gilded roofs. The gold is genuine and is layered quite thick. Each roof with the superstructure forms a pavilion standing on a stone plinth with roofs overhanging the walls. The bottom overlapping part is not gilded, and the beams form a picturesque pattern; the beams carry hundreds of small bells and plates. Another example of “mechanized” praying: when the wind moves any of the bells or plates, a prayer engraved on them raises to heaven. The same purpose is served by pieces of fabric hanging everywhere on cords like laundry hung out to dry.

The monks have a surprise for us. On a small table in the middle of the roof is a vessel shining brightly in the sun’s rays. It is the historical golden urn,²⁵ long ago donated to the Tibetan government by a Chinese emperor. When a Dalai Lama or a Panchen Lama died and clerical dignitaries could not agree on a single “incarnation”, the names of all candidates were put into the urn and the successor was chosen by lot. However, the emperor then had to confirm him in office. The last – fourteenth – Dalai Lama was the only selected candidate, and therefore no lots were drawn after the Kuomintang government gave its approval. Below the largest golden

roof used to be a lounge for Jokhang’s abbot. The room is quite spacious, and its walls are lined with high, hard bolsters, which are common, instead of armchairs, in Tibet. We are served tea (normal tea without butter), biscuits, and cigarettes (Indian). The main part of our visit, a discussion with lamas, begins.

“How many monks are there in Jokhang?” is our first question. A young monk named Awangmindyü,²⁶ who is introduced to us as the chairman of the “committee for the suppression of the rebellion”, explains: “The number of monks varies because Jokhang is not a monastery. It is a temple. Jokhang lamas come from three large monasteries: Drepung, Sera, and Ganden. There have always been about 120 monks; now we have 117.” “How many of them took part in the rebellion?” “All of them.”

Gradually, through the back-and-forth of questions and answers, a picture of what was going on before the uprising, during it, and after its events, is created.

Jokhang has always had three dignitaries, one from each large monastery. The highest one, sent from Drepung, was called Kungyepen.²⁷ His post here was lucrative; the believers donated plenty of butter, money, and expensive fabrics to the holiest of temples, and the superior and his two deputies appropriated most of it for themselves.

The ways used to be the same as at all monasteries: high lamas did nothing, lived in luxury, did not obey the monastery rules, while sticking to the principle: “The poor need to be kept in line.” Poor lamas not only had to perform all the maintenance work on the temple, but they were also personal servants of the dignitaries. They could only approach them in a low bow; whenever a superior thought a common monk’s eyesight touched his body from his knees upward, he had the monk mercilessly flogged. Similar punishments were imposed for even the pettiest breach of complex temple ceremony or even when a superior simply came to dislike a monk. About a month before the rebellion, Kungyepen and his henchmen started to attend various meetings, and someone brought weapons to the monastery – not just rifles, but also two field guns, and light and heavy machine guns. Then Kungyepen ordered the

monks to hang seditious leaflets, and shortly afterward he summoned them, distributed civilian clothes and rifles to them, and commanded them to start firearms training. This was a strange command: a Buddhist is not allowed to kill a mere louse, and a lama must not touch a weapon. But who would dare defy the almighty superior? All the more so when Kungyepen told them they were facing a struggle for the salvation of the religion that the Communists wanted to destroy. Even if someone had been reluctant to obey, he would have been forced by the soldiers who moved into the temple the next day. There were more than a hundred of them. They did not respect the sanctity of the place. They stole wherever they could, fouled the most sacred chapels. Their officers headed up the military training of the lamas.

Shortly before the outbreak of the rebellion, the monks had to carry sandbags for the fortification of the temple. It was all futile – the people’s army held all places in the vicinity of the temple, and the temple held out only because no one wanted to fire at the old sacred building.

The soldiers fled before dawn, and they took what they could carry: silver bowls as well as small statues. The monks surrendered. The people’s army entered the temple, arrested Kungyepen and his two deputies, and took away the monks’ weapons as well as those hidden in the temple. Then they left, and the lamas expected to be arrested. They were scared to death because there had been rumours that Communists tortured and murdered prisoners.

However, the soldiers did not return to the temple. Instead, a “working group” arrived composed of three young people, one of whom was a woman. The lamas were puzzled as to what those people wanted to do at the temple.

In fact, they didn’t do anything. They only walked about, talked to the lamas, both individually and in groups. They helped them remove the sandbags; they asked whether the temple had enough food and what would be needed to get the temple back in order. Then they started to talk about the uprising. They explained that the monks had been deceived: it was not a strug-

gle to save the religion, and the rebellion was organized by the rich to protect their sources of income and to ensure everyone continued to serve them. The lamas understood; they could see for themselves how much Kungyepen took from Jokhang, that he had two big houses near the temple and several homesteads. They could see that they could continue to hold their services and care for their holy statues in peace, that believers were visiting temples again and could pray and prostrate outside in front of the gate, unhindered by anyone.

Gradually, the lamas started to speak. The first to raise his voice was Awangmindyü, who recounted how Kungyepen had him beaten up when he stored a supply of butter in the cellar without asking how much Kungyepen wanted for himself. Others spoke as well – how they had been thrashed, how their food rations had been cut while the superiors were gorging themselves. Everyone had something to say if they were inclined to remember.

The working group members suggested that the monks create a “committee for the suppression of the rebellion” out of those who were the most active in the discussions. Several days later, they organized a meeting, and Kungyepen was brought in.

Many lamas still feared him. However, their former almighty master had to stand before them, bowing low for the entire duration of the meeting in the same way they once had to bow. It took a while before the first one mustered the courage to tell him what he thought of him, to reproach him for his injustice, cruelty, and stealing; then the floodgates opened. Although the meeting lasted all day, not everyone got a chance to speak. Another meeting was planned; they want to “fight Kungyepen until he admits all his guilt”. The other two dignitaries will face the same treatment.

What will happen next?

After they finish their fight, which is not needed to suppress the rebellion anymore, but will relieve lamas from fear of their lords, the committee for the suppression of the rebellion will be transformed to become the democratic administration of Jokhang. In fact, the democratic reform in Jokhang is simple.



Fig. 18 / A Dharmachakra wheel with the Chinese flag above the entrance to Jokhang Temple.

Dharmachakra is one of most common symbols in Tibetan Buddhism. It translates as the Wheel of Dharma (*chos kyi 'khor lo* ཚོས་ཀྱི་འཁོར་ལོ་), with Dharma representing the teachings of Buddhism. The circular symbol has eight radial lines representing the Noble Eightfold Path. The wheel was turned by Buddha Shakyamuni during his first sermon in the Deer Park in Sarnath, India. The two deer on both sides of the wheel are symbols of the site of this first sermon. This kind of Dharmachakra is often placed above the main entrance of a temple or monastery. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 19 / The holiest Buddhist statue of the Jowo Rinpoche in Jokhang Temple.

Chinese cameramen filmed the tenth Panchen Lama's visit to Jokhang on 7 April 1959, shortly after the Lhasa uprising. These are the very first shots of the image of the Jowo statue on film. They needed them as proof that the main shrine with the sacred statue was unharmed after the uprising and respected as ever. This was the case only up until 24 August 1966, when the interior of Jokhang Temple was ransacked and severely damaged by Red Guards during the initial stage of the Cultural Revolution. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.

Unlike monasteries, the temple was sustained mainly by donations. It has no estates, no serfs; its only possessions are two houses in town, which were confiscated anyway (the temple's property was confiscated because all its dignitaries took part in the rebellion and persuaded the monks to join in). The people who live in the houses manage the property themselves. Only one part of the whole "three antis and two concessions" movement,²⁸ which forms the first stage of democratic reforms, applies to the temple: it is necessary to find out which lamas wish to return to their homes and cast away the red robe. This is understandable. None of the poor lamas joined the monastery voluntarily; they were too young when they donned the monastic robe. These boys joined the monastery at the ages of five to seven; it was their parents' obligation to send them. Every serf family that had multiple children had to do so.

"How many will return home?"

Awangmindyü only shrugs.

"I don't know; probably fewer than from monasteries. It was a great honour to serve in Jokhang – only the most pious ones were sent here. Many of them came from far away, and they don't even know whether their families are still alive..."

The discussion is over. Our hosts invite us to visit the second story, where we did not stop at all. We are not very enthusiastic. We have seen enough chapels, statues, and butter lamps; we try to explain tactfully to them. This is something different, they say. "You don't have to look at chapels, but you might be interested in the exhibition."

Exhibition?

"Yes, we were asked to provide the second-story hall for an exhibition. It is convenient as Jokhang is visited by a lot of people. The exhibition is about the local administration in Lhasa in the old times."

The title does not sound very tempting, but as soon as we glimpsed the first exhibits, we realized this was a unique exhibition. A row of booths lines the right wall of the hall behind the entrance. The first one looks quite innocent with city seals and stamps displayed on the table. But the second, the third, and the others... One booth houses a big pile of scourges; the next one,

iron-covered staffs, tools for breaking fingers, executioner's swords... Texts of laws translated into Chinese hang on pillars in between the booths. I choose one at random and request a translation.

"If the authorities learn about an aristocrat having raped a woman serf, there are two possible punishments depending on whether the woman cried or not. If she cried, she shall be punished by 100 blows with a heavy stick. If she did not cry, she shall be executed."

It sounds incredible. I asked them to translate again, but it's true. There were two punishments for rape, but both applied to the victim! The assailant was blameless – how could he not be, being an aristocrat, a lord!

A row of cages stands along the farthest wall. They are wide enough for a man to stand inside, that is, with his head sticking out. They were forced to stand there for days; the upper part of the cage is furnished with a mechanism that strangled the victim if he collapsed.

We can see what looks like stone bowls in the left part of the hall. What were they used for? We are told these are not bowls but caps that were put on the convicts' heads. The pressure made the eyes bulge, and then it was easier to burn them. We can see arms, legs, skulls – a macabre collection of what was found on execution grounds, in prisons, in torture chambers, but not only there. Skulls were found in the houses of powerful lords. They are finely wrought, decorated with silver and turquoise; the lords used them as drinking vessels.²⁹

There are sheets of scribbled-on paper over on the wall; these are probably official deeds, each bearing many seals and stamps. I point at one of them and ask for a translation. This time, I take literal notes:

"To the executioner's office. The main prayer hall of Potala requests the following items for sacrificial purposes:

- human intestines
- human blood
- three skulls
- one execution stone
- butcher's boots

Deliver all the requested items by the nineteenth day of the second month. Given in Potala on the seventeenth day of the second month.”³⁰

A row of stamps and several signatures follows. I have no idea about the butcher’s boots – what they could be for – who knows all the twists and turns of a superstitious mind! It occurs to me: In Tibet a butcher used to be a despicable evildoer because he killed. And moreover, he killed animals. The central part of the hall remains to be seen. The space is divided by stretched ropes on which large sheets of paper with primitive paintings and written explanations hang. These are the stories of victims who personally experienced all those torments exhibited. If you excuse me, I will not describe them. I will only mention two cases: a widow who had both hands cut off because her son had left for the inland³¹ to study, and a young man who suffered terrible torture and who was blinded in the end for the sin of helping build the road from Lhasa to Qinghai province. Each of these cases is depicted in a number of drawings, and to illustrate things better, the victims are sitting in front of their pictures. What a horrid scene! A blind strong young man sits on a chair in front of the pictures, telling his story and pointing in the direction of the drawing depicting the narrative.

For a while, I have been noticing the nervousness of our Chinese guides, those who came with us from Beijing. Now they insist that we leave. No foreigner has been in the sacred Jokhang for such a long time, and outside, before the gate, a large crowd has formed in the meantime. We have to go; they might think we came to desecrate the temple. We are going out. At the gate, we say good-bye to Awangmindyü and the others who took care of us, and approach the truck. I get in and watch the people standing along the road, and they watch me. Out of habit I stick my hand out the window and wave – this is done everywhere in China when you are leaving a place. The crowd outside starts to clap heavily. As it turns out, progress in Tibet has been faster than our friends from Beijing expected. Those people did not come to defend the sacred Jokhang; they simply came to see us. Everyone waves, the applause intensifies, and we leave. The traffic policeman makes an elegant gesture to signal “the road is free”. I stick my head out of the window; it is good to breathe fresh air unpolluted by the stink of butter lamps. It is good to see today’s Lhasa instead of the horrible one of yesterday.

Chapter 5

The person who had this room furnished did not have to and apparently did not want to save money. A heavily gilded altar with images of Buddhas stands near one wall. A golden sun is painted on the ceiling above the favourite resting place of the owner; the tables are beautifully engraved and richly inlaid; the cases of the pillows on which we are sitting are made of heavy brocade. A “Made in Czechoslovakia” kerosene lamp hangs from the ceiling and next to it an electric lamp – a luxury that could be afforded by only a few wealthy men in Lhasa.³²

It seems we are looking at an open history textbook. Chapter one: luxurious furnishings. Chapter two: win-

dowpanes shot into pieces, dents where bullets hit the walls and whose white colour sharply contrasts with the red-painted walls. Chapter three: a gilded chest forming the base for the altar, which probably hides gold and silver sacrificial vessels, bears the seal of the Military Control Commission for Lhasa. This is the property confiscated from one of the leaders of the March rebellion. Chapter four: pictures and diagrams hang on the walls, probably visual aids for a basic course of electrical engineering.

The last chapter speaks about the people who are sitting here with us. There are twenty-one of them,

including craftsmen and small traders, even two former beggars who have found jobs on construction sites. Together, they form the neighbourhood committee of the sixth precinct of the second southern district of Lhasa.

The State Council of the People's Republic of China in its official communiqué of March 28, 1959, on the reactionary rebellion in Tibet, among other things, announced the following: "In order to wipe out the rebel bandits thoroughly, the State Council has ordered the units of the Chinese People's Liberation Army to assume military control in various places in Tibet. The tasks of the Military Control Commissions are: to suppress rebellion, to protect the people and the foreign nationals who observe the laws of China, to set up, with the authorization of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region and the PLA's Tibet Military Headquarters, administrative bodies at various levels..."³³

The Military Control Commission for Lhasa was formally established on March 23, 1959.³⁴ Open fighting in town had ceased by then, and further efforts to liquidate the remnants of the uprising were mainly of a political nature. The thing was to mobilize people, explain the real background of the rebellion, persuade the people to cooperate and to fight the individual rebel leaders who had been in hiding. The first act of the Military Control Commission was to dissolve the old municipal administration. This was a mere technicality, as the old administration broke up after its leading officials – mostly senior government officials from among the aristocracy – fled after the rebellion was suppressed. The commission itself took over the city administration.

Don't get me wrong: the Military Control Commission is appointed by the Military Headquarters and works under its authority; however, this does not mean it consists of soldiers. Not a single member of the Lhasa control commission is a soldier; it is composed of representatives of various layers of Tibetan society, even aristocrats who did not participate in the rebellion, plus members of the Chinese Communist Party.³⁵ One of the first deeds of the Military Control Commission was the appointment of control commissions

for individual districts. On the basic level, in precincts, there were no military commissions established. The administration was taken over by neighbourhood committees, the first government authorities elected by the people of Lhasa themselves.

Two hundred and ninety-eight families live in the precinct managed by our neighbourhood committee. Almost half of them, 140 families, are classified as "poor". These are the families of beggars, or better, former beggars; one of the most important concerns of the commission was to find work for them as quickly as possible.³⁶ The second largest group is made up of the families of craftsmen, ninety-three in total. There are fifty families of small traders and also fifteen aristocratic families, of which nine have members who took part in the rebellion.

One-third of the neighbourhood committee's twenty-one members were elected in a public meeting of the precinct; the others were elected by fourteen smaller subdivisions of our precinct as their deputies. They were quite busy right from the start.

The first part of their task is based on the "three antis and two concessions" movement. In the first days, they organized watches to root out rebellion participants who were hiding under false identities, and at the same time, campaigned for the surrender of all firearms. They found a lot of them: some were kept by common people, but the most important was to find weapons hidden in the homes of fugitive rebels. The main task in the fight against serfdom and forced labour was to regulate the relationships between landlords and tenants; it was common in Lhasa that in addition to paying the rent, a tenant had to work a certain number of days in the year for the landlord. This was closely connected with the struggle for rent reduction; rents in Tibetan towns were enormously high and comprised one of the feudal forms of exploitation. Last but not least, the neighbourhood committee also led the fight against usury: it made a list of all sums owed or lent by the inhabitants of the precinct and took and checked notes of hand. If the creditor was one of the rebels, the debts were automatically considered liquidated; for other creditors, the Preparatory Committee

for the Tibet Autonomous Region ordered that debt arisen before January 1, 1955, be extinguished, and lowered the interest on more recent debts. The neighbourhood committee destroyed the notes of hand when debts were liquidated and adjusted the interest rates of sums outstanding. All of this was not as easy as it may sound: the rebellion had been suppressed, the Military Control Commission took over the city administration, the Preparatory Committee proclaimed the “three antis” movement – but that was not enough. As always, history was made by people, and people were afraid. Even those whose lords had fled were afraid: What if they came back? The situation was even worse with aristocrats and rich men who did not directly participate in the rebellion.

Let us take Shedra,³⁷ for instance. An aristocrat, local government official, and owner of two large houses. The neighbourhood committee called upon his tenants – about twenty who lived in his house – to approach him, to talk to him and explain why they would not provide him with free labour anymore and that the rent had to be reduced. But the tenants were scared; after all, he is the lord, and whenever he passes by, you must bow low; if you don’t get out of his way quickly, he will give you a kick or hit you with a stick. How could you go to the lord and speak rudely to him?

Finally, when the committee’s members offered to join in, a deputation was put together – as soon as they started to speak, Shedra erupted in fury. He is a decent citizen, didn’t commit any offense, and no one has the right to deprive him of what belongs to him!

Since things couldn’t be resolved amicably... The committee convened a meeting of the whole district and invited Shedra, too. However, the man failed to appear. So, they went to see him, and this time they weren’t going to be rebuffed that easily. They simply told him: “Shedra, you can choose: either you go to the meeting, or you will be dragged there. No one has the right to refuse when the people ask him.” So, he went. After they arrived at the meeting, they had him stand in front of the chairman’s table, and the chairman said, “This is Shedra, who has been pestering you for so long. Shedra, people had to bow low before you.

Now you will bow to the people!” Believe it or not, Shedra bowed and remained like that for the entire duration of the meeting; he was probably afraid of what he would see in the attendees’ eyes.

I myself later saw the effect of a lord bowing before the people who had previously bowed to him. When a lord bows, the others straighten their backs. The people present began to blame Shedra for treating them harshly when they toiled for him, for applying abusive interest rates if they were late with paying the rent for even one day, for forcing a tenant to repair his apartment and other parts of the house and then expelling him, for violently beating a small child because it was noisy... A lot of wrongdoings. Shedra confessed to some things, he tried to apologize, he said that his tenants were better off than elsewhere, but his efforts were in vain. They disproved everything he said; he had to engage in self-criticism and admit his guilt. After he agreed to abolish the use of unpaid labour and to reduce rent, the meeting came to an end.

Shedra was not the only one. The people had to call another three lords to the “struggle session”.³⁸ Shedra’s colleague Penropa; the superior of the Pema guild; and Kopenyepa,³⁹ a wealthy leather merchant. The last one was especially obstinate, and they had to struggle with him in three meetings. Then the movement of “three antis and two concessions” could be fully established in the district.

However, the committee’s work had not finished. In cooperation with the city and district control commissions, the committee found work for forty-eight skilled craftsmen and workers and ninety-two unskilled labourers. The committee established a school in its district, organized a health service, and conducted a campaign for hygiene in the streets – Lhasa used to be a medieval town where the street was a common lavatory and trash dump. For the sake of better supplying the city, they acquired land and planted vegetables on it. In short, a lot of small everyday work has to be done. But what seems small and every day to you and me has a completely different meaning in Lhasa. Who has ever heard of the children of the poor going to school? Or of people having jobs and even being provided jobs?



Fig. 20 / A struggle session in Lhasa — Lhalu's *tamdzing*.

A Tibetan man with a hat is reading accusations against Lhalu Tsewang Dorje while his words are recorded by one of the foreign journalists. This could be a scene described by Jan Vinař: "During the time we have been in the courtyard people have pushed their way forward in agitation, the rows of those sitting have become denser, and a space has formed at the rear. Four men stagger there, carrying a heavy chest. It is full of deeds, notes of hand, which burdened the serfs like heavy rocks. They toiled and they paid. They paid maybe ten times more than they had borrowed, and the debt continued to rise. One of the men takes a long scroll of paper lying at the top: a list of debtors. He reads name after name, new and new ones — the list seems endless. There may be just a few people in the yard whose names are not on the list. Further names follow, names of people all over Tibet." Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 21 / Preparations for burning the lists of debtors and other deeds.

As part of Lhalu's *tamdzing*, all kinds of official documents, namely debt deeds and tax records, were burnt in public. In the photograph, two foreign journalists can be seen in the upper right corner. The one without the cap is Alan Winnington. Jan Vinař wrote: "Finally, the reading has ended. The men start to take out the deeds, some of which have yellowed with time. Who knows how many generations have paid with sweat and blood? They unfold them, tear them into pieces, and throw them into a heap. After the chest is emptied, a flame spurts up." Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 22 / The pile of deeds is growing.

Ten Tibetans continue to pile up documents and deeds to be burnt in public to end their validity immediately and collectively, so that people can be freed from all kinds of debts toward their feudal lords. All the pictured men have long hair braided into one or more braids, either hanging freely on their back or rolled around their heads. Soon, many progressive Tibetan cadres would wear a unified hairstyle in accordance with Maoist fashion. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 23 / The fire in Lhalulingka is ignited, the deeds are burning.

This photograph, taken from the gallery inside the Lhalu family manor (Lhalulingka), depicts the big finale of the struggle session. Flames on the stone-slabbed courtyard are swallowing papers with only a few documents scattered around the fireplace waiting for the flames to swallow them up as well. Jan Vinař summarized the main purpose of the *tamdzing*: "Lhalu will have a fair trial before the court. The struggle session serves two purposes. First, it should provide a lot of information to the court. Second, it should expose the criminal to the eyes of the people, and at the same time, it should help common people overcome their fear of the former master, who is now standing before them bowed and helpless. What a change for the man who used to command the Tibetan army and was one of the main insurgent leaders, for the man who merely had to beckon and any of those sitting in the courtyard would have been killed or thrown into one of the prison cells that form the first story of one side of the yard. This is a dark dingy hole without windows, water, without anything, just a dark hole where the convict lay on bare ground in his own excrement." Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 24 / Breaking torture instruments during the burning of deeds.

Jan Vinař mentioned a remarkable detail in this phase of Lhalu's *tamdzing*: "In the meantime, some other men have entered the courtyard. They are carrying scourges, heavy rods that look like fly swatters with leather flaps: these are swatters for slapping the serfs. Their master did not want to soil his hands by touching their faces. These tools are also thrown into the flames. The fire is growing, and people carefully sort through the ashes to ensure no piece of paper remains unburned. The meeting continues. Many other speakers present their cases, but we are leaving." Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 25 / The audiences at Lhalu's *tamdzing*.

The gathering was attended by hundreds of Tibetan men and women predominantly from the lowest strata of society. The photograph captured only one part of the stone-slabbed courtyard and a gallery, where a Chinese soldier with an automatic rifle on his chest can be recognised. Chinese soldiers always kept their distance, standing aside from the gathering, and never mixed with the Tibetan crowd. Jan Vinař had an unexpected explanation for their presence: "Several armed guards are standing in front, near Lhalu. They are definitely not here to stop him from fleeing; the only way out leads through the courtyard, and Lhalu has no inclination to run through the angry crowd. The guards are here to protect him." Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 26 / Frontal view of the stage of Lhalu's *tamdzing*.

This photo, just like the previous one, was taken from one of the galleries at Lhalulingka, and depicts the stage where the mass gathering took place. Lhalu stands in a deep bow under a canopy in the front row, next to him stands a bareheaded man in a white shirt and another Tibetan man wearing a hat and a traditional *chupa*. Behind them, five Tibetan men and one woman are sitting — they are speakers who delivered their talks during the meeting. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 27 / One of the speakers at Lhalu's *tamdzing*.

On the stage under the canopy, speakers, one after another, addressed the audiences described by Jan Vinař: "Today's meeting is smaller, attended only by Lhalu's serfs, or better said, his serfs that live in Lhasa and its vicinity: Lhalu's manorial estates are scattered all over the country — there were thirty-five altogether — and he himself probably does not know how many serfs he had. He may not even know how many of them he murdered or had murdered; based on the current information, there were about seventy victims. It is not surprising that the atmosphere in the courtyard is tense." Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 28 / A procession of Tibetan villagers celebrating Mao Zedong.

The exact location of the procession has not been identified, but it is not important, because such events, serving to reaffirm the new order after "putting down the rebellion", were organised in many places around Lhasa. The photograph shows local musicians with clearly imported instruments standing under a banner with a slogan in the Tibetan language. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 29 / Paying respect to Mao Zedong.

Tibetan men and women, wearing traditional costumes, offer *khatags* to a large poster with the image of the “Great Helmsman”. Offering *khatags* is a traditional Tibetan custom reserved not only for sacred Buddhist images and respected religious leaders, but also used to welcome guests or pay respect on official occasions. The villagers use them here to express their more or less genuine love and respect for the Chinese state and the Party Chairman. The hairstyle of the women on the right side might suggest that the procession takes place in the Lhoka region. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.

And most importantly, who has ever heard of the poor getting together and deciding about their affairs?

Who are these people who make decisions now? How have they lived so far? Let's take the committee's chairman, Phurbu, the shoemaker. Apparently, he is a reputable man, a hardworking craftsman. He has invited us to his home. It's not far, he says. Really, he lives in the house where we had the discussion with the committee members; it's a large house with many courtyards, and as we weave our way over the ladders that are propped up here instead of staircases, it seems to me that each room is at a different height. The building has several entrances: we exit onto the street, turn the corner, enter again, and climb another ladder. It's quite cozy here: an open terrace leads us to an apartment, in fact a single room with an area of about six to seven square meters, in which Phurbu, his wife, two children, and a dog live. Live and work. The room is modestly furnished: a chest covered with a soft mat is both the family bed and a work bench, as evidenced by scraps of material still lying there. There is also a table, two small stools, a few suitcases serving as cabinets with three figures of the Buddha standing on top under bell glasses. Pictures of Mao Zedong, the Dalai Lama, and the Panchen Lama are glued to the wall. This is nothing extraordinary – although the Dalai Lama is staying abroad, he still remains the head of the church, and his pictures can be seen in many places. The ceiling is low, at about two meters' height, and light flows here through two tiny windows in the thick wall.

"Nice, isn't it?" says Phurbu. "We are lucky to have such an apartment." We are seated and listen to the life story of the Lhasa craftsman. It is a little complicated, like every interview in Tibet: everything is first translated into Chinese and then into a European language, French in this case.

Phurbu was born in Lhasa – his father was a *tuijung*,⁴⁰ who earned his living in every way possible;⁴¹ Phurbu says he died of poverty when his son was eight. Phurbu's mother remarried; his stepfather was from Zhikatse, and the family moved there. Their lord, Lozang, a fourth-class official, did not object – as long as they regularly paid the capitation tax.

The stepfather was a rather wealthy⁴² *tsaiipa*,⁴³ and the family was pretty well off. Then tragedy struck. A criminal sought by the Lhasa authorities was caught in Zhikatse. Phurbu's stepfather was obliged to provide a horse for transporting the convict free of charge. Each serf had the obligation to render such services,⁴⁴ to take care of fodder, and to accompany traveling officials to take his animals back. The official responsible for the convict's transportation was bone idle and decided that the serf would transport the prisoner by himself. However, the criminal escaped on the way – the liability lay with the serf and not with official who had avoided his duty. Upon arrival in Lhasa, the stepfather was arrested and flogged; an order was sent to Zhikatse, the rest of the family was detained and all their property confiscated. Phurbu and his mother were transported to Lhasa, and the whole family was released several weeks later – as beggars. Nevertheless, both parents were energetic, skillful people and did not give up. They found odd jobs and even managed to arrange an apprenticeship for little Phurbu. It seemed everything would turn out all right. However, Mr. Lozang made himself heard, requesting the capitation tax owed to him since the time the family lost everything. You don't have the money? Never mind – I will take your son to serve me, and you won't have to pay.

Phurbu had no desire to go into Lozang's service. First, he enjoyed his training in the trade he liked, and second, it was no secret in Lhasa that Lozang treated his servants in a much harsher way than was usual. The boy, who was fourteen at the time, fled Lhasa. He got to the northern parts of Tibet, where the land is inhabited by herdsmen and their livestock, and he made a living as a cobbler and later as a shoemaker. Turning eighteen, he felt homesick and missed his mother. He returned to Lhasa in secret, but Lozang somehow learned about it. He sent his servants, who carted Phurbu off to Lozang's house. There he was thrown into a little room to await the master's verdict.

Phurbu knew the situation was bad. According to the law, the lord could sentence him to any punishment, and he could even kill him. Eventually, he managed to escape but was cleverer this time. He did not run

far, only about ten kilometres out of town to Drepung Monastery. He offered to serve the monastery. This was entirely against the law: the lord's right over his serfs was the foundation of the Tibetan legal system, and not even a monastery was entitled to interfere with this relationship. However, the monastery had the power. Why should they reject a serf, gained free of charge? Lozang was an official and had to consider the influence of the mighty Drepung on his career. Since then, Phurbu didn't need to be afraid of his former master, and on the whole, he could be satisfied. The monastery allowed him to pay his capitation tax through labour in the first years until he established himself as a shoemaker. He could easily return to Lhasa and even knew that his request for admission to the guild would be processed quickly, for he enjoyed the protection of the mighty Drepung!

I said Phurbu was a shoemaker, but this is not accurate. Phurbu is a manufacturer of women's footwear – mostly made of fabric. There used to be three shoemaker guilds in Lhasa: one for men's shoes, another for women's shoes, and the third for special shoes worn by lamas. Each guild was headed by a dean – a government-appointed official. His obligations included protecting the guild from unauthorized competition. This was not difficult because the foremen took care of it themselves. Thus, the dean could pay more attention to whether the guild tax had been settled by its members and whether they duly performed statute labour. Of course, a part of the tax had always stuck to his fingers, which was a common custom in feudal Tibet.

Phurbu got married in 1950 to a colleague from the guild. He had to buy her out of the guild for the fee of fifty silver coins, whereupon she was not obliged to perform statute labour or pay the guild tax. This was stipulated in the founding charter of the guild of women's footwear manufacturers, while other guilds had different rules.⁴⁵

So, they lived, worked, and paid. They paid the guild tax; the capitation tax for Phurbu to the monastery; the capitation tax to the Lhasa city authorities, whose serf was his wife; the tax on owning a dog; the tax on the flowers they had in their windows; the tax on

praying and the even larger tax if they missed a religious service; the tax on the braided hair worn by the wife; the tax for a prayer for no rain during the holidays (this was more an insurance policy than a tax: if it rained and you hadn't paid, you would be obliged to pay a hundred times more); the tax on the leather shoes worn by Phurbu. There were thirty-five types of taxes altogether. Statute labour also took their money away because it stole their working time. They had to work for the local government three months out of the year: it was partly municipal and partly guild labour. There was also work for the monastery to be done for two weeks in addition to the capitation tax; the duty to perform statute labour did not ensue from serfdom; the reason was that the monastery was also a spiritual office; a week for the city administration, a week for the landlord – on top of that they were called to extraordinary work. In total, statute labour took up almost half of their working time.

I am puzzled. To clarify things, I ask: "Can you tell me how much you could earn, and how much you paid?"

Phurbu is a tidy man. He has kept accounts for the entire period; he is taking out a thick book, a book of feudal exploitation, you might say. He begins with earnings. He could make seven pairs of shoes at the most in a month; his profit on each pair was half a *ping*,⁴⁶ i.e., twenty-five *liang*⁴⁷ in Tibetan currency. He paid over 45,000 *liang* in taxes and fees over the past nine years. I quickly calculate. There must be an error.

"You are telling me you earned 2,100 *liang* annually – and you paid 5,000. How is it possible?"

Well, it is possible. I forgot about the third column, which plays an important role in the books of each Tibetan serf: he was up to his ears in debt. Before the liquidation of older debts, he owed more than 50,000 *liang* to various lords. Of course, it's much more than he borrowed: the debt increased when he could not pay the usurious interest.

The complex calculations result in one plain fact: it was not possible to go on living like this. It's no wonder half of the district's citizens were beggars. How long would it take before Phurbu was overindebted, have



Fig. 30 / Musicians in front of Mao's image.

Three men are wearing traditional fur hats with flaps. Behind them is the image of Mao Zedong and a banner with a Tibetan slogan. Mao was celebrated not only by offered *khatags*, but also with singing and bowing. The procession was organised in an open landscape and gives a staged impression rather than a feeling of spontaneity. Similar processions were not unusual in the Tibetan tradition, but they are mostly religious, not celebrations of Chinese political and military representatives. The new times clearly brought new kind of processions. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 31 / Procession with images of Mao Zedong and Marshal Zhu De.

Men and women are holding white *khatags* to offer them up to the image of Mao Zedong. This photo shows a different banner than the previous one. Another image of the same size and on the same level shows Marshal Zhu De in military uniform. Both portraits are framed by large *khatags* and adorned with artificial flowers. Zhu De was the supreme commander of the Chinese People's Liberation Army at that time. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 32 / Detail of the procession celebrating Mao Zedong.

Close-up focused on the faces of several participants in the procession. The women in the photo wear traditional headscarves and decorative stripes of cloths *truk* (Chin. *pulu*) decorate their dresses. Steep rocks are discernible on the horizon. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 33 / Closing of the procession.

The shot, taken from the same position as the previous one, shows a Tibetan horseman fixing his stirrups before riding. He is wearing a festive embroidered costume. The closing section of the procession with flags, images and banners celebrating the Chinese state and party leaders is behind him. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.

everything confiscated from him, and be expelled from the guild, and there would be one more poor family in the district?

Fortunately, that did not happen. Phurbu doesn't think about it anymore. He is the chairman of the residents' committee, and he has quite different worries now.

In the evening, after our visit of the neighbourhood committee, we are invited to the theatre. The performance is entitled *The Fate of Jampa*,⁴⁸ a recent play telling the story of a young Tibetan. The auditorium is packed to the bursting point, and the audience responds remarkably lively, suggesting the play depicts a part of their lives that ended not long ago.

There is no scenery, just furniture and a few set pieces that suggest where the story takes place. The amateur actors are excellent – their acting is so natural that I follow the story with excitement although the double translation is restricted only to the main points.

The main character's father and his family are preparing a modest dinner. Jampa comes home with a bundle of pine sticks gathered in the mountains. Suddenly the lord's custodian bursts into the room and requests that the whole family come to labour the next day; in fact, the family have fulfilled their Saturday labour obligation, and the custodian is only trying to bleed them dry and take their last money as a bribe. After he succeeds, he drinks a cup of tea with butter, which was prepared for dinner, and leaves.

Jampa flies into a rage – the custodian acted against the law! But his father hits him: never oppose lords, that is his wise knowledge. However, this knowledge doesn't help him when two Tibetan soldiers barge into the room moments later. They want liquor. There isn't any in the house, so they are offered the last quickly made butter tea and *tsampa*, roasted barley flour, in tea.

“Where's meat?”

“I am terribly sorry, noble sirs and benefactors. I don't have meat.”

“Then kill the cow, quickly!”

The father throws himself upon his knees, begging to be spared: he only has one cow, which he desperate-

ly needs as a draft animal. The soldiers get angry. What audacity: a churl dares to oppose them! They catch the father and drag him to the county office to complain about him to the *dzongpön*,⁴⁹ the county governor.

The *dzongpön* is sitting in his office in a splendid uniform. When the soldiers bring the “rebellious” serf, he gets angry, too. It is no big deal, but he has been suspicious lately. When a serf opens his mouth to speak, he sees the influence of Communists, who have been infiltrating Tibet since 1951. The sentence he gives is 500 lashes. Three bailiffs grab the old man. They tie him hand and foot, knock him down; he lies propped up like a string between two ropes, and the third bailiff seizes a whip. The old man cannot stand it; he dies under the whip. While the family is called to take the corpse away, the secretary proposes to the *dzongpön* how he could make money out of this. As a reward, the *dzongpön* promises him the only cow of the killed wretch.

When Jampa's mother learns of her husband's fate, she drops dead immediately. The children are brought to the *dzongpön*, who orders them to arrange their father's funeral and to return to him. “I will take care of you in my grace”, he promises. He keeps his promise by taking the eighteen-year-old Jampa on as a shepherd and selling his younger brother and both sisters.

There is no end to Jampa's suffering. One of the sheep is torn apart by wolves, and he is lashed and put in jail for three days with no food. Then he is to return to the grazing land, but the young man decides to flee. He manages thanks to the advice of a compassionate ferryman, who tells him he must become a lama – that's the only way he can be safe from the *dzongpön*. Jampa sets out to Sera Monastery to join the order. He meets a lama-fighter nearby the monastery. He is one of the legendary *dob dobs*,⁵⁰ monk-fighters, who served as monastery police and when needed formed commandos used by the monastery in power struggles. Jampa begs the lama to teach him; he wants to become a lama. The monk asks: “What will you give me?” Jampa has nothing to give. So they agree: the monk recommends a wealthy farmer for whom Jampa can work

during the harvest to make some money. Then Jampa returns with a bag of *chinko*⁵¹ – mountain barley – to give to his “teacher”.

The *dob dob* acknowledges his gift and says, “I will go to the market, sell the barley, buy tea and butter, and we shall drink and learn.” He sells the barley but drinks away all the money. In the meantime, Jampa is waiting in vain, becomes hungry, and decides to beg. He gets some *tsampa*, and right when he is finishing it, the *dob dob* returns, drunk and hungry. “You have *tsampa* and you hid it from me!” He pounces on the wretched boy, but soon stumbles, falls, and dozes off.

Again, Jampa is on the run; he finds a job at a tearoom in Lhasa. After the lama wakes up, he goes to Lhasa to look for his pupil, and when he finds him in

the tearoom, he wants to attack him. The guests take Jampa under their protection, and suddenly, the room is entered by soldiers of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army. New times have come; Jampa will study and work as a free man.

Of course, all this is a little naïve and improbable – as the case is with true stories. The actors were excellent, especially the one who played the *dob dob*; he acted with such zest that he made the ruffian lama almost likable.

The lights came on, and everyone got up from their seats. Not far from us, a young man remained seated. The play had probably moved him so much that he just sat, his hands covering his eyes and his shoulders quivering as he wept. It was Jampa.

Chapter 6

I will interrupt my travelogue for a while. It’s time to go through the history of Tibet up to March 1959, when the world media reported on the fighting in Lhasa.

Tibet had been a part of China since time immemorial as one of the regions inhabited by ethnic minorities. Minorities constitute about six percent of the Chinese population – over thirty-five million. Tibetans are one of the largest ethnic groups, and therefore the motto of the democratic revolution in 1911 was “Equality of five nationalities: Han (the Chinese nationality), Man (Manchu), Meng (Mongols),⁵² Hui (a Muslim minority that does not have its own language), and Zang (Tibetans).”⁵³

The first attempt to separate Tibet from China did not occur until 1913, when the predecessor of the current Dalai Lama took advantage of the weaknesses of the Chinese government, went to India, and from there, which is typical, declared separation from China.⁵⁴ The real significance of this act was immediately aptly expressed by Tsarist Russia: an “independent” Tibet meant for them English troops in Tibet, right in the rear of Russian Central Asia. Diplomatic pressure from

St. Petersburg led to the English recognition of Chinese rule over Tibet and talks about independence ceased for thirty-six years. Nevertheless, the English tried another maneuver: they wanted to make Tibet a buffer state, where Chinese rule would be merely formal, and the real power would be exercised by an English resident. At the same time, they wanted to gain influence over those Chinese regions outside Tibet where people of Tibetan nationality prevailed. While there are only about 1.2 million inhabitants in Tibet itself, twice as many Tibetans live in various provinces of the Chinese interior.⁵⁵ Even this manoeuvre failed; however, the English, with one stroke of the pen and without the consent of the Chinese government, adjoined a part of Tibet to India up to the McMahon Line, which has now become a subject of dispute between China and India.⁵⁶

Another attempt to separate Tibet from China occurred after World War Two, this time with the English and the Americans working together. Under their duress, the young Dalai Lama sent his troops to fight the People’s Liberation Army, and he himself found

temporary residence in Yadong⁵⁷ on the border with India. It must be noted that he was only fifteen and did not make independent decisions; rule was exercised by the regent. Tibetan troops were dispersed upon the first skirmishes with the Chinese People's Liberation Army. The young Dalai Lama was so affected by the defeat that he decided to get rid of the regent,⁵⁸ take over as ruler, and send a delegation to negotiate with the people's government in Beijing. The delegation, partly traveling through India, was delayed, under pressure from Western diplomats, but finally arrived in Beijing. The negotiations were successful, and the Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet was signed in May 1951.⁵⁹

One of the outcomes of the agreement was the return of the Panchen Lama,⁶⁰ the second-highest ranking spiritual authority, to Tibet. When the previous Dalai Lama had attempted to turn Tibet into an English protectorate and mobilized his army against China, such actions were necessarily associated with the enhancement of his powers and centralization of government authority. These efforts necessarily provoked opposition from a group of clerical and secular dignitaries centered around the Panchen Lama,⁶¹ whose position was threatened by the Dalai Lama's policy. The Panchen Lama, who was in danger of being murdered, fled to inland, where he later died. His successor, the present Panchen Lama, had never entered Tibet until 1951. His position was restored only after the conclusion of the agreement between the People's Republic of China and the local Tibetan government. It is no coincidence that the group around the Panchen Lama has traditionally opposed imperialistic attempts to separate Tibet from China.

The main points of the agreement can be summarized in three principles: the unity and integrity of the territory of the People's Republic of China including Tibet, territorial autonomy, and the gradual introduction of democratic reforms.

In order to protect the unity and integrity of the territory, the Chinese People's Liberation Army entered Tibet and occupied some strategically important points. It was stipulated that the local Tibetan army

should undergo reorganization and become integrated into the People's Liberation Army; however, the Tibetan government did not fulfil this point of the agreement, like many others.

The actions of Chinese officials in 1951–1959 were guided by the principles of the Chinese Communist Party policy regarding ethnic minorities. We could see there were many ethnic minorities in China, and most of them had common features: as a result of national oppression, which had lasted for many centuries, they had been forced to settle in hardly accessible, mountainous areas or in deep forests; their economy lagged behind, and therefore, their social development was hindered. Some of them have only recently abandoned the stage of a primitive clan system; others have lived as slave or feudal societies. The extermination policies of former Chinese governments and economic oppression mostly resulted in distrust, or even hatred toward the Han.

The Chinese Communist Party has based its policy on this knowledge and on the fact that although slaveholders and feudal lords of minority nationalities were undoubtedly exploiters, they were at the same time the subject of national oppression, which is a form of exploitation; they were both the exploiters and the exploited. Bearing in mind their "two-faced" nature, the party seeks an agreement with serfs and slaves on the one hand, and with former rulers of ethnic minorities on the other; it implements democratic reforms by way of persuasion and concord. Such a policy has proved successful for the ten years of existence of the People's Republic of China. Democratic reforms have been introduced for all minorities except Tibetans, and most minorities have even embarked on the path to socialism with the help of the working Han people.

The situation was somewhat different with the Tibetan nationality. In Tibet, the feudal exploitative class had a powerful ideological weapon in the form of the Lamaist church as well as the centralized state apparatus and the army in the Tibetan territory proper.

In spite of that, the authorities of the People's Republic of China have done a lot of work, the results of which eventually manifested themselves in full force.

Under the leadership of a specially appointed working committee for Tibet attached to the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, they pursued a policy of economic and social assistance to the Tibetan people, while fully respecting their religious and other customs.

Tibet has always suffered from a lack of consumer goods and high prices. Therefore, the ancient, traditional economic system has been preserved until recently, and the only product to be imported in large amounts was tea. The reason for this situation was the difficult transportation connection with China. Although there were roads leading to India, the goods brought by Indian traders were mostly luxurious articles for the Tibetan nobility. India was the main source of imported grain only in the outermost southern tip of Tibet, around Yadong. The situation has dramatically changed in the years 1951 to 1959. Three new roads, connecting Tibet with the provinces of Sichuan and Qinghai and with the autonomous territory of Xinjiang, enabled regular transportation by caravans of trucks. As a consequence, the prices of consumer goods in Tibet dropped, and their import increased substantially. Another great asset in the development of Tibet was the establishment of three experimental agricultural farms in Lhasa, Chamdo, and Zhikatsé. The main significance of the farms rests in the future. The experience gained during their operation can only be utilized now, after the agrarian reform. Up to now, the farms contributed to revolutionizing the diet of the three towns. Their markets offer enough vegetables not only from the farms, but also from the fields of those peasants who followed their example, got from them seed grain for free together with advice on how to cultivate different varieties. The aid provided to peasants and herdsmen took on different forms, for instance, interest-free loans, for keeps mostly. State aid amounted to more than six million yuan, and moreover, the authorities of the People's Republic of China contributed four million to help victims of the catastrophic floods in south Tibet in 1954. Veterinary care was no less important, for – despite initial distrust – it eradicated cattle epidemics. Because a quarter of Ti-

betans live off cattle breeding, the importance of this action was immense. Farmers benefited from the construction of irrigation infrastructure, built by labour provided by the Chinese People's Liberation Army and with an investment of five million.

Also the area of healthcare brought surprising successes if you consider the vast religious prejudice that stood in the way. Almost three million patients were treated, and 350,000 immunized, in three hospitals and a hundred healthcare centres. The scourge of smallpox has disappeared from Tibet. An interesting fact, reflected in the political sphere, testifies to the significance of this aid. Even the rebels promoted the slogan: "Drive out the Han people – only doctors from the People's Hospital may stay!"

One of the most important factors in dispelling the distrust toward the Hans was the meticulous respect paid to Tibetan religious customs by officials and soldiers. It extended as far as to the strict prohibition on entering monasteries, except upon express invitation. This prohibition remained in effect even when it was no secret that many monasteries gathered arms for the rebellion. Every breach of the ban was punished so strictly that officials and soldiers used to say: "A monastery is like a tiger's butt – it's dangerous to touch!" The exemplary behavior of soldiers made a deep impression in other respects, too. The people who dealt with the garrison began to understand the difference between the people's army and the feudal army. They expressed their opinion in a single sentence: "Bu ma bu da bu na."⁶² They don't curse, don't beat, don't steal. It is clear that these characteristics refer not only to the People's Liberation Army, but also to the other army, the Tibetan feudal army.

Above, I described the main features of the activities of the People's Republic of China's representatives in Tibet over the course of eight years. It seems we haven't done much, the comrades themselves say. However, we can see significant results. In only eight years, the rebellion of the reactionary aristocratic clique has not found support among the Tibetan people; on the contrary, in most places, people helped to suppress the rebellion – even aristocrats and high Lamaist hierarchs

were not united in the support of the rebellion. About a third did not take part in or actively opposed the uprising.

What did Tibetan lords do in the meantime? The local government and the strata it represented sabotaged the agreement as consistently as the central government representatives honoured it.

They made a pledge to reorganize its army as part of the People's Liberation Army – and in eight years, they have not bothered to do it.

They made a pledge to support the gradual introduction of democratic reforms, and yet they fought every reform tooth and nail. In 1956 they even forced the central government to promise them that no reforms would be implemented in Tibet until the end of the second five-year plan.

From the very beginning, they could see that their feudal system was in danger of extinction. No one forced any reforms upon them in Tibet, but in other parts of China, reforms took place among each ethnic minority, including Tibetans living outside of Tibet proper. In the end, Tibet remained the only bastion of darkness, and the Tibetan rulers were too clever not to realize that this status quo could not last forever. However, they were not clever enough to grasp the futility of their efforts to stop progress. They chose the other path: the path of conspiracy and of being in cahoots with imperialistic agents, and finally, of open rebellion.

As early as in 1952, only a year after signing the agreement, the supreme *kalön*⁶³ Lukhangwa⁶⁴ planned a putsch aiming to separate Tibet from the People's Republic of China. Central government representatives, who were monitoring his activities, did not intervene; they only warned the Dalai Lama, who had to unseat Lukhangwa. Afterward, Lukhangwa left for India, where together with American and British agents he established a counter-revolution centre in Kalimpong, from where the reactionary forces in Tibet were commanded.

A period of relative quiet followed, although even during this time the reactionary nobility showed their hostility to progress in every way possible. They harshly punished their serfs who helped build roads and

banned them from obtaining loans from the Chinese government (there was another reason: interest-free loans endangered the profitable usury practiced by Tibetan feudal lords). Nevertheless, by and large, the situation in Tibet was quite peaceful.

Changes began in 1956. Democratic reforms were introduced in Tibetan autonomous territories (*zhou*),⁶⁵ which were subjected to provincial administrations. At the same time, the Dalai Lama and his large suite made a long journey through China upon the invitation of the central government. Reactionary emissaries in his entourage plotted with the local aristocracy, called them to armed resistance and promised help, arms in particular. They managed to incite a rebellion in the most backward of the territories, Kandze, in the western part of Sichuan province. Rebellious gangs murdered many Chinese comrades and cruelly tortured those serfs who dared to actively participate in the reforms. When units of the People's Liberation Army approached, they withdrew to the west, to Tibet. Tibetans living in Kandze are called Khampas in Tibet. Khampas troops together with the Tibetan army formed the core of the rebellious armed forces in March 1959.

Preparations for the rebellion started shortly after the Khampas arrived. Their gangs assaulted smaller, detached units of the People's Liberation Army as well as caravans. The situation escalated, and the conspirators' courage grew as Chinese troops were strictly ordered to use weapons only in self-defence. This led the Tibetan lords to believe the Chinese were afraid of them. At the beginning of 1959, the rebels felt strong enough to start open action.

They used the planned visit of the Dalai Lama to the garrison theatre to disseminate provocative allegations that he was to be arrested; then they removed him from Lhasa and launched a general attack. In the early morning hours of March 20, the command of the People's Liberation Army ordered a counterattack. The rebellious gangs soon fled away from the strike, and within three days, Lhasa and its vast surroundings were purged. The rebels withdrew to the south of Brahmaputra, the region of Lhoka, where they planned to

establish their stronghold. These events will be described by their direct participants.

When I speak about Tibet, I am always asked the question: “What about the Dalai Lama? According to the Chinese, he was kidnapped by the rebels; then he appeared in India, where he incited hatred of China. And in spite of that, he is still the chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Re-

gion, and moreover he has been elected the vice chairman of the National People’s Congress. How does it go together?”

Indeed, this is a rather complicated question. It may be better to go look for the answer in the “Jade Orchard”,⁶⁶ Norbulingka, the summer residence of the Dalai Lama, and the place where he stayed until his departure from Lhasa.

Chapter 7

Norbulingka – the Jade Orchard. When we were approaching Lhasa, we saw the remainder of an entrenchment the rebels built around their headquarters. The last consultations were held here; this is where the Dalai Lama wrote three letters to the commander of the Chinese units, Comrade Tan Guansan,⁶⁷ in which he regrets he cannot attend the theatre performance because “reactionary, evil elements are carrying out activities endangering me under the pretext of ensuring my safety”. This was written on March 11. A day later, in the second letter he writes, “The unlawful activities of the reactionary clique cause me endless worry and sorrow,” and again, he mentions “the reactionaries who arrogantly moved into Norbulingka under the pretext of protecting me”. In the third letter, of March 16, he writes: “In a few days from now, when there are enough forces that I can trust, I shall make my way in secret to the Tibet Military Headquarters. When that time comes, I shall first send you a letter.” The next day, on March 17, the Dalai Lama left Norbulingka for India. No wonder the Chinese authorities announced that the Dalai Lama had been kidnapped.

On April 18 in the Indian town of Tezpur, a document was distributed to journalists, which was seemingly a translation of a personal statement made by the Dalai Lama. It contained these words: “The Dalai Lama and his Government endeavoured to maintain friendly relations with the Chinese and tried to carry out negotiations with the Chinese representatives as to

how best to bring about peace in Tibet and assuage the people’s anxiety [about the fate of the Dalai Lama – Jan Vinař’s note]. On the March 17, two or three mortar shells were fired in the direction of the Norbulingka Palace. Fortunately, the shells fell in a nearby pond. After this, the Advisers became alive to the danger to the person of the Dalai Lama and in those difficult circumstances it became imperative for the Dalai Lama, the members of his family and his high officials to leave Lhasa. The Dalai Lama would like to state categorically that he left Lhasa and Tibet and came to India of his own free will and not under duress.”

There are several interesting issues with this statement. First, it clearly contradicts the Dalai Lama’s letters, the veracity of which he later confirmed in an interview with the Indian prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Second, the statement is formulated in the third person, even though it claimed to be the Dalai Lama’s personal declaration; such style is not possible in Tibetan. Third, the text contains many English formulations that do not have counterparts in Tibetan, even though it was seemingly translated from Tibetan.

Let us examine the cited section in detail. It says that several mortar shells “were fired” in the direction of Norbulingka. Who fired them? The units of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army did not let loose a single shot before 10 a.m. on March 20, when an order to counterattack was issued. Afterward, I saw myself the way they fired: without damaging a single brick, their



Fig. 34 / The gate to Norbulingka, left side.

The gate to the “park of jewels”, the Dalai Lama’s summer palace, a large park complex situated three kilometres east of his winter palace, the Potala. The main gate in the picture is facing Potala and the town of Lhasa. There was a public procession accompanying the Dalai Lama every year as he would move to and from his summer palace in the spring and fall. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 35 / The gate to Norbulingka, right side.

There were booths for Dalai Lama's guards, who were still wearing traditional uniforms until the March uprising, on both sides of the main gate. During the journalists' visit, they already wore the new PLA uniforms. The photo shows an armed soldier and three musicians next to him with small and large drums. People form a lane to welcome the foreign guests. Tibetan children in traditional costumes and the red neck-scarfs of the Party youth organisation, known also from the Soviet bloc, hold flowers. Things changed quickly at that time. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 36 / A lion statue on the right side of Norbulingka gate.

There is a statue of a Tibetan snow lion to the right of the guard booth and the same was placed on the opposite side. The snow lion is a mythical animal used in a pair as the central symbol on the Tibetan flag. In Tibetan iconography, it is usually white with green and gold elements like the mane, eyebrows, and decorative ornaments. The foreign journalists were welcomed by Tibetan children and men in Chinese style military and worker uniforms. One of the men, probably Tibetan, even wears a white shirt, jacket and a tie. The bicycles by the wall behind the crowd are an interesting detail. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 37 / The lane formed by Lhasa inhabitants to welcome the foreign journalists to Norbulingka.

The lane was formed by Tibetan children, men and women who came here to see the rich cultural program featuring performances of the PLA propaganda troop and Tibetan singers and dancers. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 38 / The new summer palace of the fourteenth Dalai Lama, the eastern wing.

The photograph pictures the new building of Takten Migyur Podrang (*rtag brtan mi 'gyur pho drang* ཏཱ་བརྟན་མི་ལྷུང་ཕོ་བླང་) build for the fourteenth Dalai Lama in the central part of the park. It was finished in 1954 and includes living rooms used by the Dalai Lama as well as his private shrines. Stairs lead to the main entrance in front of which there is a round fountain pond decorated with numerous flowers in large pots. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 39 / The new summer palace of the fourteenth Dalai Lama, view from the eastern side.

The photo shows the entrance area to the new palace with several visitors. The fourteenth Dalai Lama used this palace only shortly and during the visit of the foreign journalists he was already in the Indian exile. He never returned to Norbulingka, which he left from in March 1959. Tibetan pilgrims still visit this place to recollect the events leading up to the Dalai Lama's lifelong exile. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 40 / Two Tibetan female dancers with their partners in Norbulingka.

The visit of the foreign journalists was accompanied by several cultural events in which the inhabitants of Lhasa and surrounding villages could take part. The symbol of a swastika on the female dancer's belt and the male dancers' coats lined with leopard fur are interesting details. The journalists left Tibet before the national holiday on October 1 which celebrated the tenth anniversary of the People's Republic of China. It can be assumed, however, that people from the countryside already gathered in Lhasa for this occasion. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 41 / A group of dancers in Norbulingka.

It is evident from this photograph that the two couples from the previous picture were only part of a larger ensemble. This photo shows eight couples with women in front and men behind them. The swastika symbols and leopard furs are the same as in the previous close-up. There is a big white tent and the white wall of some building or one of the palace complexes in Norbulingka behind the dancers. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 42 / Vsevolod V. Ovchinnikov in Norbulingka.

The photograph captures the Soviet journalist Vsevolod V. Ovchinnikov during the visit to Norbulingka. He has a large photo camera on his chest and seemingly a small film camera in his hands. Ovchinnikov published his own photographs in his two books about Tibet, but the fate of the film material he made is unknown. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 43 / Tibetan dancers in Norbulingka.

The scene takes place in the same setting as in the previous photographs, only the dancers and the foreign reporter have changed. The Tibetan dancers have different costumes, which indicates that they are probably from a different part of Tibet. This costume draws attention due to the large fur hats worn by men. The foreigner with a light-coloured cap kneels in the centre of this shot, taking photos of the dancers from a close distance. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.

cannons managed to aim at the upper-floor windows of Potala Palace that had been converted into embrasures by the rebels. Therefore, it seems highly improbable that they would hit a “nearby pond” instead of Norbulingka. Moreover, it was very convenient that the shells fell right into the pond, where no traces were left. In short, it was not possible to ascertain whether any shells fell or not.

Another explanation is much more probable: the people around the Dalai Lama, in order to make him escape, had two or three charges explode loudly

nearby Norbulingka, and then reported the Chinese had fired. In the hubbub of shots, a few stronger explosions that scared the Dalai Lama might not have been heard.

The statement further mentions that the “advisers became alive to the danger” and that “it became imperative” that the Dalai Lama leave Lhasa. This passage speaks too eloquently about the actual events and cannot be weakened by claiming that the Dalai Lama “would have wanted” to declare he had left of his own free will.

Chapter 8

We are in Norbulingka, in the part formerly closed to the public: a large rectangle of a lawn and flower beds is surrounded by dense rows of trees and walls. A group of old willows on one of the shorter sides of the rectangle provides pleasant shade for a nice sit-down; the Dalai Lama’s palace is built along the longer northern side. The building is new; it was erected in 1956.⁶⁸ The summer seat of the Dalai Lama used to be at Kelzang Podrang,⁶⁹ a palace built by Kelzang, the seventh Dalai Lama. The new palace is a strange mixture of traditional Tibetan style and modern architecture. Although it has sloped walls, a flat roof, and a wide dark ledge that skirts the walls, it gives off an air of being the villa of some millionaire. The interior furnishings are eclectic, too – besides traditional, richly decorated prayer rooms, you can find modern bathrooms; also, the Dalai Lama’s study is quite modestly furnished. The palace houses a projection room, where movie shows were held regularly.

Today, the palace is empty but apparently well maintained. Visitors, both Tibetan and Chinese, are strolling outside; several young women in uniforms are standing near a group of trees where we are seated on prepared chairs. They are members of an ensemble of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army and are putting

on their makeup for a performance as part of a folk festival to be held in another part of the park.

A slight old man in a red robe made of good woolen fabric is approaching us across the lawn. As is customary, one arm protrudes naked from the robe; the man has a small wrinkled face and a short, pointed beard. He is a “living Buddha”⁷⁰ (i.e., an embodiment of the soul of a Buddhist saint), Gyatsoling,⁷¹ the Dalai Lama’s tutor and sutra teacher. He lives in Norbulingka: all the Dalai Lama’s tutors had their own houses. There is also a building where the *Kashag*⁷² had its office, the barracks of the personal guard, and another two palaces called Chensel Podrang⁷³ and Dzutsepodzang,⁷⁴ situated next to the new palace and Kelzang Podrang.

Gyatsoling is sitting among us, a tiny man among tall (and fat, in some cases) European figures, quietly speaking. He describes life in Norbulingka, where the Dalai Lama used to spend most of the year. He only stayed in Potala during the winter. A picture of the man often referred to as a “God-King” by the Western media begins to appear before our eyes. He got up at six in the morning, spent five hours in prescribed prayer, then, shortly before lunch, he received *kalöns*, after lunch he discussed sutras – Buddhist sacred texts – with his tutors. Then a walk, meditation, and sometimes a movie in the evening. All was designed

so that the young man, who was supposed to believe he was an incarnation of a god, lost all connection to the world – the *kalöns'* audience was so short that they could hardly inform their ruler, let alone obtain a thought-out decision. Clearly, it was not the Dalai Lama who governed here. I remembered another episode from the life of the God-King, recorded by the Austrian Heinrich Harrer. Harrer was sent by the Nazi government in 1939 to scout the terrain for a Himalayan expedition (his task was probably to explore other things, but he does not mention this in his writings). After the outbreak of World War Two, he was sent to a detention camp in India; he escaped and got to Tibet, where he remained for seven years. Harrer writes about having built a skating rink in Lhasa and taught Tibetans to skate. When the young Dalai Lama stayed in Potala, he watched the life of “his” people through a field glass from a roof a hundred and thirty meters high. But the rink was behind a corner, and he could not see it. Therefore, he sent Harrer his motion-picture camera, and Harrer took some footage; the Dalai Lama sent the film to India to have it developed, and then finally he could see “his people” skate.⁷⁵

Gyatsoling continues his story. When the Dalai Lama was moving from Potala to Norbulingka on March 6, 1959,⁷⁶ Gyatsoling asked for a few days off to arrange some private matters. The Dalai Lama granted the request but ordered him to return on March 10 to accompany him to the theatre at the Tibet Military Headquarters.

On the way to Norbulingka, Gyatsoling met rebellious troops who were wildly shooting around the streets of Lhasa, injuring many people. He entered the building of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region, where he met General Tan Guansan. The general asked him to deliver a letter to the Dalai Lama.

Gyatsoling carried the letter to Norbulingka. The park was occupied by the rebels, and he waited to be let in for two hours, but to no avail. In the end, he decided to use a small gate to which he had the key. He met the Dalai Lama, who was walking in the park. The old teacher gave him the letter. The Dalai Lama read it

and said: “Evil people threaten me, and I suffer. I am not my own master even in this palace. Tell it to Tan Guansan!” However, Gyatsoling could not carry out the order; the rebels refused to let him out of the park. They distrusted him, for he worked at the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region. They took him to his house and barred him from going out. Gyatsoling has not seen the Dalai Lama since.

“I have known him since his childhood,” says the old monk. “I love him as my own. I don’t believe he left out of his own will. He was kidnapped by *kalöns!*”⁷⁷ He then sits for a while, his face buried in his hands, before suddenly standing up and leaving. He is crying.

A clearer picture is starting to come into focus thanks to documents, published testimonies, this and other interviews. It is the picture of a boy who was told he was a god, was taken to an old castle and brought up in the image of their own dark, medieval god. A picture of a boy who was allowed to see people only through a field glass. Once, he was not yet sixteen, he revolted – perhaps under the influence of his father, who was known for opposing the intrigues of his son’s reactionary advisers. That was in 1950, when the Dalai Lama came into office and sent a delegation to Beijing. He was taught a lesson – his father was murdered. His brothers were persuaded and lured to emigrate to Taiwan and the USA. In his desperate isolation from the people, he did not comprehend something had indeed changed in Tibet during those eight years. Nothing had changed in the vicious circle along which he moved. Thus, they gradually gained control over him. He hesitated, tried to find a way out, but succumbed at the last moment. Maybe he wasn’t abducted, but he certainly did not leave out of his own free will because the Dalai Lama had expressed his free will only once in his lifetime.

The Chinese central government showed more understanding for his situation than this weak young man deserves. As always when it concerned a member of the leading stratum of an ethnic minority, the government understood the “two-faced” nature of this figure. It left the way back open; it did not deprive the Dalai Lama of his numerous offices. But will he find the way



Fig. 44 / Gyatsoling Tupten Kelzang Rinpoche, the Dalai Lama's teacher.

Jan Vinař described the meeting with the Dalai Lama's teacher who remained in Lhasa after the Dalai Lama's escape to India: "A slight old man in a red robe made of good woollen fabric is approaching us across the lawn. As is customary, one arm protrudes naked from the robe; the man has a small, wrinkled face and a short, pointed beard. He is a 'living Buddha' (an embodiment of the soul of a Buddhist saint), Gyatsoling, the Dalai Lama's tutor and sutra teacher. He lives in Norbulingka. All the Dalai Lama's tutors had their own houses. [...] Gyatsoling is sitting among us, a tiny man among tall (and fat, in some cases) European figures, quietly speaking. He describes life in Norbulingka, where the Dalai Lama used to spend most of the year. He only stayed in Potala during the winter. A picture of a man, often referred to as a 'God-King' by the Western media, begins to appear before our eyes. He would get up at six in the morning, spend five hours in prescribed prayer, then, shortly before lunch, would receive *kalöns*. After lunch he discussed sutras — Buddhist sacred texts — with his tutors. This was followed by a walk, meditation, and sometimes a movie in the evening." Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*



Fig. 45 / Tibetan soldiers marching in Lhasa.

The photograph shows four Chinese soldiers marching in a row with light Bren machine guns on their shoulders. The first and the fourth soldier are carrying magazines with cartridges. On the left side, a man, probably Chinese, is watching the soldiers. Part of the Tibetan army was already integrated into the PLA during the uprising. The rest, namely the Dalai Lama's guards, were also formally part of the Chinese army, but still had their Tibetan uniforms as in this case. These had typical long sleeves which, during cold winters, substituted for gloves and could be easily rolled up in the summer. This scene was probably shot before the uprising. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 46 / A meeting at the PLA headquarters in Lhasa during the March 1959 uprising.

The photograph shows five top-level officers of the PLA who were entrusted with the task of eliminating the rebellion. General Tan Guansan, who gave the final order to fight the rebels, is on the far left. High officers are holding a meeting over military maps in the military headquarters. It is apparent that the scene was staged for filming of the propaganda documentary *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet* after the uprising was suppressed. For this purpose, the walls were covered with white cloth for better lighting of the scene, which was not the case during the original meeting. It was held in a regular room with windows and furniture. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 47 / A captured Tibetan rebel officer.

A staged scene from the film shows a Tibetan officer in traditional uniform. The helmet on his head is reminiscent of those worn by colonial British soldiers, but has Tibetan army insignia — the double vajra, which means two crossed thunderbolt symbols; vajra (or *dorje* in Tibetan) is a ritual instrument used by monks during Buddhist rituals. In the photo, a long turquoise earring is clearly seen in the soldier's left ear — a sign of officialdom. There is another captured rebel, standing there with lowered head and holding a Tibetan army rifle, behind the prisoner. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 48 / Armed PLA soldier with two Tibetan captives.

This scene, as with all the scenes in the film showing captured rebels, was staged. It has two Tibetan soldiers with army caps on their lowered heads and with their rifles lifted with both hands above their heads — a sign of capitulation. A Chinese soldier with a bayonet rifle is taking them out of the conquered building, where they are about to give up their arms. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 49 / A Chinese soldier supervising the staged capitulation of armed monks.

The photograph shows a group of monks with Lee Enfield rifles of British provenance lifted above their bare heads. Coming out of a building, they are turning in their arms like the central figure of the picture. A single Chinese soldier is standing in front of a collapsed monastery wall, holding a Soviet machine gun PPS-43 known as Sudayev during World War Two, on the right side. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 50 / A procession of captured Tibetan rebels with *khatags* in their hands.

Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 51 / A procession of captured Tibetan rebels led by Tsarong.

Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 52 / Detail of the captured Tsarong.

Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 53 / A captured Tibetan rebel.

This man was Sumdowa Gyeltsen Yönten (*gsum mdo ba rgyal mtsan yon tan* གསུམ་མདོ་བ་རྒྱལ་མཚན་ཡོན་ཏན་), a government official. A wall of the Potala, the Dalai Lama's palace, is clearly seen behind him. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 54 / Captured Lhalu Tsewang Dorje.

Lhalu Tsewang Dorje, as one of the high Tibetan officials, supported the uprising and was eventually captured by Chinese soldiers. Along with nearly a dozen top officials, he figured involuntarily in a similar situation in the propaganda documentary *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet* to showcase the triumphal victory of the Chinese army in Lhasa in March 1959. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 55 / A monk takes away rifles from the Drepung Monastery.

Chinese soldiers organised a public event in the Drepung Monastery, during which rifles, and other weapons were taken out of the monastery buildings. In a staged scene for the film documentary, monks, one by one, had to lay the seized arms by a monastery wall to show that all the rebels were defeated. Some large monasteries in Central Tibet, including the Drepung, took part in the armed uprising and monks were actually fighting. A monk carries several Lee Enfield rifles on his shoulder in the photograph. The attractive watch on his wrist is an interesting detail. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 56 / The arrival of the tenth Panchen Lama at Lhasa airport.

In the 1950s, the Tibetan airport was situated some 170 kilometres from Lhasa. The hosts had to consequently travel hundreds of kilometres there and back for an official welcome of any respected guest. This was the case for General Zhang Guohua⁷⁸ who travelled to the airport to personally welcome Tibet's highest representative at that time, the tenth Panchen Lama. Up until 28 March 1959, the highest representative of Tibet had formally still been the fourteenth Dalai Lama, but by the time of the Panchen Lama's arrival in Lhasa, he was already on his way to India, unable to influence what was going on in Lhasa. The man with a hat behind the Panchen Lama is Tretong Che Jigme (*bkras mthong ce 'jigs med* བཀའ་མཁོན་ཅེ་འཇིག་མེད་), who was the one in charge of these events. He served as the director of the Panchen Lama's office in Nanjing, the Chinese capital during the Kuomintang regime, and defended Chinese interests as a member of the Khenpo Council. He had a decisive influence on the young Panchen Lama. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.

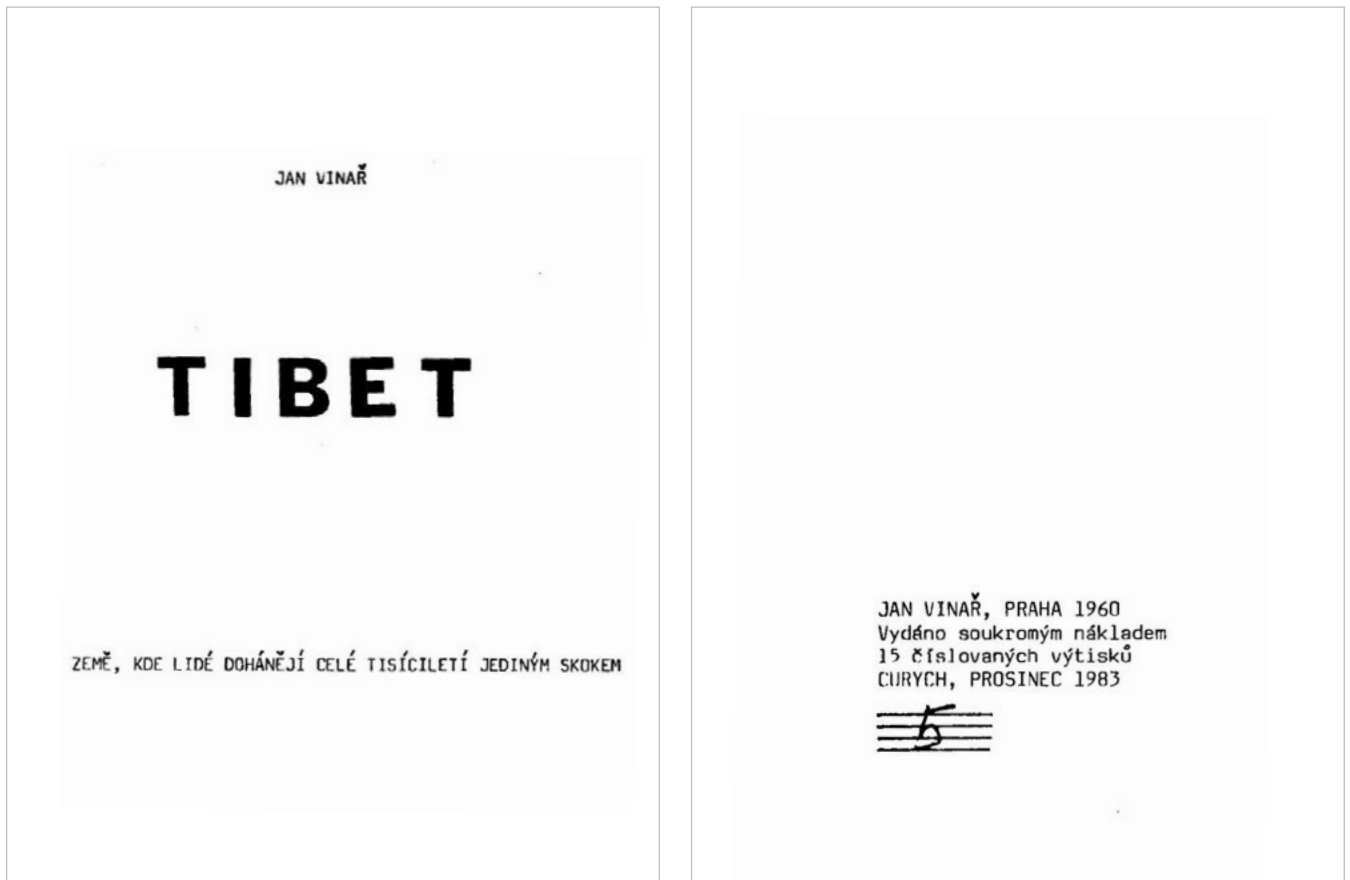


Fig. 57 / The front page and colophon of Jan Vinař's samizdat.

Jan Vinař's reportage was published as a samizdat by his wife Věra in December 1983, three months after his death. Samizdat was a form of private publishing of texts that could not be published officially in Czechoslovakia before 1989, either because the author was banned at home or was in exile. In the case of Jan Vinař, his text about Tibet could not be published in 1960, when it was written, because of the rift between the Soviet bloc and the PRC and later because he went into exile in 1968. His wife published the work in Zurich, where they had lived together since 1968, in memoriam in a limited edition of 15 copies for family and friends. The print has 108 pages, a number coincidentally considered sacred in Buddhism. The reportage is not accompanied by any illustrations, maps, or other supplements, being in all probability in the same state as Jan Vinař finished it in 1960. Each copy was marked with a handwritten number, the one obtained by Martin Slobodník from Vinař's grandson had no. 5. Source: Jan Vinař, *Tibet – a Country Where People Have Leapt a Thousand Years Forward*



Fig. 58 / The tenth Panchen Lama visiting Jokhang Temple.

The new highest representative of Tibet, the tenth Panchen Lama, visited Jokhang Temple on 7 April 1959. The visit was well-documented by the Chinese film crew. The photograph shows the Panchen Lama and his entourage in an open courtyard within the temple, the *khyamra* ('*khyams ra* འགྲམས་ར་'). It is paved with large stones and surrounded by massive wooden pillars. The entourage consists of three civilian officials in white vests and dark hats, two monks, and probably some Chinese, like the man in the background with the Mao-style cap. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 59 / The tenth Panchen Lama and his entourage visiting the interior of Jokhang Temple.

The high point of the Panchen Lama's visit, to the most important Tibetan Buddhist temple, was paying respect to the statue of Jowo Rinpoche. The photograph shows the Panchen Lama looking at the statue, partly hidden behind a man in front who is preparing *khatags* to be ceremonially offered to the Jowo statue. The detail of one of the carved wooden pillars is clearly seen behind him. Filming inside the Jokhang was also complicated because the temple at that time had no electric lighting and film-makers and photographers did not have enough light. This was in all probability the first shooting in the Jokhang, the second occasion was during the filming of the propagandist black and white feature film *The Serf* (*Nong nu*; 1963; 88 min.; dir. Li Jun 李俊) several years later. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 60 / The tenth Panchen Lama at the entrance to the shrine of Jowo Rinpoche.

The entrance to the main shrine with the Jowo statue was usually covered with a curtain made of metal rings which is not seen in this photo. The entrance to the inner chapel was guarded by four statues known as the Four Heavenly Kings (Sanskrit Caturmahārāja; Tibetan *rgyal chen zhi* རྒྱལ་ཚོང་ཞི་) representing the four cardinal directions. One of them can be seen behind the bareheaded Panchen Lama. Statues or images of the Four Heavenly Kings are usually placed in entrance corridors of Buddhist temples, as is also the case in the Jokhang, where they are placed not only by the entrance to the Jowo shrine, but also in the corridor through which the temple is accessed. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 61 / The arrival of the leaders of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region (PCTAR).

PCTAR was an institution established by the Chinese administration of Tibet with the aim of gradually substituting the *Kashag*, which was formally incorporated into it during the first meeting of the Committee on 6 May 1956. The Committee was formally chaired by the fourteenth Dalai Lama and, after his escape to exile, the Beijing government decided that his place would be taken by the tenth Panchen Lama. This is the reason why he is walking in front; the first Vice-Chairman was General Zhang Guohua who follows behind him. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 62 / Ngaphö Ngawang Jigme arriving at the PCTAR meeting.

One of the important leaders in the PCTAR was its General Secretary, Ngaphö Ngawang Jigme. In this photograph, he is on the left side as the fourth person arriving at the meeting. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 63 / The tenth Panchen Lama chairing the first meeting of the reorganised PCTAR.

This meeting, the first one after the uprising, was held on 8 April 1959. The Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai re-established this institution on March 28 after eighteen 'traitors', who supported the uprising, were excluded from the Committee. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 64 / The chairing desk during the PCTAR meeting, 8 April 1959.

Although the room in which the meeting took place was not large, the chairing desk was equipped with several microphones. This was not due to the capacity of the meeting room. The speeches were recorded and also broadcast to the general public through loudspeakers in the streets of Lhasa. A life size bust of Chairman Mao is placed behind the speakers. Sitting at the desk, the tenth Panchen Lama reads a prepared speech from a paper, sitting on a couch on the left side are two Chinese generals, Zhang Guohua and Tan Guansan on the very left with a shawl around his neck. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 65 / General Zhang Guohua speaking at the PCTAR meeting on 8 April 1959.

This Chinese General played an important role in the modern history of Tibet. Along with Generals Tan Guansan, Zhang Jingwu, and Fan Ming, he was one of the key figures of the Chinese PLA in Tibet. Together, they helped to shape Chinese policy in Tibet and held military power from the early 1950s up until the establishment of the TAR in 1965 or until the Cultural Revolution which began a year later. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 66 / Ngaphö Ngawang Jigme reading a prepared talk.

Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 67 / The tenth Panchen Lama at the PCTAR meeting.

Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 68 / A Tibetan woman giving a speech at a mass rally in Lhasa.

Mass rallies were one of the important channels of public communication after the uprising, serving to pass Chinese policies down to the Tibetan public. These gatherings were not spontaneous, but they were arranged by local CCP organisations. The speakers were not the Chinese Party representatives, but rather local Tibetan cadres and Lhasa inhabitants who supported the new developments in Tibet after the March uprising was defeated. Various banners were held during such rallies; the one in the photograph is bilingual, with Tibetan above and larger Chinese characters below. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 69 / Chinese administration giving out grain to the Tibetan masses.

PLA soldier pouring grain from a square container to a Tibetan couple who brought their own sack can be seen in the centre of the photograph. People around are watching or waiting for their turn. Another Chinese soldier and a Tibetan official next to him record the amounts of distributed grain. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 70 / A close-up from the mass event during which grain was distributed to the Tibetan masses.

The photograph captures a close-up scene from the previous picture; the Chinese soldier wears an older type of uniform that was gradually substituted with the new type after 1956. The old uniforms did not show army ranks, only a label above the left pocket indicated that the person wearing it was a member of the People's Liberation Army. The new type already showed distinctions from Private to Marshal. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 71 / Tibetan youth taking part in a public gathering.

Compulsory school education, according to Chinese education plans, was introduced for Tibetan children, both boys and girls, from the 1950s. Apart from that, they also had to participate in various events in support of the regime, not just school events, but also as members of newly established Party youth organisations. These organisations were established in Tibet according to the Chinese (and originally Soviet) model, and its members wore red neck-scarfs, the same as those introduced thirty years earlier in the Soviet Union. They were ideological organisations teaching children and young people about history, theory, and practice of communism. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 72 / Large posters carried by rally participants.

Along with red scarfs and large bilingual banners, another visual innovation was introduced from inland China at that time — large bilingual cartoons picturing the enemies of the Tibetan people or progressive images showcasing the deep friendship between the Tibetan and Chinese masses. This was something completely new to Tibetans. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 73 / Bilingual Chinese-Tibetan banner in Lhasa.

The inscription on the banner calls for "people of all nationalities and ranks from all over Tibet to unite and firmly and thoroughly eliminate all rebels". Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 74 / A lorry carrying Mao's image during a rally in Lhasa.

Images of Mao Zedong in various forms and sizes were an integral part of all mass gatherings at that time. They were present in Lhasa ever since 9 September 1951, when the first three thousand PLA troops arrived in the capital of Tibet. The photograph shows three lorries driving through a street in Lhasa. The first one carries a large portrait of Mao with two Chinese flags on both sides. The lorry is covered with artificial flowers. The other two vehicles can be described as allegorical, showcasing the revolutionary enthusiasm of Tibetan and Chinese people, their everlasting friendship, gratefulness for the "Peaceful Liberation", the fight against feudal superstition and the correcting of past mistakes. It is not clear from the picture what exactly these vehicles were carrying, but the procession celebrated the great victory over the "counter revolutionary rebellion", as is apparent from the Chinese language banner bridging over the street. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 75 / Tibetans reading a public announcement placed on a wall in the centre of Lhasa.

Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 76 / Tibetan government official.

The man wears a specific round hat as a sign of his official rank, accompanied by a typical hairstyle — a kind of bun worn by Tibetan government officials — and a long turquoise earring in his left ear. He is holding another attribute of officialdom, a pen and a piece of paper, in his hands. The round badge on the left side of his coat, with a portrait of what seems to be the fourteenth Dalai Lama in a ceremonial tall hat worn by high lamas on special occasions, is an interesting detail. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 77 / Tibetans reading public announcements.

All kinds of public announcements were often printed, but sometimes also handwritten — especially when they addressed only a smaller number of inhabitants, like a neighbourhood or a street. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 78 / A soldier speaking with Tibetans.

The man on the right side with a rifle on his shoulder wears the traditional uniform of the Tibetan army, while the second soldier, with his back turned to the camera, wears a modern uniform with a brigadier hat. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 79 / Tibetans working with the Chinese government taking refuge in the PCTAR headquarters in Lhasa.

This scene figures in the Chinese propagandist documentary *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*. The commentary explains: "The rebels called upon all Tibetan cadres to renounce all ties with the Central people's government and threatened death to anyone who refused to comply. In spite of such intimidation, most of the cadres upheld the unity of the motherland and many moved with their families into the offices of the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet." Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 80 / The PCTAR headquarters — front view.

Shortly before the uprising, a complex of three four-story buildings was completed in Lhasa to serve as the headquarters of the newly established PCTAR. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 81 / The location of the PCTAR headquarters opposite Potala Palace.

The complex was situated opposite Potala Palace, which cannot be seen in this photo. Despite the fact that PCTAR was part of Tibet's incorporation into the Chinese administration system, the formal head was the Tibetan leader, first the fourteenth Dalai Lama and after his escape to exile the tenth Panchen Lama. The committee ended its operations in 1965 when the Tibet Autonomous Region was formally established. Its new head was Ngaphö Ngawang Jigme. Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.



Fig. 82 / Chinese military headquarters in Lhasa with a prison.

Source: *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*.

back? I doubt it – if he was not able to resist in Lhasa, it would be much harder for him today, amid reactionary emigrants. In short – the mystery has burst. The Dalai Lama finds himself in a position similar to those of the many young men who were lured to emigrate by reactionary circles. How many of them, from

Czechoslovakia or Tibet, would like to come back? Only a negligible minority found their way back – the others do not have enough strength, whether they wear beggar's rags, a foreign legion uniform, or the brocade gown of a Lamaist dignitary.

Chapter 9

We are sitting in the building of the PLA's Tibet Military Headquarters. Three officers are seated opposite. None looks like a soldier or at least like our usual image of a professional officer. Their faces are round and smiley, their movements slow and deliberate; their way of speech does not evoke the brusqueness of military orders. In spite of that, these people had their nerves tested severely for years. From 1956 to March 1959, the People's Liberation Army units in Tibet were not in an envious position – an armed rebellion was being prepared before their eyes, attacks led by smaller, remote groups were reported once in a while, and the order from Beijing was: "Wait. Do not fire except in direct defence. No counterattacks!"

Opposite me are sitting the deputy political commissar of the area, Major General Zhan Huayu,⁷⁹ and two officers with the rank insignia of Senior Colonel:⁸⁰ the area chief of staff, Wang Kang,⁸¹ and the chief of the Political Department, Lü Yishan.⁸² Comrade Wang Kang recollects the escalation of provocative actions occurring in Lhasa since February. February 20 was a traditional Tibetan holiday on which the Dalai Lama was to explain sutras to the public in the square in front of Jokhang.⁸³ The Dalai Lama spent the week before the event praying in the temple. For the whole week, the rebels were spreading rumours that the Chinese authorities intended to arrest the Dalai Lama, and shortly before the holiday, they even claimed a cannon was pointed at the place from which the Dalai Lama should have spoken to the people. At the last moment it was announced that the sermon would be cancelled,

and from then on the wildest myths floated around, that the Dalai Lama was to be arrested or even had already been arrested. Armed gangs from other places started to gather in the city. On March 10, when the Dalai Lama planned to visit the theatre, rumours about his apprehension spread again. The city administration issued an order that each family send one man to join the procession heading to Norbulingka to plead the Dalai Lama not to go to the theatre.

It was clear since that day that the reactionists were getting ready for a big event. There was no end to the demonstrations: the serfs were simply commanded to join them, and many came to believe the provocative rumours. The rebels sent a deputation to the Indian consulate requesting the Indian government intervene. However, the main efforts shifted to preparations for military action.

The rebels took and fortified both hills dominating Lhasa: Marpori, on which Potala is built, and Chakpori,⁸⁴ the Iron Hill, where the building of the Tibetan medical school stands. They embattled Norbulingka, where they had 3,000 men in the end, they made a machine-gun nest opposite the entrance to the building of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region, and they pointed cannons from the old Ramoche⁸⁵ temple toward the building of the Tibetan Foreign Office.⁸⁶

As far as the People's Liberation Army is concerned, the no-fire, no-attack order still stood. Soldiers and employees of the Chinese authorities did not go out; they locked themselves in office buildings, where many

Tibetan staff and some Lhasa citizens moved in out of fear for their safety.

At 3:45 a.m. on March 20, the rebels launched a general attack. At ten o'clock on the same day, an order to mount a counteroffensive arrived from Beijing. The size of the forces was as follows: in all of Tibet there were about 20,000 rebels, and the People's Liberation Army had approximately 5,000 men. There were also about 4,000 Chinese officials, medics, technicians, officers, etc. in Tibet. In Lhasa alone, the rebels gathered about 7,000 men, opposed by an artillery regiment and ten infantry companies, two of which were reserves and did not intervene in the fighting.

The first strike was directed against Chakpori. It is an ancient, rocky hill of some 100 meters, where the rebellious troops built a number of fortified positions. The People's Liberation Army approached from three directions and seized the hill in three and a half hours.

Thus, the Norbulingka rebels were cut off from the city, and at 7 p.m. on the same day, they surrendered. That was the end of the first day of fighting.

March 21 saw an attack on the rebels' positions in the city. The rebels in Potala, which is situated outside the city proper, did not intervene in these fights; their cannons were directed mainly at the road from Qinghai to Lhasa and a group of buildings along the road: repair shops, garages, gas depots, and drivers' quarters. In the heart of the city, the insurgents fortified themselves in many noblemen's houses. Their strongest positions were in Jokhang and Ramoche temples. The main strike was directed against Ramoche, from where the rebels kept shelling the building of the Foreign Office. After the fall of Ramoche and several hours of street fighting, only two positions remained in the hands of the insurgents: Jokhang and Potala. These two gave up at 9:00 a.m. on March 22. In two days of fighting, the rebels suffered 5,360 casualties, in terms of dead, wounded, and captured men; about a fifth managed to escape. 10,835 rifles with ten million rounds and seventy-nine cannons with 20,000 shells fell into the hands of the People's Liberation Army, as well as a number of mortars and machine guns. The weapons were mostly of English, French, and American pro-

venience. The purging in Lhasa and fifty kilometres around Lhasa lasted until April 5. Then the second stage started: the battle for the region of Lhoka. Here, we shall interrupt Comrade Wang Kang's retelling – we will have the opportunity to follow the stages of these struggles right where they occurred. Let's listen to Comrade Lü Yishan in the meantime.

"The Chinese People's Liberation Army", begins the chief of the political department, "is a policy tool of the Chinese Communist Party and the Government of the People's Republic of China. Therefore, the liquidation of the reactionary rebellion could not be a mere military action. The aim was to liberate the Tibetan people."

However, the army itself could not liberate the Tibetan people until the people decided to liberate themselves. Therefore, mass political work was implemented together with military action.

The first prerequisite for its success was even stricter compliance with all guidelines concerning respect for the customs and interests of the Tibetan people that had proved successful in the previous period. During the fighting, these guidelines were elaborated in more detail and summarized into eight points:

1. Respect the religious and other customs of the Tibetan people.
2. The protection of monasteries and monuments, by, among other things, the prohibition of housing both people and animals in numerous monastery and temple buildings, and the prohibition of touching Buddhist scriptures and statues.
3. Do not damage or take a log, a straw, or a needle without paying for it.
4. All spoils of war must be handed over to headquarters.
5. Decent treatment of prisoners of war. It was forbidden to kill, beat, and insult prisoners; soldiers were banned from searching them without an order to do so.
6. A number of guidelines were issued with respect to those rebels who voluntarily surrendered. In addition to rules applicable to prisoners of war, they

also included a ban on investigating their previous crimes, a ban on holding “meetings of war” against them, and the principle of remunerating those who caused others to surrender or who otherwise contributed to the liquidation of the rebellion.

7. Besides fighting, soldiers’ duties included work among the population, consisting in campaigning as well as assisting with work. One of the mottos was “If you can’t agree with them, do something good for them.”
8. Protection of foreigners, provided they comply with the law. Most foreigners in Tibet come from India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim.

One small incident shows the sometimes absurd consequences of adhering to these principles: An egg disappeared in a house near Lhasa, where a part of a signal company was accommodated. The soldiers held four meetings to find the culprit among their own ranks – it didn’t help. Finally, they collected a silver yuan among themselves as compensation – which was worth about fifteen eggs – plus wrote a long letter of apology to the husbandman, expressing their regret of having a dishonest man among them.

War is war, and order is order. Therefore, the units had to report not only about combat operations, training, supplies, etc., but also about their work among the population. An artillery regiment that took part in the Lhasa fighting and then was accommodated near the town, reported from April 8 to June 28 the following:

- The regiment organized 175 meetings where the soldiers explained the Chinese Communist Party’s policy regarding ethnic minorities;
- the soldiers visited 606 families to discuss with them and to make their acquaintance;
- the regiment organized 17 arts and cultural events for local inhabitants;
- the soldiers cultivated one hectare of land for local peasants;
- to help housewives, the soldiers carried 459 pails of water;

- the regiment aid station treated 1,002 civilian patients;
- regiment barbers gave haircuts to 664 civilians;
- the soldiers helped Tibetan families with household cleaning 780 times;
- the regiment members helped repair 163 houses;
- a soldier saved one child from drowning.

It may seem strange that the above activities form a military dispatch, but they were of crucial significance. “People were afraid of us mainly in those areas where they had never encountered the units of the People’s Liberation Army. They were afraid simply because they feared soldiers – until then, they only knew the Tibetan army, and the old still remembered the Chinese armies of previous times. The rebels had told them cock-and-bull stories about us... On the other hand, they were happy that the rebellious gangs who looted, raped, killed, and drove people to forced labour ran away from us. After they learned what the people’s army was, they devised an original name for us: an army of Buddhas sent by Chairman Mao.”

It was the contrast between the feudal army and rebellious mercenaries on the one hand and the people’s army on the other that showed better than words who really had the people’s wellbeing in mind. During the liquidation of the rebellion, when scattered gangs and individual members of rebellious troops were hiding in the mountains, local peasants helped eradicate them in many ways. When they discovered the presence of insurgents, they informed the headquarters, and often helped as guides during the pursuit. Elsewhere, they even organized search parties and caught the rebels in the mountains. More often, though, they approached the runaways, describing to them the military situation, which was hopeless, and telling them about the People’s Liberation Army’s treatment of captives, in particular, those who voluntarily surrender. Liquidating the remnants of rebellious groups would have taken many months, maybe years, without such help. You mustn’t forget that Tibet, with its area of 1.2 million square kilometres, its high mountains, vast pastures where cattle graze freely without a shepherd,

and numerous caves known only by locals, provides the ideal terrain for the existence of small gangs, with shelter and food to be found easily. During the military operations, local peasants in the region of Lhoka restored 375 kilometres of road destroyed by the retreating rebels. Others helped transport supplies and ammunition.

“And so”, says Comrade Lü Yishan, when we think he has finished his presentation on the mass political work of the army and its successes, “and so we could move to the period of the real political work. After the period of convincing the masses and liquidating the remains of the rebellion, the period of mass work arrived. At that point, the standard form of contact between the army and civilians started to be insufficient. Political work to stabilize democratic reforms was necessary even where there were no military units and we had insufficient cadres.”

Since July 1959, the units of the People’s Liberation Army in Tibet assigned 1,000 soldiers, non-commissioned officers, and officers to political working groups. Most of them work directly in villages, where two- or three-member groups strive to create the political and organizational prerequisites for the “three antis and two concessions” movement and subsequently for the land reform that will build the economic foundations of the new democratic system in Tibet. The working groups encouraged the establishment of “committees for the suppression of the rebellion” and “peasants’ associations”, which represent the core of the future democratic administration. Other soldiers work in counties, some as county secretaries of the Chinese Communist Party or members of military control groups. Comrade Lü Yishan did not give us the details about this political work, perhaps because it was done outside the army or because he knew we would learn about it on the spot. He began speaking about another, no less interesting issue. He analysed the revolt from the class point of view, talking about the composition of insurgent troops and the causes of their quick defeat.

“Outwardly, they pretended to fight for the cause of the nation and religion,” he says. “However, it was

a class struggle in its purest form: the struggle of the aristocratic elites – both secular and ecclesiastical – to maintain feudal privileges and feudal exploitation.”

This manifested itself in the composition of the feudal army. The lords forced their serfs to fight, as did ecclesiastical dignitaries, their monks. Even most of the Khampas were reluctant to join the fighting, but they were in a completely different position, entirely dependent on their masters. It may be said that eighty percent of all who fought on the rebels’ side were forced to do so.

Besides, there were serious disputes between the Khampas and the Tibetan army and between the Tibetan army and lamas. It got so far that army units fought armed groups of lamas, and a clash between the Khampas and the army occurred in the region of Lhoka at a later date.

“If you consider it from the purely military point of view,” says the chief of the political department, “you wouldn’t understand why we won so quickly in terrain where we could hardly assert our technological superiority. The insurgent troops typically consisted of people knowledgeable of the terrain, used to a hard life in the mountains, and accustomed to the thin air at high altitudes. They were perfectly mobile, and a large part of their troops were cavalry, with their small horses at home in the mountainous countryside. The rebel leaders had some military knowledge, and they initially chose the right tactics: they ambushed small units and used disruptive tactics against larger ones. Why was our victory so easy and so smooth? The main reason was internal conflicts in the enemy army. First, there were disputes between the Khampas, the Tibetan army, and lamas, in addition to disputes between commanders and members of the insurgent troops who were forced to participate, and their eagerness to fight diminished as they uncovered the real reactionary nature of the revolt – and finally there were conflicts between the insurgents and the masses of people whom they treated with incredible cruelty.

An image of the last stages of the rebellion’s suppression unfolds before us; however, I am not talking of “purges” as we know them from the staff reports

of colonial powers. I don't know if ever before a victorious army that has suppressed an armed rebellion issued leaflets, established reception points where POWs and those who surrendered obtained medical care, food, and also clothes, financial aid, and supplies for the journey home, which could be undertaken – except for the main leaders – quite soon. Certainly, it has never happened that released captives and their relatives worked at such reception points as helpers. But is it really so strange? We should remember the introductory words of Comrade Lü Yishan: “The army is an instrument of the party and government policy. The aim of crushing the rebellion was to liberate the Tibetan people. The main goal was not military success; it was winning the widest possible masses for the democratic reform movement.”

I have remembered those words many times since. They were essential for understanding most of the stories we heard about the suppression of the rebellion. They were the key to recent developments in Tibet.

If you look at the maps of Lhasa drawn up by earlier travellers, you will see a rectangle to the northwest of the city, a short way behind Potala, which is marked as “Lhalu” or “Lhalulingka”.⁸⁷ More detailed maps have the rectangle coloured green, but one part, a smaller rectangle, which lies inside on the southern side, is of a different colour. The green denotes a park, *lingka*, and the smaller rectangle is a building, the main residence of the powerful family of Lhalu. We pass through the hotel gate, ride across the People's Square, turn around Potala and cross the bridge that had brought us to Lhasa. Then we do not follow the road leading to the west but turn right toward the north and in a while reach a plot fenced off with a high wall. This is our destination.

We enter the gate and walk into a large courtyard, a square whose sides are about eighty meters. The square is surrounded with buildings: two-story ones along three sides and a three-story building on the northern side. A wooden balcony built on the second story encircles the courtyard.

There are about a thousand people in the courtyard. They are sitting on the ground, facing the northern

part, where under a canvas canopy is the presidium. The canopy is richly decorated, but the people sitting under it are dressed plainly like those filling the courtyard. A man is standing in front, facing the crowd, speaking with excitement and repeatedly pointing at a figure we did not notice, because it's bent low. Only now can we see a man in a low bow. He is clad in a green overcoat made of quality woollen cloth, neatly shaven, his face flanked by sideburns that reach far below his ears, his hands leaning against his knees for relief, and he looks angrily at the people filling the courtyard. This is Lhalu Tsewang Dorje.⁸⁸

A double name in Tibet means that its bearer comes from an aristocratic family. Lhalu Tsewang Dorje means “Tsewang Dorje, the head of the Lhalu family”. However, Tsewang Dorje, nowadays called Lhalu, was not born into the Lhalu family; he is the son of an even more powerful family named Lungshar.⁸⁹ His biography says he was adopted by the Lhalu family. Such adoptions were nothing extraordinary in Tibet. If a noble family was threatened with extinction of the male line, it had two options: either one of its members returned from the monastery to secular life, where it didn't matter that he might have been a “living Buddha” – the embodiment of a Buddhist saint – or the family adopted a male from another family. However, power struggles between various groups were led in very unscrupulous ways, and, thus, such an “adoption” sometimes served completely different purposes. It is well known that, for instance, Tsarong,⁹⁰ the founder of the pro-British Young Tibet Group and the most powerful man in Tibet in the era of the previous Dalai Lama, was originally named Nangdrak.⁹¹ He became the commander of a division sent by the Dalai Lama to fight China in 1913. The real Tsarong was the supreme *kalön* when the Dalai Lama fled to India. It was Nangdrak's working when a group of lamas from Sera Monastery attacked Tsarong and his son on the street and butchered them. The Dalai Lama appointed Nangdrak Tsarong's successor. Because the Tsarong family had no male heirs, he donated him all Tsarong's manorial estates. Nangdrak then adopted Tsarong's name and to secure himself from the revenge of Tsarong's more

distant relatives, he married both Tsarong's daughter and his son's wife.

I am not sure whether Lhalu got his new name under similar circumstances, but he was the same type of person as Nangdrak, and his conduct was just as bad as Tsarong's, that's for sure.

Two weeks before our arrival in Lhasa, a public meeting, attended by 10,000, was held in the People's Square in Lhasa. There as well stood Lhalu, bowing to the masses of people. There too he had to listen to one accusation after another. His crimes against the whole Tibetan people were heard. After the thirteenth Dalai Lama died, he, as one of the young and active members of the Young Tibet movement, together with Tsarong, murdered the regent, the "living Buddha" Radreng.⁹² He is also responsible for murdering the "living Buddha" Getak,⁹³ whom he and the English agent Ford poisoned because he stood in the way of their plans to drive Tibet into a war against the people's China and to separate it from the People's Republic of China. Lhalu also eliminated the present Dalai Lama's father, who opposed the reactionary group of which Lhalu was a leader. Getak's personal servant, Zhepa Palden,⁹⁴ an old man who can hardly walk, made the journey from Chamdo to Lhasa to make his accusation against Lhalu before the people's eyes. He said in a trembling voice:

"I have come to avenge the murder of the living Buddha Getak. It was you, you devil with a wolf's heart and dog's lungs, who together with the British spy poisoned him! I saw it with my own eyes, how you forced my master to drink the poison! My master, who only thought of the good of the Tibetan people and of work for peace! No one knows how many innocent people died by your poisonous hand, you servant of alien spies! You don't have a single drop of Tibetan blood – you have sold the last particle of your body to foreigners!"

The former servant of the regent spoke as well and precisely described how Lhalu murdered his master; he remembered not only the year, month, and day, but also the exact hour. Then he opened his garment and

showed the scars from the torture he had suffered in prison after he was arrested following the murder of his master. "I couldn't quench my thirst for revenge even if I drank your blood to the last drop. I bow before the wise people's government, which forbids us to avenge our injustices ourselves, but here, face-to-face with the people of Lhasa, I firmly request that the patriot's murder be avenged and Lhalu be punished according to the law!"

Maybe you think the language unusual, but it stems from the conditions that have been unusual in our civilization for almost 1,000 years, conditions that Lhalu and the like fought to be maintained tooth and nail, with weapons and poison. Today's meeting is smaller, attended only by Lhalu's serfs, or better, his serfs that live in Lhasa and its vicinity: Lhalu's manorial estates are scattered all over the country – there were thirty-five altogether – and he himself probably doesn't know how many serfs he had. Maybe he doesn't know how many of them he murdered or had murdered; according to the current information, there were about seventy victims. No wonder the atmosphere in the courtyard is tense. Several armed guards are standing in front, near Lhalu. They are definitely not here to stop him from fleeing; the only way out leads through the courtyard, and Lhalu has no inclination to run through the angry crowd. The guards are here to protect him. Lhalu will have a fair trial before the court. The "struggle session" serves two purposes: First, it shall provide a lot of information to the court. Second, it shall expose the criminal to the eyes of the people, and at the same time, it shall help common people overcome their fear of the former master, who is now standing before them bowed and helpless. What a change for the man who used to command the Tibetan army and was one of the main insurgent leaders, for the man who merely had to beckon and any of those sitting in the courtyard would have been killed or thrown into one of the prison cells that form the first story of one side of the yard – a dark dingy hole without windows, water, without anything – just a dark hole where the convict lay on bare ground in his own excrement.

A former serf named Chuzang⁹⁵ is speaking now. From his speech we learn that Lhalu was a cultured man: he used handkerchiefs, which was not customary in Tibet. Chuzang's daughter laundered them, and when she hung them to dry, one hanky was carried away by the wind. The "cultured" master had her strip naked and punished with one hundred lashes...

Now we listen to Jutse,⁹⁶ a respected and pious man. Because of his piety, he took care of Lhalu's home chapel – he made sure there was enough butter in the lamps. Once, when he was sent to Jokhang, one of the lamps disappeared. He was accused of theft, and he had to pay for the lamp; of course, his price was three times higher. He became indebted, had to sell his horse, his best clothes, but in the meantime, the debt has increased to such an amount that he has not been able to recover.

With every new crime, fists are raised, and shouts are heard in the courtyard. The former personal servant Trinle Dawa⁹⁷ asks, "Who of you wasn't lashed by him?" and people start rising, move to the front and shake their fists at Lhalu. There is no one who wasn't lashed by Lhalu. An old woman and a young man are sitting in the front row. They are both agitated and loudly interrupt the speakers every few minutes. The old woman shakes her thin arm; the young man is crippled – his right arm is missing. I found out the reason for their anger only after the meeting. The woman's husband was *langsheng*,⁹⁸ a serf whose position was not much different from that of a slave. He served the Lhalu family his entire life, and when he grew old, Lhalu refused to sustain him. He had him lashed three times – and the man failed to stand up for the third time.

The young man was also a household servant. When his brother was dying, he asked Lhalu for a half day off; he wanted to say good-bye to his brother. Such impudence had to be punished. Lhalu ordered the young man beaten with heavy metal-plated sticks. They broke his arm, the wound became infected, and the man turned into a cripple.

Not all stories are that horrid. In many cases, Lhalu required even more work from his serfs than they were obliged to do under Tibetan feudal law and did not pay

them even the little sums they were entitled to. A "cultured" lord, who skinned his subjects alive and enjoyed murdering them...

You would think a man who is forced to listen to accusations that grave would be horrified and would wish the ground swallow him up; but when I look at Lhalu, his face only shows helpless, furious anger, as if he was saying "You scum of the earth! If I could, I would give you hell!" But Lhalu cannot – those days are over and will never come back.⁹⁹

During the time we have been in the courtyard people have pushed their way forward in agitation, the rows of those sitting have become denser, and a space has formed at the rear. Four men stagger there, carrying a heavy chest. It is full of deeds, notes of hand, which burdened the serfs like heavy rocks. They toiled and they paid. They paid maybe ten times more than they had borrowed, and the debt continued to rise.

One of the men takes a long scroll of paper lying at the top: a list of debtors. He reads name after name, new and new ones – the list seems endless. There may be just a few people in the yard whose names are not on the list. Further names follow, names of people all over Tibet.

Finally, the reading has ended. The men start to take out the deeds, some of which have yellowed with time. Who knows how many generations have paid with sweat and blood? They unfold them, tear them into pieces, and throw them into a heap. After the chest is emptied, a flame spurts up. In the meantime, some other men have entered the courtyard. They are carrying scourges, heavy rods that look like fly swats with leather flaps: these are swats for slapping the serfs – their master didn't want to soil his hands by touching their faces. These tools are thrown into the flames, too. The fire is growing, and people carefully sort through the ashes to make sure no piece of paper remains unburned. The meeting continues. Many other speakers present their cases, but we are leaving. Only now do I notice a closed-body vehicle in front of the gate – the Lhasa prison van. It shall escort Lhalu after the meeting ends. He is going to prison, where he shall wait for

his trial. Will he be sentenced to death? Probably. Even if his political activities are disregarded, he is a sadistic mass murderer. If it happens, the Western press will have another opportunity to shed crocodile tears over the “bloody terror” in Tibet.

However, it’s not important. Only two things matter: that crimes like those committed by Lhalu will never be committed in Tibet again and that the people who are thundering during today’s meeting will never again be afraid of their former master.

Chapter 10

We would have liked to meet Khampas but were told it was not possible. They all were released from captivity and returned to Kandze except for the leaders, who were imprisoned. In the end we met them unexpectedly during a visit to the People’s Hospital.

They were sitting in the waiting room of the outpatient department. Their skin was darker than that of Tibetans in Lhasa, and their clothes were different, too. These are the wounded who must recover before making the strenuous journey across the mountains to their homeland, which they have not seen for three years. We didn’t speak to them; at the time, we didn’t recognize them as Khampas. We were told only later by the doctor with whom we were discussing. In the meantime, the Khampas left.

Anyway, the interview with Doctor Zeng Hualing¹⁰⁰ was so captivating that we weren’t interested in the Khampas at the moment. Doctor Zeng is one of the hospital’s veterans, although he was only thirty-six when we visited. He graduated in Beijing in 1950 and a year later joined the army as a medical officer. The liberation of Tibet was being prepared, and the unit where Doctor Zeng served was to take part. The unit moved to Lanzhou, where a message arrived that an agreement had been signed and they could enter Tibet peacefully. It was no longer a military operation. He joined a group of soldiers, officials, political workers, and medics numbering 1,000. They rode horses taking the northern way from Qinghai; there was no road back then. Northern Tibet was still plagued by the gangs of an Osman bandit;¹⁰¹ they tried to avoid him, riding through uninhabited areas and getting lost several times.

On the march, Doctor Zeng had a lot of work, in particular because of altitude sickness. Some parts of this ancient caravan path were known for the “poisonous breath of mountain ghosts”, which made it impossible for people to breathe, deprived them of strength, caused their faces to turn blue, and sometimes killed them. Then he had his first Tibetan patients, and it wasn’t easy work. Some villages were deserted by their inhabitants, who, under the influence of lamas and Tibetan officials, had fled from the approaching Chinese units, leaving behind the seriously sick, who were found in desperate condition by the doctor, for they had been lying there without food and help for several days.

Finally, they arrived in Lhasa. There was no hospital at the time, only the healthcare department of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army. Since the very beginning, the Chinese medics were visited by Tibetan patients, especially serious cases, which the Lamaist doctors and their traditional medicine couldn’t help. In July 1952, a public health centre attached to the health department of the 18th Army was opened, which later became the People’s Hospital.

The number of patients did not increase at first because people saw the Chinese doctors only when they felt really sick. Lamas and local officials spread various rumours – they even claimed hospital treatment is expensive, although it was free of charge unlike traditional Tibetan health services. Those whom the lamas could not help included many people with pneumonia and a large number of syphilitics. Syphilis is a major health problem in Tibet, although no precise statistics

exist. The systematic diagnosis of this disease using the Wassermann test was only possible after the suppression of the rebellion. When they had tried the test before, lamas spread a rumour that the Chinese doctors suck patients' blood...

"Anyway," says Doctor Zeng, "we didn't need Wassermann with Tibetan army soldiers. We could start medicating them right away." Then the situation changed – when Tibetan doctors were at a loss, they sent patients to the hospital and took money from them for the recommendation. The hospital's reputation is mostly built on several famous cases. Our friend, the living Buddha Gaymtsoling, fell ill with pneumonia in the spring of 1952. They treated him with incantations, prayers, and Tibetan pills, all in vain. Because he was the Dalai Lama's teacher, and Tibetan doctors feared assuming the responsibility, they asked the hospital for help. Doctor Zeng and the hospital director went to see the patient, but before they could examine him, they had to get rid of the dozens of lamas who were burning incense, praying, and chanting incantations in a chorus. The diagnosis was easy: severe pneumonia. It took three weeks to cure him completely. Another case concerned surgery. This was the most difficult discipline in the beginning: it was considered a grave sin to open the human body. Then Tendzin,¹⁰² one of the most learned lamas, who occupied a high position in the Lamaist hierarchy, had an operation. His life was at stake: he had acute appendicitis; a condition that used to be fatal in Tibet. When, after a few days, he was walking healthily along Lhasa's streets, the ice broke. Even Lamaist healers later admitted that surgeons from the People's Hospital were knowledgeable of things that Tibetans could not do. The third case was in the field of obstetrics. It aptly illustrates the peculiarities of Tibetan life and the way the hospital had overcome religious prejudice and gained influence. A living Buddha, Demo,¹⁰³ a friend of the Dalai Lama, lived in Lhasa. When he was fifty, he fell in love, and the Dalai Lama permitted him to marry against all conventions. However, "the gods took revenge". Although his wife gave birth to several children, they all died shortly after delivery. Then she tried the hospital, and she has four healthy sons. Apparent-

ly, hygienic conditions in the maternity ward and the doctors' knowledge overpowered the "gods' revenge".

Similar cases helped to overcome prejudice, and the hospital could not complain about a lack of patients in recent years; the opposite is true. Today, it is not necessary for people to get used to the hospital; today's problem is the lack of medical doctors needed for expanding healthcare services. Previously, doctors rarely worked in the field, except for during natural disasters when the government sent aid carried by a special working group under military protection, and a doctor could "join in". Nowadays, groups of medics travel all over Tibet, providing treatment and collecting the information necessary for building up the healthcare network. The thing is, there are not enough doctors.

We interrupt Doctor Zeng with a question:

"Do you also have Tibetan doctors?"

"We only have two. One is a Tibetan from Gansu, who studied in Beijing. The other one was educated and trained right here. I shall introduce him in a minute." In a while, a slim young man in a white doctor's coat enters. He is smiling and holding out his hand: Doctor Ngawang Püntsook.¹⁰⁴ They added the doctor's degree to his name; in fact, he never attended a medical faculty. Doctor Ngawang Püntsook is a surgeon who learned everything, including theory and basic knowledge of the natural sciences, and gained practical experience at the People's hospital. Doctor Zeng is his tutor and patron and is proud of his achievements.

When Ngawang Püntsook was eleven years old, he became a lama at Jampaling Monastery¹⁰⁵ in the Lhoka region. No one asked him whether he wanted to be a lama; the family had three sons, and two of them had to enter a monastery. He stayed only one year in Jampaling. His uncle, who was a Lamaist doctor in the largest Tibetan institute of traditional medicine, the Lhasa Mentsikhang, wrote to the abbot and asked him to send his nephew to train there.

He studied Tibetan medicine there for eleven years. Then, in 1953, the local government decided that four young lamas should train at the People's hospital, and Ngawang Püntsook was one of them. He chose surgery and is the only one who has stayed. Two of the young

lamas ran away after two months, the third one after a year. Apparently, religious prejudice was deeply rooted in them.

Now I interrupt Ngawang Püntso. I remembered an episode from a book by Karel Beba, who was in the People's Hospital in 1955. He met a young monk who was training to become a surgeon.

"... he wore the white doctor's coat over the red monastic robe. He was putting surgical knives and tongs into the sterilizer after an operation where he had assisted. 'We sew people together,' he said happily, emphasizing the 'we.' 'Only here, I learned what man looks like on the inside. I can give injections, make blood counts, cut out furuncles, and can also tell the various stages of syphilis. Most of all, I enjoy assisting during operations. Surgery is a great thing.'" ¹⁰⁶

"Yes, that's me," Ngawang Püntso laughs.

"But Beba writes about a monk named Retsinpintso."¹⁰⁷

"It's easy. Retsinpintso used to be my monastic name. When I decided I didn't want to be a lama anymore, I took back my original name." Indeed, ordinary trousers can be seen under the doctor's coat, no monastic robe. This is not the only change Retsinpintso made after he returned to secular life. He had the courage to do it a long time before the uprising, and it must have been difficult for him. Since then, he has married and joined the Chinese Communist Party.

Ngawang Püntso has matured not only politically. Nowadays, he helps during surgeries, and he is a fully qualified surgeon. He is expanding his specializations: he is studying a discipline with a horrible name that commanded my respect when I was a child: otorhinolaryngology.

"You know, medical doctors are scarce, and I will not stay in Lhasa forever; I will work in the field, and you need more than one specialization there."

He tells us what it meant for him to work at the hospital. When he became a lama, he was a child; he had nev-

er attended school until Mentsikhang. He believed that everything is governed by divine power, that thunder is the voice of God. In short, all natural phenomena were explained as divine acts. At Mentsikhang, he was taught the same. Tibetan medicine is a mixture of empirical knowledge and superstition: for instance, bloodletting was forbidden on the eighth, fifteenth, and thirtieth days of the month. Not to speak of their medicines – there are about 200 of them, and almost half contain the excrement or urine of the Dalai Lama or another living Buddha. He had his first doubts at Mentsikhang. Ngawang Püntso saw that lords and paupers got different treatment. The poor were charged money although they were prescribed worse medicines. At the time, he tried to convince himself that it had to be that way; maybe he wasn't wise enough yet to understand everything. Perhaps less effective medicine could gain power after lying at the Buddha's feet for an entire month...

He wasn't keen to start working at the hospital at first, but he was sent, so he went. Here, he obtained basic knowledge about nature: he learned what thunder is; amazed, he observed a cell under a microscope – something he had not heard of before. At the same time, he saw the way patients were treated in the hospital. When he first saw a cured patient who had undergone a difficult surgery on the eighth day of the month, a forbidden day, it was a severe shock for the young monk. His image of the world shattered, and his faith gradually crumbled. However, he had the courage to follow the path till the end.

"Don't think it's easy. I don't believe in God anymore, and I don't believe in superstition either, but sometimes I find myself caught in certain old habits. But comrades at work help me overcome them, and recently my wife joined the effort."

The path from Retsinpintso the monk to Ngawang Püntso the doctor must have been difficult, but not always such path leads through dramatic struggle sessions.

Chapter 11

Lhalu Tsewang Dorje is a representative of the most reactionary wing of the Tibetan aristocracy. We know that this reactionary fraction influenced seventy percent of all aristocratic families. What about the others? What is the situation of the remaining thirty percent? What are their opinions?

This can be best answered by a man who played an important role in the development of Tibet in the past decade and who will probably continue to do so for a long time from now on: Ngaphö Ngawang Jigme.¹⁰⁸ He is the most competent authority, and therefore we go to talk to him.

We are sitting in the building of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region opposite a tall man with the tanned longish face of a typical Tibetan. He is dressed like a Chinese cadre, but his beige suit is made of quality woolen fabric. He speaks slowly and deliberately, pondering each word.

His name suggests he is a chieftain of the Ngaphö feudal family,¹⁰⁹ whose main manorial estates are located in the eastern part of Tibet. As far as we know, he is an old, experienced politician, whose career began long before the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet in 1951. He had been appointed a *kalön* at a time when intrigue and murder were a common political instrument in Tibet. During the reactionary rebellion, which was quelled thanks in part to his contribution, he was active among the rebels, and yet he survived. He must have been adroit as well as brave.

According to the official version, it was he who delivered the Dalai Lama's letters to General Tan Guansan. This is only partially true. When I was sitting at dinner next to him several days ago, I asked him, "Was it dangerous to carry those letters?"

Ngaphö smiled.

"Dangerous? You should have said impossible – and stupid. I took possession of the Dalai Lama's letters but knew it would be a crazy idea to take them out of Norbulingka. I was glad they let me through the gate, and I had been thoroughly searched. I couldn't smuggle

out a needle, let alone the Dalai Lama's letters. I entrusted them to an old servant, who could move about much more inconspicuously."

"An old loyal servant" sounds like something out of a fairytale, and I am not surprised: most of our fairytales originated in the feudal era, when there were old loyal servants or serfs, who served all their lives without pay, just for sustenance, and yet were proud of their service.

This is the environment where Ngaphö was born and still lives in. Yet he proved he was able to see beyond the walls of his feudal manors and five houses in Lhasa. In 1950, as a *kalön*, he was the commander of a Tibetan army division that was sent by the Dalai Lama to the east, to fight the Chinese People's Liberation Army. The Tibetan army had 20,000 men and new weapons; the rebel guns that we have seen date back to World War Two. The weak forward units of the Chinese army retreated at first. It was a tactical move that sealed the rapid defeat of the feudal army. The soldiers passed through territory occupied by the "red devils", and they heard from locals about the true nature of the "devils". When the first skirmishes occurred, the Tibetan army simply scattered. Ngaphö was captured. The commander invited him to a talk, explained the Chinese Communist Party policy regarding ethnic minorities, and released him with full honours. He was even allowed to keep his gun.

Ngaphö is not stupid. Although I don't know what lesson he was taught by his victorious opponent, he definitely understood one thing: a government that outside of the capital exercises its power only on paper no longer rules here in China. He also understood that the Communist party wants to gain not only poor people in Tibet; it wants to cooperate with everyone, even the aristocracy.

The defeated commander-in-chief mounted his horse and left for Yadong, a town on the Indian border, where the Dalai Lama fled with his advisers. He told his master what he saw, heard, and thought. Maybe

it was under Ngaphö's influence that the young Dalai Lama decided to send a delegation to Beijing. The delegation was led by Ngaphö, and it was he who as the principal delegate signed the Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet. Ngaphö has remained a *kalön* and later became a vice chairman and the secretary general of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region. We didn't ask how the cooperation with reactionary colleagues went or how he managed to avoid poison and the dagger. I bet it wasn't easy.

Anyway, Ngaphö is the head of a large and powerful family; I did not manage to get precise data about the numbers of his serfs. Some said 1,000; according to others, it was "only" two thousand. Apparently, he has held a certain position among the Tibetan aristocracy, in particular among those who did not take part in the rebellion. We ask him what the attitude of those people to the current developments in Tibet is.

"For a long time it had been clear that Tibet had to undergo reforms. We acknowledged this necessity in 1951 and incorporated it in the agreement. Even the biggest reactionaries did not dare deny the necessity; they only secretly grumbled that the reform would only happen over their dead bodies. What they said in public was this: 'Reforms, of course. But we are so backward, we must proceed slowly; reforms must be postponed.' This was not a common opinion among the aristocrats. Some of us see farther than beyond the end of our own nose, and especially when we traveled outside Tibet, we could see how the feudal system hindered the progress of Tibet. Maybe some people didn't care – but no true Tibetan could be indifferent.

Previously, we could only speak about such issues in secret because those who had power were on the reactionist side. However, during the rebellion, it was revealed who was against the reactionary jiggery-pokery; those who hesitated could learn a lesson from the prompt suppression of the rebellion. That made things clear.

The second session of the Preparatory Committee issued a resolution concerning democratic reforms and the 'three antis and two concessions' movement.

Although the composition of the Preparatory Committee has changed a little, it still consists of – besides several Chinese comrades – members of the Lamaist hierarchy and aristocracy. All of them supported the resolution. This shows the attitude of the part of the aristocracy that did not want to have anything in common with the rebellion and wishes for the fastest possible liquidation of all its traces. The current situation is such: democratic reforms are under way, the people are mobilized, and those noblemen who have stayed are for the reforms. However, it is not easy. The whole way of aristocratic life is based on feudal exploitation; therefore, the aristocracy must take the initiative and re-educate themselves. It won't happen overnight. Take, for example, an issue such as the attitude toward work. Work was limited to serfs, and contempt for serfs necessarily also meant contempt for work. This attitude must change fundamentally; aristocrats must find a way to the people; they must understand that work is an honour. It will take time.

Now it is necessary to overcome some fears widespread among the nobility. One concerns purchase prices; another is about the further progress of democratic reforms. As you may know, according to the decision of the Preparatory Committee, the land reform will consist in purchasing the aristocrats' land unless it is the confiscated property of the rebels. The purchase prices have not been determined yet."

We also know that the prices were not determined in the decision because a careful estimate had to be made first. This issue has been clarified, but there are some differences between different proposals. Depending how the differences are resolved, Ngaphö will receive compensation for his land ranging from 800,000 yuan to one million. Ngaphö himself suggests the lower purchase price. In any case, he will be quite well off: he will continue to own houses in Lhasa and the same piece of land as each of his serfs. It will be the best land, as former owners are entitled to choose from the allotted plots.

"Of course, the richest, such as me, need not be concerned; we know there will be enough left for us. The problem is with the poorer ones; they fear about their

standard of living. However, this worry is not such a big problem: the purchase prices will be determined in the nearest future, and fears will disappear.

Another fear mainly concerns struggle sessions. The party's policy concerning ethnic minorities says that no one who does not oppose the reforms should be punished for his previous treatment of serfs. But noblemen see such sessions at their neighbours' houses, and they are afraid. They say, 'After they get even with the rebels, it will be our turn.' Things will get better after the purchase and distribution of land; that will remove the barrier between the aristocracy and the people."

Ngaphö adds:

"The reforms will clearly mean lower incomes for each member of the aristocracy. But few of them realize that most of the nobility will incur fewer expenses, too. Did you know that serfs had to perform work for the local government? This duty was a servitude attached to the feudal estate. The truth is that the burden was carried by the serfs. However, there were a lot of noblemen who for various reasons didn't have enough serfs to do the work. For instance, previously, it occurred that entire villages died from smallpox. Although this has not happened in recent years, almost no such villages have been resettled. Elsewhere natural population growth was balanced out not only by the mandatory number of boys who had to join the monastery; the population even gradually decreased. If there was a lack of serfs, the lord had to buy himself out of the services.

Then you had taxes. The heaviest burden was again carried by serfs, but even a nobleman had to pay a lot: the feudal system was complex. And he paid to his directly superior lord and moreover to the government and, of course, to the monastery.

We will also be relieved of large expenses connected with mandatory representation during various holidays, where we had to keep old customs, we had to be dressed in golden brocade, and so on. For minor aristocrats, these costs swallowed most of their income."

Another question is, upon which principles are the purchase prices determined?

"The main criterion for land is net yield for six years. The prices are not uniform for draft cattle, houses, and

agricultural tools; they are based on the market price, which differs by regions."

How long will it take to carry out all the reforms and the distribution of land?

"As you know, land is not distributed in the first stage of the reforms. In the period of 'three antis and two concessions', ground rent shall be reduced to twenty percent of net yield, and the profit from the fields that have been confiscated shall pass to those who work on them. This is easy with fields that have been leased to serfs. Where a lord has his serfs cultivate his own land, the distribution of the harvest among individual workers must be decided by a certain body. The distribution of land proper requires much more thorough organization, and this is a task for the first stage of the reforms. As soon as the first stage ends, preparations for land distribution shall commence. A list of fields shall be made first, then a list of families; here it is expected that some lamas will return to their families. Only those who voluntarily decide to stay at the monastery will remain there. From now on, no one will be forced to become a lama. After the lists are put together, it will be clear how much land will be allotted to each person. It may happen that in some areas there are a lot of peasants and not enough land. In such cases it will be necessary for one village to leave part of its lands to the neighbouring village. After the measurements are finished, it will be calculated how much will be assigned to each family based on the number of its members. In certain cases, a family may be entitled to a smaller area than was the area of the land they leased. The Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region, upon agreement with the Chinese Communist Party Tibet Work Committee, recommends that such families be assigned a little more land. However, it will be up to the peasants to decide. In the next stage, the whole area shall be divided based on the areas of individual families, and each family shall be allotted their plot. Two principles shall apply: if possible, each family should obtain the lands on which it worked in the past, but the quality of land must be taken into account so that some families don't get only the best land and others only the worst land.

As you can see, this is difficult work, and it can be done only by the peasants themselves, for no one else knows the local situation as well as they do. A prerequisite is the creation of peasants' associations, which shall control the distribution of land. It's going to take different amounts of time in different regions; the period is not decided by the government or the Preparatory Committee: it will be decided by the pace and progress of the first stage of the reforms and the work of peasants' associations. The distribution of land has begun in some places, whereas in others it will not happen before the end of the year. We think that the distribution of land in the whole of Tibet should be completed by spring 1961."

The next question was this: The central government delegated the powers and responsibilities of the local government to the Preparatory Committee. At the same time, there are Military Control Commissions in Tibet, and new democratic forms of government are created. How are these forms interconnected, and how is power distributed?

"As for the fundamental political directives, the Preparatory Committee works independently, of course under the political guidance of the Communist party. The party only determines the main political direction; its detailed implementation is entrusted to the Preparatory Committee. Military control commissions exist in regions (*chichiao*¹¹⁰) and counties (*dzong*¹¹¹); there is no control commission for the whole of Tibet. A Tibet-wide commission could not very well have been established due to the fact that in the part of Tibet that was not involved in the rebellion – that is, the area where the Khenpo Council,¹¹² headed by the Panchen Lama, exercised the powers of the local government – no military control was established.

At first, the Preparatory Committee was not a governmental body and did not have its own administrative structure. It only had offices in regions, but not in counties and municipalities. However, the heads of the offices were mostly regional governors, installed by the local government, and they fled. Thus, the Preparatory Committee didn't have any bodies on the lower levels after it assumed the function of the Tibetan local

government. Therefore, it authorized Military Control Commissions on the county and regional level to exercise the powers of local governmental bodies, that is, of the Preparatory Committee.

Much more important is what is happening in individual villages. No governmental bodies were established from above, and there had been none in the past. A village, *zhika*,¹¹³ simply belonged to an aristocrat, the local government, or a monastery, and the owner exercised both governmental powers and court jurisdiction; in short, he was an almighty lord. After the rebellion was suppressed, two- or three-member working groups were sent to the villages. They are mostly composed of young people whose task is to mobilize the masses to embrace democratic reforms. The working groups are not administrative bodies; their role is purely political. Peasants' and herdsmen's associations have been established in villages, and their committees perform at the same time the basic functions of state authorities. They are the first state bodies ever elected in Tibet.

When there are peasants' associations established in the whole county, county people's congress elections can be held; then, a regional election can be held, and, finally, the election of the Committee of People's Congress of Tibet Autonomous Region. The democratic reform of the political system and the role of the Preparatory Committee will thereby end. We think all these stages may be completed by 1961."

It's all rather complicated, and we are not surprised. The goal is to establish a democratic political system in a territory that had not known even rudimentary democracy and where people could not even imagine what democracy was.

The interview with a representative of the progressive wing of the Tibetan aristocracy explained a lot. It also showed how closely the Middle Ages entwined with the modern era in Tibet. When we asked, for instance, how the land reform progressed at the Ngaphö estates, he replied that he himself tried to provide the best preconditions for the reform by giving the peasants accurate lists of lands, buildings, and inventory.

"I summoned my..." A word translated into English as "subtenant landlords" followed. It took a while and

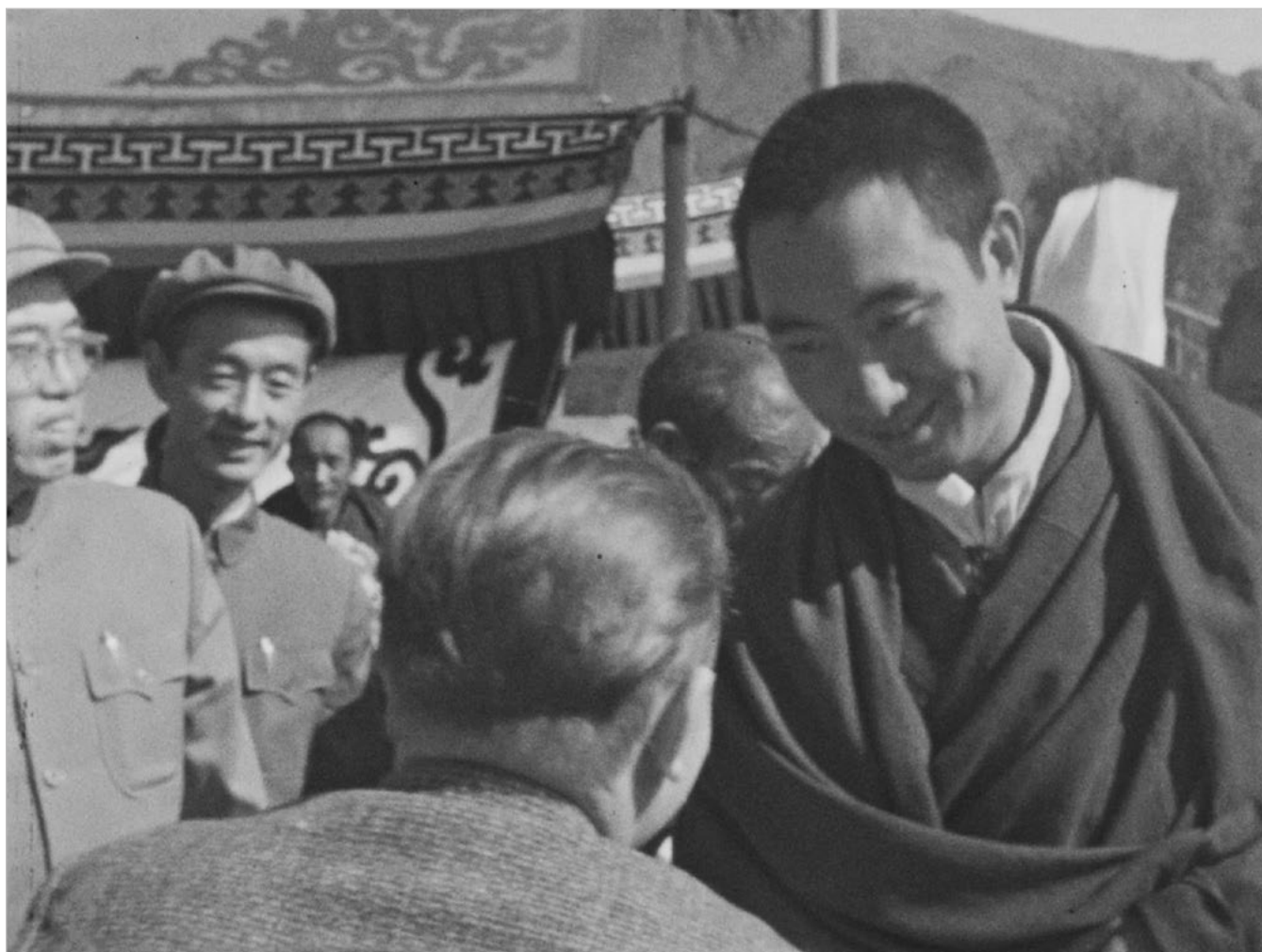


Fig. 83 / The tenth Panchen Lama welcomes foreign journalists — here with Vsevolod V. Ovchinnikov.

The host personally welcomed each member of the expedition at the beginning. They shook hands according to the Western custom and all guests were offered a *khatag* as required by Tibetan etiquette. The Panchen Lama welcomes the Soviet journalist Ovchinnikov in the photo. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 84 / The tenth Panchen Lama with Alan Winnington.

The group of journalists followed an unofficial hierarchy based on age and experience. The two most experienced journalists who had already visited Tibet before were at the top of this hierarchy. The first one was Ovchinnikov and the second one was Winnington from the UK. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 85 / The tenth Panchen Lama with his companions during the audience with foreign journalists.

The audience took place in the open space outside, but also inside a large tent specially erected for this occasion. The Panchen Lama's entourage included Tibetan monks and civilians and Chinese civilian officials and soldiers. They all participated during the audience for foreign guests. Many interpreters were also present, including those translating from Tibetan to Chinese and those translating into English and Russian. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 86 / The audience continues in a large tent.

The event continued in the large white tent with a decorated interior. The Panchen Lama is seen sitting on the left side and reading his written speech. Two Chinese men in dark suits sit behind him. Ovchinnikov (with glasses) and Winnington are on the right side. They are both occupied with their cameras rather than paying attention to their host. An interesting detail is the round can on the table with the "555" logo – "555" was a popular brand of cigarettes imported to Tibet from India. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 87 / The tenth Panchen Lama during the tent audience with foreign journalists.

A close-up of the scene from the previous photo — the tenth Panchen Lama with his Chinese entourage. They are not soldiers, but rather civilian officials or, perhaps, interpreters. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 88 / The first group photo of the tenth Panchen Lama with foreign journalists.

The group photograph was taken during the meeting near Tashilhünpo Monastery. This shot shows roughly half of the expedition members. The only published photograph of all “nineteen correspondents from twelve countries in front of Potala Palace” is in Anna Louise Stong’s book (*When Serfs Stood Up in Tibet*, 20). The technical parameters of its reproduction do not enable, however, the counting of the number of people in the photo. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 89 / The second group photo of the tenth Panchen Lama with foreign journalists.

This and the previous photographs are both screenshots taken from the film footage, only a few seconds apart. They are both very similar, but each of them shows different people. Together, these two photographs capture ten members of the journalist expedition. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 90 / The German journalist Eva Siao Sandberg during a trip to Zhikatse.

This German journalist with Chinese citizenship had visited Tibet earlier in 1956, when she accompanied an East-German lorry expedition to Lhasa. The photo shows her during her second visit, shooting on a film camera during the trip to Zhikatse. The group of foreign journalists travelled from Lhasa to the second largest town in Central Tibet at that time in GAZ-69 lorries of Soviet provenance. There are seven of them parked in front of a building and a tent is seen in this photograph. One of the drivers, wearing a Chinese-style uniform, cleans the limousine used as a representative personal vehicle of the tenth Panchen Lama. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 91 / Tibetan monks from the Panchen Lama's entourage.

The tenth Panchen Lama was always accompanied by his suite, consisting of both monks and civilians. This photo shows four monks and one more man, probably Chinese, behind them. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.

several more questions to understand what it meant: Ngaphö called his feudal tenants to Lhasa to discuss the land reform with them. This is exactly what characterizes the transformation of Tibet: yesterday, they were subtenant landlords and serfs, today everything is changing, and tomorrow it will be free peasants who will work their own land. But even now, when they do not own the land yet, the first forms of the socialist transformation of agriculture start to emerge as mutual assistance groups. Ngaphö told us about them, too:

“Understandably, we don’t yet have mutual assistance groups in the form that originated in China a few years ago. The groups were created as a form of common work on lands that were individually owned by peasants. Such lands have not been allotted here yet. However, we have feudal lords’ lands where serfs previously toiled under the bailiff’s whip. Now, when they cultivate the land for themselves, they’ve decided in most cases that they won’t divide the land into sections where each family would work individually with the harvest belonging to the family concerned. They’ve founded an organization that jointly cultivates the land instead; they’ve determined how the harvest should be distributed – based on the number of workers as well as on the number of mouths to feed in the family. The organization formally resembles the mutual assistance group.”

This second transition, this intermingling of different eras, manifests itself in our interview: Ngawang Jigme, the head of the Ngaphö family, a powerful lord who managed to retain a significant political position, explains how democratic reforms are implemented and compares the development of Tibet with the development of the Chinese interior. His speech contains a lot of words that wouldn’t be expected from a great feudal nobleman. It is a nice illustration of the strength and rightness of the Chinese Communist Party policy concerning ethnic minorities.

The “big three”¹¹⁴ – the aristocracy, the local government, and the Lamaist church – governed all areas of life in old Tibet. Feudal landholders created two mighty instruments of power: the state establishment and the church, which kept the villeins obedient while exploit-

ing them. The church also had its own “big three”: of all 2,138 monasteries, it was Drepung, Sera, and Ganden that played a major role in politics and that dominated with their lands and the largest numbers of serfs. All three are historically closely linked with the figure of Tsongkhapa,¹¹⁵ the founder of the powerful Yellow Hat sect,¹¹⁶ which held a prominent position among all the other sects.

The largest of these three is Drepung. According to the rules, there should have been 7,700 monks; in fact, it mostly housed 10,000 of them. The location of the monastery is typical of Tibetan monasteries. Its white and red buildings with heavily gilded roofs seemed to be glued to the sheer rock. People say that monasteries were built on steep slopes because in ancient times hermits took refuge in the mountains and the first monasteries were founded around their caves.

We are driving along the road that had brought us to Lhasa, about ten kilometres to the west. A side valley opens up on the right. Down there, in the valley, is also a monastery, a small but famous one. Nechung Monastery¹¹⁷ is known for the authority of its learned lamas, whose opinions on the interpretation of ecclesiastical and secular laws had great weight in Tibetan politics. Most recently, they proved that although Buddhism forbids to kill a mere fly, it was right to fight the Communist devils and that also lamas were to participate in the fight even if religious laws prohibit them from touching weapons. It is likely that after that feat of strength, Nechung lamas won’t be asked for their highly erudite interpretation of law anymore.

On the slope at the end of the valley is a whole town of houses small and big, white and red. We are climbing the road with its many hairpin turns, which is hard work even for the trucks, and we arrive at a small open space in front of the gate. We are waiting for the others to climb up, and after the customary ceremonious welcome, exchange of *khatag*, and sticking out of tongues, we pass through the gate and walk up a narrow steep lane where there are large stone stairs instead of pavement.

The monastery walls looked blindingly white from a distance. Now, as we are walking through the narrow

lane in the middle of them, we can see it was an optical illusion. Almost everything in the monastery is filthy: walls, dark rooms into which we peek through open doors, the robes of most monks we meet – they are greasy with dirt, as are the monks themselves as well as their dogs. Dogs are plentiful here; they lie in the sun, searching for fleas; there are large spots with no fur on their bodies – open, purulent wounds swarming with insects.

I am not aware of a rule in Lamaist sects that would require monks to be dirty; anyway, not all of them showed the same degree of filthiness. The religion is well known for its prohibition on killing insects and other living creatures. This fact is expressly emphasized in a legend from the life of Tsongkhapa:

When Tsongkhapa had a disputation with the superior of the Red Hats,¹¹⁸ which had been the most powerful sect up to then, he suddenly exclaimed: “You cruel man, let go the louse you are squashing! I can hear its pitiful cries, and my heart is torn with compassion!” Upon hearing those words that were the proof of Tsongkhapa’s absolute compassion, his opponent threw himself on the ground and the victory of the Yellow Hats was sealed – by defending lice.

We finally come to a place that opens to a wide view on one side; the slope is so steep that the place lies high above the rooftops of the buildings we have passed. We can see the main assembly hall on the opposite side. The slope continues to rise, and thus, the temple is above the space where we are standing and can be approached by a flight of stairs as wide as the building itself. The interior is dim, and when we enter from the bright sunlight, it seems almost completely dark. Rows of bolsters on which monks sit and kneel during prayers stretch to the opposite wall; the ceiling is supported with rows of wooden columns interlaced with enormous colourful, ornamentally arranged fringes. A throne on which the highest hierarch is seated during services dominates the front part of the room; a tall statue of the Buddha is situated next to the throne, and its varied colours shine in the sun’s rays. There is an opening in the ceiling above the statue, and the contrast between the low light of the prayer

room and the bright illumination of the statue creates a special effect.

We are climbing up, and finally we reach the roof – in fact, it is not a roof in the usual sense: it has several stories, and each flat roof of a building carries another, smaller roof, and only the highest stories are covered with the golden rooftops that are visible from far away. The gold is genuine; the roof area is covered with a thick layer of gold leaf. Five monks are standing under the highest roof. Two of them blow into the strange, long, metal horn called the *dungchen*,¹¹⁹ whose end rests on the shoulders of the third monk. The *dungchen* is four meters long, and its sound has a special depth and strength. Together with the somewhat higher tones of the trumpets known as *sola*,¹²⁰ into which the other two lamas are blowing, the sounds were carried far into the countryside to bear witness to the power of Drepung Monastery. Nowadays, they only seldom play the instruments. Today they took them out in our honour.

After we’ve had enough of this strange concert and taken pictures of the musicians from all sides, we descend a little lower and enter a row of rooms where an exhibition is taking place. It is an exhibition of a special kind: the lamas prepared it for themselves, assisted by the working group. The goal was to make clear what their monastery had meant in the past and why things had to change.

The first room presents a peculiar image: a map of Tibet with a cobweb spun around it. The spider sitting in the centre has a picture of the monastery drawn on its back; the knots of the web indicate estates and pastures owned by the monastery. There were 300 of them; 41,000 serfs, 25,000 peasants, and 16,000 herdsmen worked there. If we add the number of monks, we can see that every twentieth Tibetan was under the direct control of Drepung Monastery. And it is only one of more than 2,000 monasteries, though it is the largest and most powerful one. The chart does not contain an explanation of how much was paid annually by the serfs in various taxes and levies. There is, however, a summary of their debts: peasants owed on average four tons of grain per capita to the monastery. In total

it is 100,000 tons! Naturally, now it is not possible to find out how the debts originated; we only know that the consumption of grain in Tibet definitely did not exceed an annual average of 100 kilograms. Each serf thus owed forty years' worth of his consumption, and yet he handed over at least eighty percent of everything he reaped if he worked on a leased field for himself. Others, who worked directly for the monastery, handed over even more. In addition, the monastery obtained from its subjects about a million and a half yuan in interest, not to speak of interest in kind.

Where had it all gone? You would have to look into the enormous monastery cellars, which store so much grain that most had spoiled long ago, where there are innumerable stocks of yak butter, and also gold, silver, and other treasures. A part of the gold and silver is displayed in the exhibition. This do not come from the monastery treasury, but it is the personal property of high dignitaries, who appropriated a substantial portion of the monastery income. They were literally rolling in money. Next to the gold and silver, we can see a lump of opium as big as a human head; heavy, expensive carpets and furs; and an immense and diverse array of objects: cameras, phonographs, radios, watches, gold and silver cutlery... Ancient cameras and phonographs with horns next to the latest Leica model; old "turnips" stand out strangely beside state-of-the-art automatic watches – their owners probably had no idea of the objects' value, but they had enough money to buy whatever.

The next room houses weapons: rifles, machine guns, and mortars, mainly of English origin – most of them date back to World War Two. These weapons were not used during the rebellion; the rest was captured by the Chinese People's Liberation Army during the fighting. Their purpose was probably to guard the immense stolen property, of which only a small part is exhibited. They also served as tools to keep the people in line so that the monastery hierarchs could roister as they pleased. This is evidenced in the further part of the exhibition, which shows the activities of one pious man who raped hundreds of women and maidens – subjects of the monastery – and engaged in most disgusting perversities.

When I am leaving the last room, I can see the noble face of the Buddha ahead or rather below me. We are standing above the main assembly hall, right at the opening in the ceiling, through which sunlight falls upon the statue. Next to it is the throne which was probably often occupied by the man whose godly actions are described in the exhibition. He was also a "living Buddha", a reincarnation of a Buddhist saint...

We are descending another bit and enter a room prepared with Tibetan refreshments. High rectangular bolsters are propped around the walls; cups of butter tea are on the tables. We are welcomed by the chairman of the committee for the suppression of the rebellion, the monk Chönyi Rinchen.¹²¹ He is a young man with an open, intelligent face. His gown is clean, made of simple cloth: Chönyi Rinchen and most of the committee members are poor monks. However, there are also enough former monastery hierarchs – those who did not take part in the rebellion – among the members. One of them is Tupten Nyima,¹²² who looks like an illustration of Rabelais's or Balzac's descriptions of a fat monk, then Tsangbachende and Mi Wu.¹²³ Tupten Nyima and Tsangbachende are *khenpos*, holders of the highest ecclesiastical title that is not connected with reincarnation. Mi Wu is a Han and one of the most learned Buddhists in China. He came to Tibet twenty years ago to study old Buddhist manuscripts, and he stayed. A monk named Tsangbachende (meaning "charity") explains us the history of the monastery, founded by Tsongkhapa's disciple Tashi Palden,¹²⁴ one of the favorite pupils of the sect founder, declared by Tsongkhapa to be the incarnation of Buddha Amitabha and his other form Avalokiteshvara, or Chenrezik¹²⁵ in Tibetan. Amitabha's incarnation is the Panchen Lama; Chenrezik's incarnation is the Dalai Lama. However, these titles are not linked to the incarnations and were bestowed on their holders later. Tashi Palden was the first incarnation of Chenrezik, and his successors, Dalai Lamas, remained closely connected with the monastery; each year, they spent a certain amount of time there. The political influence of Drepung wasn't limited to the Dalai Lama. Spiritual dignitaries of the local government came from Drepung, and direct

representatives from the monastery participated in discussions on crucial affairs. The power of Drepung was symbolically expressed by two Drepung monks taking over the exercise of power in Lhasa once a year during the Mönlam Prayer Festival. During that time, monks also served as policemen inside Lhasa; the temporary monastic rulers did not acknowledge the orders of the local government, and once they even imposed a fine on the Dalai Lama. This situation lasted for three weeks.

In counties where all the land belonged to the monastery, and there were several of them, Drepung had its own courts and prisons. The supreme executor of power and the supreme judge over monks was *tie-banglama*,¹²⁶ “a lama with an iron staff”. He was also in charge of assessing the church levies that were paid by everyone, not just the monastery’s serfs. The levies were especially burdensome for merchants. Despite all its wealth, the monastery wouldn’t say no to any income: they invented various kinds of fines and diverse tricks to exact their payment. For instance, it was forbidden to sell cigarettes to monks, as there was a ban on smoking for lamas. It often happened that a monk entered a store and lit a cigarette; the monastery police rushed into the store shortly afterward and levied the merchant a fine for having sold cigarettes to the monk. There was a strict hierarchical division in the monastery itself – ordinary poor lamas were not much more than servants to their superiors, to whom they had to bow deeply at every encounter, and who punished and robbed them at will. While grain in the cellars went bad and members of the high hierarchy did not know what to do with their money, poor lamas were often hungry.

The monastery superiors were tied to the reactionary wing of the high nobility, who sought the separation of Tibet from the People’s Republic of China. In 1950 they called their subordinates to “voluntarily” participate in the military operation against the Chinese People’s Liberation Army, two years later they were involved in Lukhangwa’s conspiracy, and beginning in 1958 they were systematically preparing the armed rebellion. They sent food supplies and a force

of 300 armed lamas to Lhoka, where military units had been formed; they participated in all conspirative sessions and started to bring rifles and machine guns to add to the arms already stored at the monastery. At the time of the rebellion, they formed further armed units and sent them to fight for Lhasa. After the uprising was quelled in the capital itself, they surrendered but tried to hide a substantial number of guns that were later found by the soldiers of the People’s Liberation Army during a search of the monastery.

And after the rebellion? The committee for the suppression of the rebellion was created, which is helped by the working group; they have tried to gain the cooperation of all members of the high hierarchy who did not participate in the rebellion. They face a lot of problems. First, they don’t know how many monks will stay in the monastery. There are 3,000 at the moment; one part fled with the rebel troops, and a larger part left for home. The main problem is how to organize the future operation of the monastery. They cannot count on income from the lands; the land belonging to the monastery was confiscated because the monastery took part in the rebellion.¹²⁷ The monastery will retain some land – the entitlement will correspond to the number of monks who stay there. The cultivation of fields will have to be taken care of: serfs won’t do it anymore. This means that monks will have to work for their living; so far, the poor monks have done all the work in the monastery but have not worked in the fields.

However, the monks’ subsistence is not the main issue: for instance, the consumption of butter for sacral purposes is large. These needs will have to be satisfied from charitable gifts from believers. So much for economic issues.

There are also organizational matters. The old discipline maintained by cruel punishment, and the old relationships between monks based on strict caste differences have ceased to exist. They will have to be replaced: democratic governance and democratic relationships between monks must be formed. This is long-term work.

One short-term task is to be fulfilled now: mobilizing all the monks to fight the hangovers and residues of the

rebellion and of rebel rule. Until this stage reaches its peak, it will be difficult to start anything else. “I won’t tell you any details,” says Tsangbachende. “You will see for yourselves how we do it.”

We are leaving the room and descending again, returning to the courtyard in front of the main temple. The space is filled with boys in dirty red robes now. The oldest one may be twelve years old; the youngest is about five. They line up, they sit down on the pavement. A boy of maybe nine steps forward before the first row. We have seen the boy before: he was hanging around the courtyard when we arrived, and he was looking at our cameras with fascination. I don’t think he will stay in the monastery for long.

We are sitting down on the stairs leading to the temple. Chönyi Rinchen, Tsangbachende, and Tupten Nyima, who are our companions, are sitting next to me. Chönyi Rinchen excuses himself after a while; he has work to do. I look at the other two. They apparently come from quite rich upper-class families; their robes are made of fine woolen cloth, and Tupten Nyima, whose outline resembles a monk’s caricature, wears a costly brocade garment under his robe, which also covers his left shoulder, which common monks usually leave bare.

The little conductor raised his arm, called the tune in his bright voice, and the whole courtyard was suddenly ringing with the song we all know – “*shehuizhuyi hao*”,¹²⁸ “socialism is good” – the most popular song in the People’s Republic of China. The words are different. They sing in Tibetan; only the last stanza is in Chinese. I have heard the song innumerable times before, but I had never thought I would hear it here, in Tibet, in the courtyard of Drepung Monastery. More songs follow; the melodies are well known, and the subject is similar to the first one. Boys’ voices, trained to sing sutras, sound clear and bright. What are the boys thinking about as they sing? About their future life here in the monastery, in the dark faintly interspersed with the flickering of butter lamps, between cold walls that remember 500 years of history? I don’t think so. Today’s life in Tibet offers so many new opportunities, and each of them must seem more attractive to

the boys than the path which, until recently, looked to be the only possible one. No one had asked the boys whether they wanted to live the monastic life; no one had asked their parents, either. They were swallowed up by the greedy maw of the church juggernaut. Today, they can be reborn and start to live life for real.

The singing has ended, but the boys stay. Our guides tell us we shall see a theatre performance. Artistic creativity in the monastery – this is something new. A stage is built on the opposite side of the courtyard. It is made of canvas – a popular material, from which people sew various tents where they spend holidays and celebrations, even in the yard of their own house.

All the actors are lamas, and thus the only female part is played by a young man, whose choice was somewhat inappropriate: he is tall and thin, and the women’s dress hangs on him as if on a pole. The acting is primitive but enthusiastic. The theme is closely related to the monastic setting. The story takes place on a monastery estate. An old serf, whose harvest was poor, is unable to pay levies to the monastery and pleads for grace. The monastery custodian, a fat lama, won’t hear of it. He takes a liking to the daughter of the old peasant. “You can’t pay – very well then! You will give me your daughter instead of money; she will serve me.” The old man begs for mercy, but the custodian orders his servant lamas to throw him out.

The maiden weeps over her fate, wrings her hands, but to no avail. At first, the custodian tries to persuade her by fair means; he would move mountains for her, but the girl won’t listen to his proposals, pushes him away, and wants to escape. The lama snatches her and drags her behind the stage, from where her desperate cries are heard when he rapes her. Then the pervert returns and throws himself on the ground before the image of the Buddha precisely as we saw it in front of Jokhang. At this point, the boys were laughing out loud. I looked at them; they were captivated by the play, which undoubtedly reminded them of the recent past. It was apparent that they did not follow the sacred example of Tsongkhapa: every now and then, one of them would reach under his robe with an experienced move of his hand and without averting his eyes from

the stage, and when he pulled his hand out, squeezed something in between two fingers and threw it away.

My neighbour, Tupten Nyima, did not hunt for lice. He did not laugh, either. He was watching the stage with a clear expression of disgust. His otherwise shining round monk's face became lined with wrinkles. He wasn't feeling well during the performance.

Anyway, he didn't have many reasons to knit his brows. All's well that ends well. The young lamas who served the fat custodian sent a report about his crimes to the monastery. A "lama with an iron staff" appeared and punished the pervert. As you can see, a happy end found its way to Tibet, too; I only suspect the end of the play somewhat contradicted the historical facts. The old serf even got compensation for his damages from the criminal's property that had been acquired by theft. Was it common here that big thieves punished small ones?

We are descending again. It's a long walk this time; at the point where the path turns left toward the exit from the monastery, we go to the right to another courtyard, which is smaller than the one we have just left and is shaded by many old willows. Several hundred lamas are sitting on the bare ground among the trees, all dressed in the simple greasy robes of poor lamas. Among them are young men, almost still boys, and old men with deeply furrowed, thin, dark faces. Across from them stand three fat bowed figures in the rich gowns of monastery dignitaries. A chest serving as a reading desk is behind them. We have come to a struggle session.

The three men are Tsingpeicheta and Isichema,¹²⁹ two former "lamas with an iron staff", and Lozang Gonpo, a "living Buddha". The speaker, a poor monk named Ngawang Nangdrak,¹³⁰ furiously pounding the reading desk from time to time, is talking about the "reincarnation" of a saint in Lozang Gonpo's mortal frame.

"What kind of a living Buddha are you, Lozang Gonpo? You bribed them to call you a living Buddha! You paid because you knew you would be richly rewarded; stealing from people as a living Buddha would be easier! When I entered your service, you told me

that in a dream you had seen my mother in hell. I was a sucker, and I believed you. I begged you to pray for her soul; you heard my plea and made me pay you. Since then, you blackmailed me – you said again and again: 'Ngawang Nangdrak, your mother is not saved yet. I will pray for her once more.' I was such a fool to pay with money I had to earn by begging. You are an old fraud, Lozang Gonpo! You never studied to heal people; you sold them medicine you made from dirt picked up from the ground. Even that wasn't enough. When two peasants from a monastery village in Gam-pa dzong¹³¹ county approached you and begged you to heal their seriously ill mother, you said, 'It's a trifle. I am visited by a god every night. I can ask him.' You demanded 1,500 silver liang and barley and butter on top. They became indebted and had to pay long after their mother passed away. Did you give anything to anyone for free, Lozang Gonpo? You did indeed!"

Ngawang Nangdrak takes out a crumpled piece of paper tied on a long piece of string. He hangs it around Lozang Gonpo's neck, shaking the fat bowed figure unsparingly.

"You gave us this and told us: 'These are sacred amulets; go and fight the Communist devils. You will be protected and made invincible.' Where are the bodies of those who fell with your amulets round their necks, Lozang Gonpo?"

An indescribable commotion erupts in the courtyard. Dozens of people spring up and run to the desk with similar amulets in hands. Some hang the amulets around the "living Buddha's" neck; others simply throw them on the reading desk. The monks raise their fists and shout: "You sent our brothers to death! Confess now; we shall fight you until you admit your guilt! You call yourself a Buddhist, a living Buddha even, but you spat on the religion."

Further speakers are coming forth. A different image than at the struggle session against Tsewang Dorje Lhalu is unfolding before us. Greed, dirtiness – these lords in clean woolen robes and brocade gowns would do anything that brought money.

It was Isichema's habit to pick on a young monk. He followed him, and whenever he caught him breaching



Fig. 92 / Tibetan monks from the Panchen Lama's entourage in front of a tent.

Three out of the four monks from the previous picture are standing in front of a tent. The rich decoration of the traditional Tibetan white tent used for celebrations is clearly seen in this photo. The monk in front wears a foreign wristwatch. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 93 / Tibetan horseman near Tashilhünpo Monastery.

During the audience, Tibetan horsemen from Panchen Lama's troupe demonstrated their skills to honour the foreign guests. They competed in speed racing, archery, and the traditional art of horse riding. These kinds of competitions were usually part of all kinds of traditional celebrations and religious festivals in Tibet. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 94 / A street in Zhikatse.

Jan Vinař described his impressions from Zhikatse with these words: "It's not as busy as Lhasa. The whole town is somewhat sleepy; even trade seems less thriving, although the Indian border, from where all the goods except tea came up until recently, is half the distance away. There are fewer people on the streets, but many scabby dogs. Chalk-drawn lines are visible at about a metre's distance from the walls of houses: the tenants marked where private property ends, so that people relieve themselves only in the public part of the street. Lhasa has already solved this problem in a different way: they built a number of public lavatories to keep the streets clean." Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 95 / A view of Zhikatse.

It is the same street as in the previous photo, this time also showing the upper parts of the houses and their roofs, verandas and other architectural elements typical of traditional Tibetan houses. Rising roof constructions, with golden ornaments typical for Buddhist temples, are seen behind, below the mountain ridge on the horizon. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 96 / Upper floor of a building in Tashilhünpo Monastery.

More details of a building are seen in the photograph: wooden window frames and awnings shielding the windows from the sun, a flat inhabitable roof, and the wooden railings of the bridges connecting buildings. A small wooden balcony is seen on the right side of the picture. One of the journalists is standing on the roof in the central part of the photo, taking photographs of the town's peripheral area with high mountains behind. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 97 / One of the foreign journalists on a roof in Tashilhünpo.

The previous two pictures and several of the following ones are all taken from the same place — the gallery of a large house, probably in the Tashilhünpo Monastery complex. The gallery was on the same level as the roofs of the surrounding buildings, therefore it was possible to walk from one roof to another. The journalist in the photo remains unidentified. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 98 / Detailed view of a railing on the rooftop in Tashilhünpo.

The cast iron elements of the railings are a remarkable detail, being undoubtedly highly unusual in Tibet at that time. Using iron casts imported from India instead of wood, which was already very expensive in Tibet, would have been a sign of significant wealth. Only monasteries or nobility could afford them. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 99 / Details of railings and galleries of a large stone building in Tashilhünpo.

It is clear from the photograph that the two-story house had a large stone-slabbed courtyard and a gallery on each floor. The building itself was made of stone, with wooden pillars holding the galleries. Only the rooftop railing had the cast iron elements also seen in the previous picture. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 100 / Tibetan man standing on the rooftop on a building in Tashilhünpo.

An older man in a typical Tibetan costume and a hat posed for the camera in this unusual photograph including a local inhabitant and a foreign journalist sitting on the left side in the background. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 101 / A view from the gallery into a courtyard.

The photograph captured twelve men in Chinese-style uniforms having a rest in the courtyard. It is not clear whether they are the PLA soldiers as they have no distinctions or weapons, but they are in all probability Chinese and not local Tibetans. They might have accompanied foreign journalists on their trip from Lhasa to Zhikatsé or could have been members of a local garrison. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 102 / Arriving at Drepung Monastery.

As part of the expedition's program, the foreign journalists visited Drepung Monastery in the suburbs of Lhasa. It is one of the three large Gelug monasteries in the vicinity of Lhasa, along with Sera Monastery located on the northern periphery of the town and Ganden, situated in an amphitheatre of mountains some sixty kilometres north-east of Lhasa. Drepung Monastery is now a part of larger Lhasa, several few kilometres west of Potala Palace. The Drepung can be seen in the central part of the picture with a road leading to the complex nestled below high mountains on the horizon. Two lorries are seen on the road and several people walking in their direction. The elderly lady with the walking stick is in all probability Anna Louise Strong, the oldest member of the expedition who was at that time seventy-four years old. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 103 / Two monks blowing short tubes called *gyaling*.

Monks posing for foreign journalists on the roof in the Drepung Monastery complex, blowing short tubes called *gyaling* (*rgya gling* རྟོ་གླིང་). Source: *Shots from Tibet*.

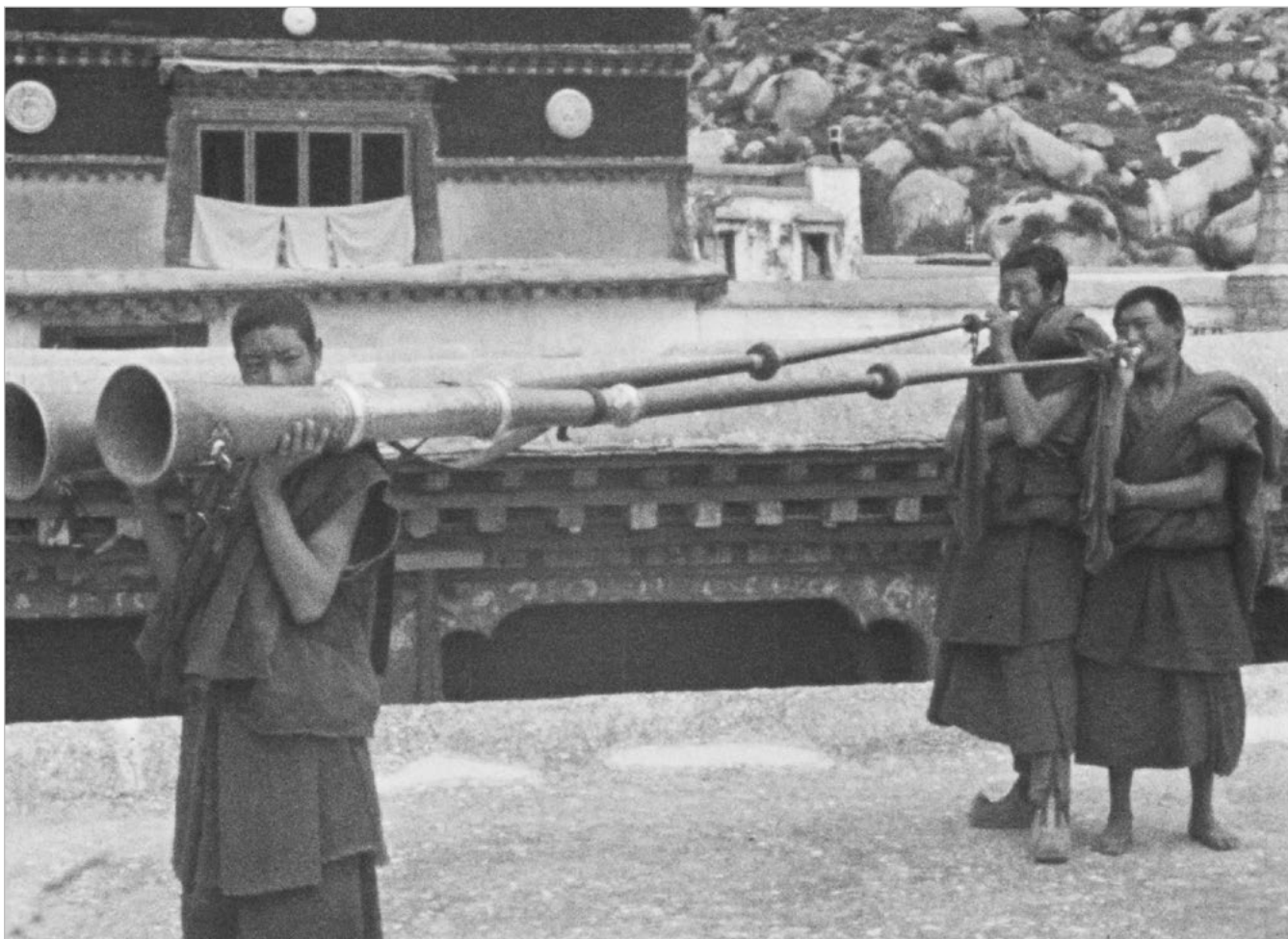


Fig. 104 / Two monks assisted by another monk blowing long tubes called *dungchen*.

Three monks pose for foreign journalists on a roof in Drepung Monastery, blowing long tubes called *dungchen* (*dung chen* དུང་ཆེན་). Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 105 / Ritual music instruments.

Monks from the previous pictures all together performing with their ritual instruments; rocks behind the monastery can be seen in the background.
Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 106 / Little monks in Drepung singing the Chinese song *Socialism is Good*.

Jan Vinař described this scene: “The little conductor raised his arm, called the tune in his bright voice, and the whole courtyard was suddenly ringing with the song we all know — *shehuizhuyi hao*, ‘socialism is good’ — the most popular song in the People’s Republic of China. The words are different. They sing in Tibetan; only the last stanza is in Chinese. I have heard the song innumerable times before, but I had never thought I would hear it here, in Tibet, in the courtyard of Drepung Monastery. More songs follow; the melodies are well known, and the subject is similar to the first one. Boys’ voices, trained to sing sutras, sound clear and bright. What are the boys thinking about as they sing? Are they thinking about their future life here in the monastery, in the dark faintly interspersed with the flickering of butter lamps, between cold walls that remember 500 years of history? I don’t think so. Today’s life in Tibet offers so many new opportunities, and each of them must seem more attractive to the boys than the path which, up until recently, seemed to be the only possible one.” Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 107 / Theatre performance for monks in Drepung.

Jan Vinař: "Our guides tell us that we will see a theatre performance. Artistic creativity in the monastery — this is something new. A stage is built on the opposite side of the courtyard. It is made of canvas — a popular material, from which people sew various tents where they spend holidays and celebrations, even in the yard of their own house." As concerns the theatre production, the Drepung monks inclined to minimalism, which is not unusual for all kinds of traditional theatre in Asia. The only props the monks used were canvases with Buddhist decorative art, one larger scroll (*tangka*, *thang ka* ཐང་ཀ་), a small table for offerings, covered with a cloth and with burning butter lamps on it, and a thick carpet on the floor. There was another table, usually used for ritual instruments during Buddhist ceremonies, but it was empty most of the time, except for a period of time when they placed a tea bowl on it. The last prop was a large metal pot for hot water or tea and a metal kettle. It was not clear what these props were used for during the performance. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 108 / A scene from the play — the only female character enters the stage.

Jan Vinař: "All the actors are lamas, and thus the only female part is played by a young man, whose choice was somewhat inappropriate: he is tall and thin, and the women's dress hangs on him as if on a pole. The acting is primitive but enthusiastic." Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 109 / A scene from the play — monastery custodian, a plump violent lama, the rapist.

Jan Vinař: "The theme is closely related to the monastic setting. The story takes place on a monastery estate. An old serf, whose harvest was poor, is unable to pay levies to the monastery and pleads for grace. The monastery custodian, a plump lama, won't hear of it. He takes a liking to the daughter of the old peasant. 'You can't pay — very well then! You will give me your daughter instead of money; she will serve me.' The old man begs for mercy, but the custodian orders his servant lamas to throw him out." Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 110 / A scene from the play — a girl is dragged behind the scene where she is raped.

Jan Vinař: "The maiden weeps over her fate, wrings her hands, but to no avail. At first, the custodian tries to persuade her by fair means; he would move mountains for her, but the girl won't listen to his proposals, pushes him away, and wants to escape. The lama snatches her and drags her behind the stage, from where her desperate cries are heard when he rapes her. The pervert returns and throws himself on the ground before the image of the Buddha, precisely as we saw it in front of Jokhang. At this point, the boys were laughing out loud. I looked at them; they were captivated by the play, which undoubtedly reminded them of the recent past." Source: *Shots from Tibet*.

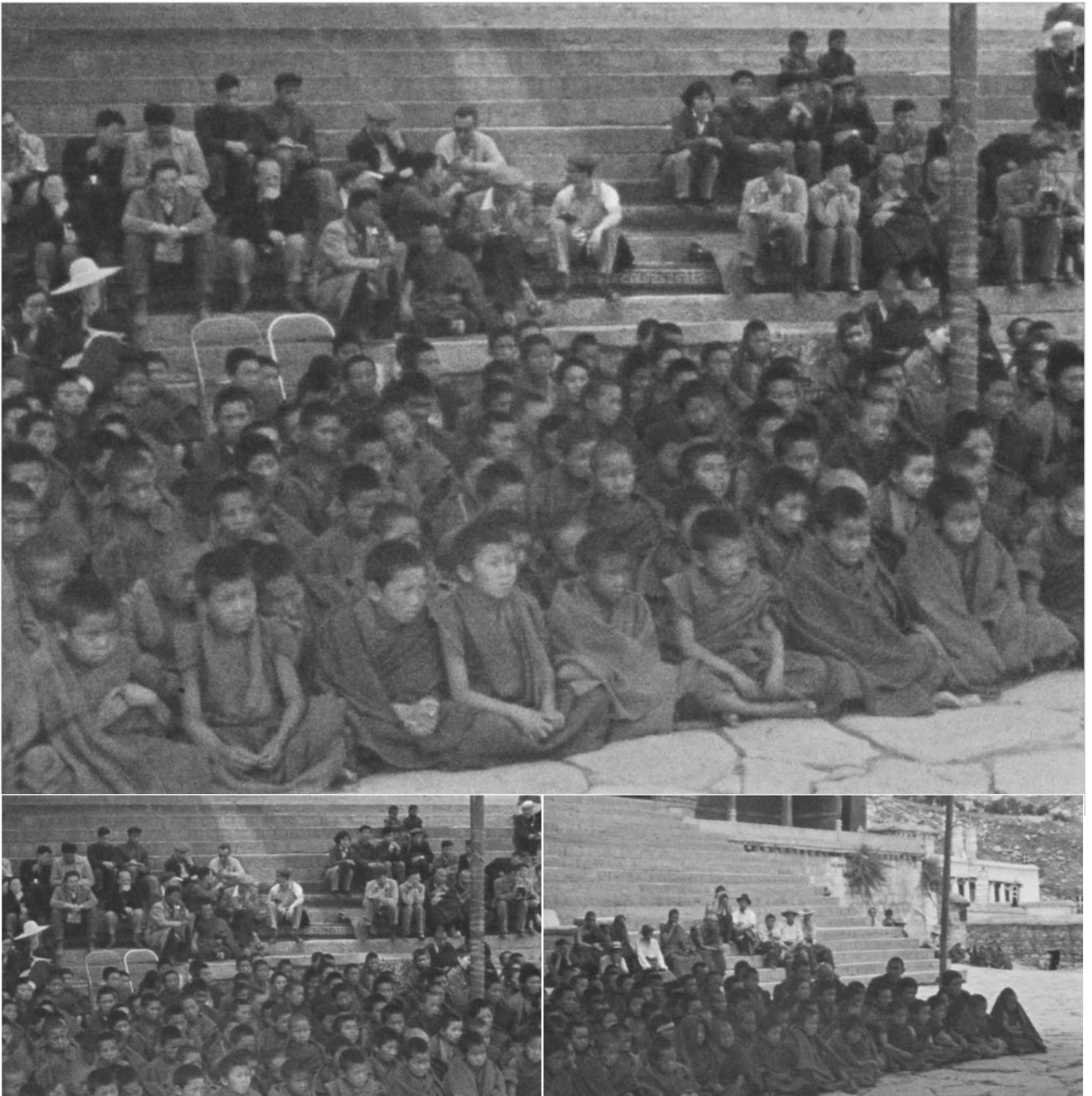


Fig. 111 / The audience watching the theatre performance in Drepung.

All the young monks, including small children, were watching the play along with the foreign journalists and their Chinese companions. Some older monks were also present. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.

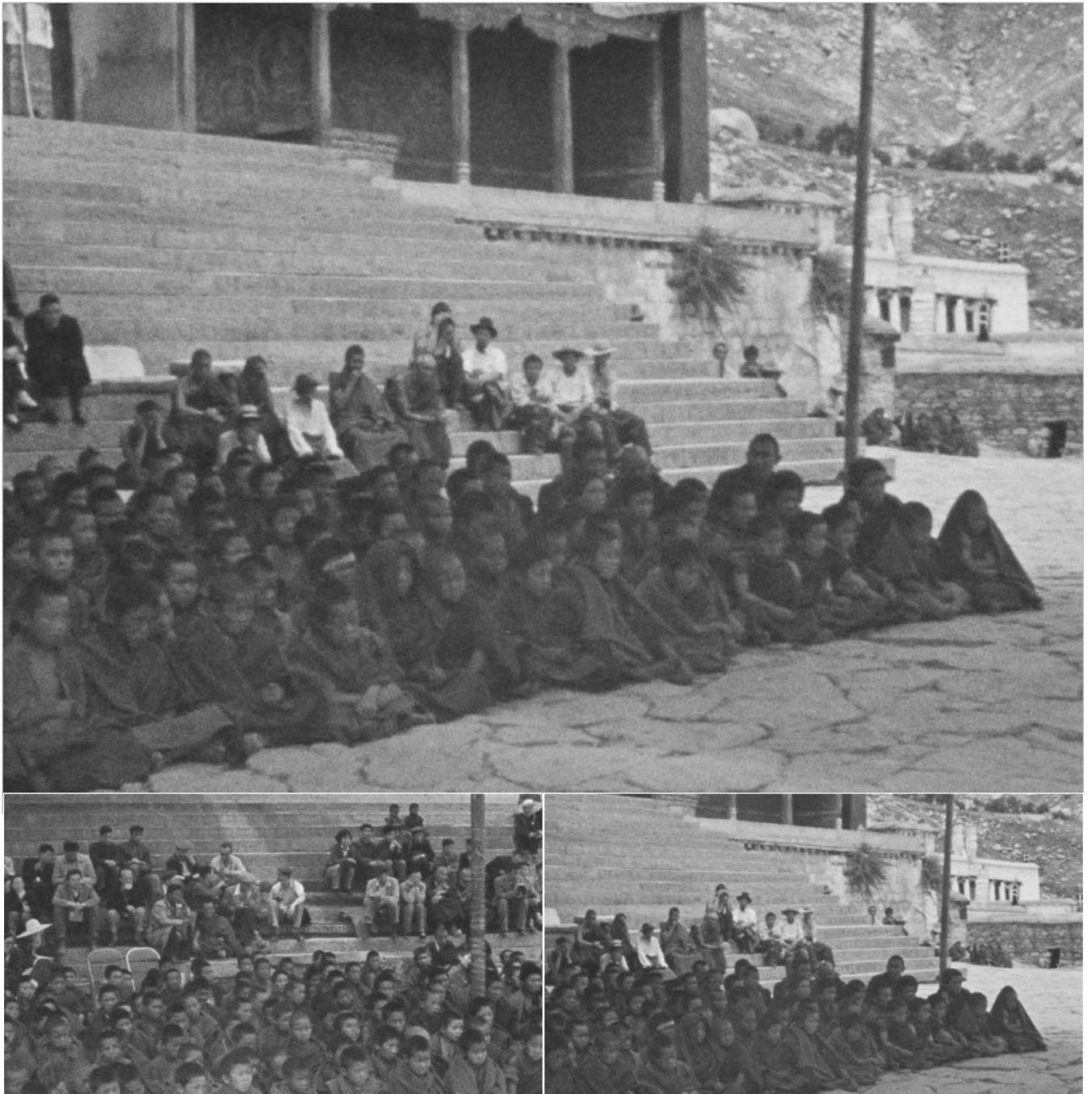


Fig. 112 / The improvised auditorium in Drepung — the stairs at the entrance to the main assembly hall.

The audiences were sitting on large stairs leading to the main assembly hall of the monastery, the *tshokchen dukhang* (*tshogs chen 'du khang* ཚོགས་ཆེན་འདུ་ཁང་). The improvised auditorium and the stage were partly shielded by a large canopy. There are more monastery buildings with rocks behind them on the right-hand side. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.

the rules in the slightest way or idling at work, he punished him with a beating and made him pay to be pardoned. Tsingpeicheta is reproached for a nasty story: the living Buddha Tetselatsang¹³² from a remote monastery sent a message to Drepung, writing that he had some gifts for the monastery and would they send monks to carry them away. Drepung sent ten monks, and each brought a heavy load of yak butter. As a reward, Tetselatsang gave each of them a leather sack of *chinko*. Tsingpeicheta stole the *chinko* and replaced it with sand...

However, the three standing here now aren't the main villains; they simply used their power to steal from individual monks. Their superiors didn't deal with such trifles; they stole directly from the rich monastery treasuries.

Night is closing in, yet the session is not coming to an end. As we are leaving, I look at Tupten Nyima, who came with us. He is standing under a tree, watching the three bent figures, panic clearly visible in his face. His conscience is not clear, and he probably doesn't believe the assurance that old crimes will be forgiven those who did not take part in the rebellion. Once outside, we take a deep breath. Although we have spent several hours outdoors, the air is never clean inside the monastery even if there is no roof. We leave, and as we turn to the main road, we take one last glimpse back. The monastery stands as it has been standing for centuries, and it looks like a fortress. But even this fortress of darkness and superstition has been penetrated by new life.

The village of Nankangosi¹³³ is situated west of Lhasa, a little farther than Drepung. The Kyichu valley sprawls almost thirty kilometres wide; fields, mostly planted with barley, can be seen all around. The fields teem with life; it is shortly before the harvest, but the corn is still green. The peasants who will reap it for themselves for the first time in history are trying to supply it with water for the seeds to become nice and full. They dig through dams that were used to protect the fields from flooding two weeks ago, make ditches, and distribute water to the fields by means of small channels.

We stop at a nice house, probably belonging to the local landowner, and become acquainted with members of the Military Control Commission for the county of Lhasa-West. The chairman of the commission is Captain Gao Dingzhuan, a young, energetic officer; I can see two more Chinese comrades among the members, and the rest are Tibetans, probably peasants, judging by their clothes. It's our first visit to the countryside, and we have many questions – about the commission's work, about the organization of democratic reforms and their progress. After all, the actual liberation of the Tibetan people is mainly in the hands of peasants and herdsmen.

Captain Gao himself fought in local battles. Strong rebellious gangs whose task was to cut off the road from Lhasa to Qinghai concentrated here. Both their esprit de corps and their organization were poor, and they were dispersed after the first serious strikes. Captain Gao's unit remained in place for several more days until purging was completed and then left. He was posted to organize the activities of the Military Control Commission.

“Of course, the first task was to eliminate the old feudal county government and to build a new one. At the same time, we had to return life back to normal – naturally, we didn't mean to restore outdated notions, but it was necessary that people calm down and pursue their work in peace. The third task was the mass promotional campaign. All the people had to be informed of the party's policy. First, we proclaimed the new rule: the harvest shall belong to those who grew it.” The commission was soon aided by working groups coming to villages, which started to explain to the peasants directly on the spot the significance of the changes to be implemented in Tibet, and to gain them for active participation.

“In the first stage, we fought those who openly revolted. We used the army first, then we had to find those who went into hiding. People didn't like them and helped us. However, the fight against the hidden enemy was much harder.

The resolution of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region on democratic reforms and

the declaration of ‘three antis and two concessions’ meant huge progress. Although local peasants had known ‘there would be no more lords,’ concrete directives for the implementation of reforms – like the elimination of statute labour, the cancellation of a large part of people’s debts and the reduction of interest on the rest, the reduction or elimination of ground rent on the confiscated lands of rebels – were things they understood immediately. Many rebels returned to the county – mostly less important participants who had been released from captivity. Among them were many aristocrats and estate custodians who had transgressed in the past. The peasants themselves started to claim that these people were held accountable at struggle sessions. Twenty-two such sessions were organized against sixty-eight accused. Only fifteen people were arrested. We only arrested those who had committed serious offenses – for instance, those responsible for killings. Our task is to gain everyone who can be gained, and we think that many an offender will think twice when they stand with their heads bowed in front of the people. However, when it came to severe crimes, we were obliged to arrest them even if we didn’t want to; otherwise we would oppose the will of the masses.

One of the arrested criminals was the former deputy of the *dzongpön*, the county governor. He had six human lives on his conscience, and he beat a pregnant woman to death.” Captain Gao adds:

“Those struggle sessions were horrific. Before I joined the army, I worked in the Youth League, and I attended a lot of inland struggle sessions at the time of the land reform. But I had never seen such cruel exploitation, such beastly oppression, such suffering of the masses, and I would never have thought it could be possible.”

No wonder many peasants wanted to beat their old enemies at the first struggle sessions, the same as they used to beat their serfs. “It was quite easy to explain to them that this was not right, that they would only be copying their lords. When the lord has to bow at the session, the peasants immediately understand that the old days are forever over. Many say, ‘Your sun has set; ours is shining now.’ Many weep at the session,

and when it’s finished, they don’t part. They sing new songs they composed: songs with old sad tunes, but new lyrics.”

After the struggle sessions, the peasants’ activities grew immensely. They went to see the control commission and asked that the land be distributed. The commission members answered, “We don’t have any land and can’t give you any. You must take the land yourselves!”

“The preparation of land distribution will be explained to you in Yangta *zhika* by members of the working group and comrades from the peasants’ association,” adds Captain Kao. “But maybe I should first give you a small overview of the situation in the county, serf categories, and land ownership.”

Naturally, we are interested and diligently take notes.

Tibetan serfs were divided into three main categories: *Tsaipa* [Tib. *trelwa*] (in some parts of Tibet pronounced as “chaabaa”), *tuijung* [Tib. *düchung*], and *langsheng* [Tib. *nangzen*] (in some regions pronounced as “nangsen”).¹³⁴

A *tsaipa* lived similarly to a peasant serf in medieval Europe. He rented the lord’s land, which he cultivated for himself and his family, and paid mainly in labour but also in grain and money. For every ten *khe*¹³⁵ (approximately 0.7 ha) of land, he gave the lord one full-time worker; this aspect differed from, for example, Bohemia, where statute labour was not explicitly stipulated in the lease. The person toiled for the lord for the whole year and did not get anything – the *tsaipa* sustained him or her at his own expense. It was not specified who should fulfill the labour obligation¹³⁶ (*ula*).¹³⁷ It could be the *tsaipa* himself, a family member, or a hired labourer. *Tsaipas* ranged from poor to rich. A poor *tsaipa* had little land, which was not enough to sustain himself and his family, and he had to take up menial jobs. A moderately wealthy *tsaipa* cultivated the land himself, hired labour to fulfill the *ula*, and had enough fields to feed himself. A rich *tsaipa* hired workers because he had more land than he and his family could till. Some *tsaipas* did not work on their land; these mostly included estate managers and bailiffs. A *tuijung* had only one duty: every year

he paid the capitation tax for himself and each family member. If he rented land, it was based on a special voluntary agreement, either for a fixed rent or a share in the harvest, which was fifty percent or more. Besides the rent, he also had to pay the capitation tax. *Tuijungs* usually did not rent land; they earned their living and money for taxes as craftsmen, cartmen, traders, or labourers. Some served *tsaipas* or performed the *ula* for them; others worked for wages for their own lord or another master. A *langsheng* differed only little from a slave. The history of Tibet is not thoroughly known in this respect, and therefore it is not clear whether *langshengs* were originally slaves or whether *tuijungs* and *langshengs* were *tsaipas* who had gone poor. The only substantial difference between a *langsheng* and a slave was that a lord could not sell or buy a *langsheng*. However, he could donate him or her to a daughter as part of a dowry – this was customary with personal servants. *Langshengs* worked in the master’s fields or in the master’s house, ate what they were given, wore discarded clothes, and were not allowed to leave the house without permission.

All serfs except for *langshengs* had to pay various fees to the church and taxes to the local government; all with no exception had to work for free for local government officials as part of the *ula*.

Captain Gao begins to talk about the county of Lhasa-West. The first sentence is strange:

“The county was established by joining two old dzongs. No one knows its area.”

We learn that the old Tibetan authorities were not interested in such banalities as cadastral maps, land surveying, etc. All existing measurements of Tibet were made for the purposes of creating geographic maps. The county was divided into 115 *zhikas* and 15 homesteads, 131 units altogether.

The meaning of the Tibetan word *zhika* is similar to “manorial estate”. It covers feudal property, including buildings, lands, serfs, and cattle, and its owner could be an aristocrat, a monastery, or the local government. The homesteads Comrade Gao mentioned are smaller estates, which do not have their own manager and belong under the administration of a *zhika*.

The population of the county is 16,680, from 2,267 families.¹³⁸

The county has 42,731 *khe* of cultivated land. It’s hard to tell how many hectares that is. *Khe* is not a square measure; it is a dry measure. You fill a vessel with grain, and the area that can be sown with the grain equals one *khe*.¹³⁹ One *khe* usually requires 13.5 kilograms of grain. It’s more difficult with the land because the density of sown grain is not the same everywhere, but on average a *khe* is one-fifteenth of a hectare.

The county has good soil, and crop production prevails. There are also 10,000 head of cattle.

What was the structure of the county’s population (without Drepung lamas)?

Aristocracy	0.7 %
Rich <i>tsaipa</i>	4.3 %
Moderately rich <i>tsaipa</i>	6.7 %
Poor <i>tsaipa</i>	27.3 %
<i>Tuijung</i>	6.9 %
<i>Langsheng</i>	39.0 %
Monks from 11 small monasteries	3.9 %
Herdsmen	9.8 %
Traders.....	1.4 %

“The relationships of herdsmen to lords were different, and I would say more complicated,” says Comrade Gao. “Therefore, they weren’t included in any serf category. The fact is that most herdsmen in my county also cultivate a bit of land. Traders include those who rented a piece of field; they were also serfs, but their relationship to the lord was mostly complex, and thus we included them in a special category.”

All the land in the county belonged to “three big lords”:

Local government ¹⁴⁰	6.9 %
Aristocracy	12.4 %
Monasteries.....	80.7 %

“Monastery land predominates because we have Drepung in this county,” explains Comrade Gao.¹⁴¹

All the land belonged to lords, and peasants paid for it not only when they rented a field. If a peasant wanted to collect dung on the road, he had to pay, for the road belonged to the lord. If he wanted to use a balk, he had to pay, as the balk belonged to the lord, too. First, he had to ask the lord or his manager for permission. And of course, he wouldn't have received permission if he didn't bring an egg or two. The worst thing was that even water had to be paid for. Rain is scarce around Lhasa, and although there is enough water in the river, it could only be used upon the lord's approval and for a fee. Woe was he who took water without permission! Once it happened that a dam in one of the channels broke, and water flooded a field. The serf who rented the field had to pay for the water and a high fine on top.

Our discussion is coming to an end. Our last question was whether Comrade Gao had ever experienced the negative influence of religion in his work.

“Just in the beginning,” he answers. “The influence manifested itself in the people's fear. When peasants working in Drepung's fields heard that the land had been confiscated and they would obtain the harvest, they said: ‘That's not possible; everything belonging to the sacred monastery is untouchable.’ This attitude hindered any activity in the beginning; people said: ‘Suffering is our destiny; we didn't pray enough in the previous life.’ But then, some began to think and said: ‘We prayed all our lives. We crawled up to Potala on our stomachs, and yet, there was no *tsampa* for us.’ Then some former lamas who left the monastery after the rebellion started to speak and said that everything in the monastery had been a lie. The situation gradually developed, and most people at least came to understand that they had been cheated through the religion and that those who taught them to lead a pious life had not been faithful to their own teachings. However, that doesn't mean they do not believe.

All in all, it can be said that the poorest ones were the most liberated from religion, but today the influence of religion does not stop most people from being

involved in the ‘three antis and two concessions’ movement. Of course, we don't deprive anyone of their faith. In a country where religion has always been so influential as in Tibet, it will take time for the people to overcome ancient, deeply rooted prejudice.”

I am sure Comrade Gao could tell us many more interesting things. However, the talk with him was just a part of our program. We are scheduled to continue to a village in the county to discuss directly with members of the peasants' association their work, the “three antis and two concessions” movement, the preparation of the land reform, and today's peasant life.

We say good-bye, get in the trucks, and after a while arrive in Yangta *zhika*. The village borders on several *zhikas*, and its name is derived from the largest one, belonging to the Lhalu family. We are welcomed by the chairman of the peasants' association committee, Paju, and his deputy, Gaga¹⁴². They wear typical Tibetan peasant's clothes: a shirt made of rough linen; trousers of undyed wool, spun and woven at home; high boots; a coat-like robe made of the same fabric as the trousers, pulled-up at the waist. The weather is warm today, and thus they wear only their shirts and have the sleeves of the robes tied around their waists. When the wind blows, they can easily slip into one or both sleeves – practical attire for a region with changeable weather, where the sun beats down from one direction and ice-cold wind blows from the other. Both men wear English hats that used to be imported from India. They wear them their way, reminiscent of Italian mountain dwellers. Elsewhere in Tibet, the hats are worn with the brim lifted on one side in the style of the Canadian Mounted Police.

In the beginning we ask Paju to tell us something about himself. He has three children: “My youngest one is a nursling, the middle one is learning to sing, and the oldest one is studying the Tibetan language.” It takes a while before we understand that the middle child attends nursery school, and the oldest one goes to elementary school. No wonder the man has chosen a strange formulation: there was never a nursery or elementary school before in Tibet. There are not many nursery schools, whereas schools were established by the peasants wherever possible after the liberation.

Previously, education was monopolized by the church and the highest nobility.

Paju was a *tuijung*, and he belonged to Drepung Monastery. Because he had no money to pay the capitation tax, he entered into an agreement with the monastery: he leased four and a half *khe* of land, the worst land possible. They wouldn't give him anything better, and he – or rather his wife – laboured toward the settlement of the rent and the tax. Paju cultivated the land on his own and also picked up dung from the roads; of course he had to pay to do so. He dried it, and after there was enough of it, he loaded it on the backs of his three donkeys, brought it to Lhasa and sold it on the market as fuel. From dawn to dusk, he toiled on his rented land, while his wife drudged on the lord's. It was dark when they could go to bed, and it was dark when they had to get up. Yet they couldn't make ends meet. Paju borrowed fourteen *khe* of grain from the monastery to make some *tsampa*. He had to beg the manager three times before he was allowed the loan; each time he had to give a bribe of ten eggs. Unfortunately, the harvest was bad, and the debt couldn't be paid off. The monastery manager took two of Paju's donkeys away after the harvest.

I do mental calculations: fourteen *khe* is less than 200 kilograms – surely the donkeys cost more!

Paju shrugs his shoulders: “Their price was at least ten times higher – but what could I do?”

What could a serf do against a lord? A pointless question. The rest is simple. Life was even harder without the donkeys. He had to borrow again, the interest was high, and the debt increased. Paju couldn't keep track of his total debt; he never knew how much the manager would add on the next settlement. He only knows that the less he ate and the more he paid, the faster his debt grew. That's the whole story. He has been the chairman of the peasants' association for only two weeks, since the committee was elected.

“We went to the county authorities: we wanted the land to be distributed. They told us we had to distribute it ourselves. But how? We asked comrades from the working group for advice: it was one young Han and one Tibetan youth who had studied in Beijing.

When we thought it out, we saw it wasn't that easy. It had to be calculated how much everyone would get. Shares had to be chosen. We were at a loss. They told us we had to form an organization, told us about the peasants' associations and about the Preparatory Committee having drawn up statutes for them. So, we convened a meeting and elected a committee; it has nine members. Six of them are former *tsaipas*, one *langsheng* and two *tuijungs*.”

Why did they elect you?

“You know, it had been a lot of work even before. People had to join forces. When the rebels fled, everything here was left with no lord. Part of the managers left, and those who stayed did not care for cultivating the fields; they only walked about and said that after the lords come back, they won't tolerate this. By then we had known that we would reap what we grew; it would be a shame to let the lord's field overgrow with weeds. But people had to join forces to work in the field, to dig irrigation ditches, to build dams against floods. Comrades from the working group provided advice, and a few of us took the lead. Then we were elected members of the committee.” Today, after two weeks after recruitment, the association comprises forty members; the others are still hesitating.

“Everyone wants land, but they hesitate to do something to deserve it. The beginnings were the worst. Things were set into motion after the first ones joined.”

For the time being, they have enough work as it is. They must determine how to distribute the harvest from the lords' fields, they direct work, and they are preparing a list of lands, a list of families, a list of tools at manorial estates and cattle to be distributed, and a list of tools to be claimed from the authorities; at that time, it was common knowledge that thousands of good plows and other tools lay idle in Lhasa. These tools were brought by the Chinese government to Tibet a long time ago, but the old government blocked their distribution to peasants.

As Paju describes the work in the committee, we can clearly see that it is fulfilling the role that was assigned to it: it serves as a government body in the village, the first body elected by the people themselves.

Paju does not use big words. He speaks modestly and to the point; he knows what he is talking about and does not doubt the necessity and usefulness of his work. He knows he is not in danger of being overindebted anymore: he works for himself and for neighbours who trust him.

After the interview is finished, he takes us to the house that used to be the seat of Lhalu family's manager and which Lhalu himself occasionally visited. It's a large mansion with many courtyards, almost a fortress. We walk around rooms furnished richly but with no taste. Ornamented paintings of the Buddha and various saints hang on one wall; kitschy pictures of scarcely dressed Japanese and Taiwanese film stars are displayed on the other. The furnishings have remained the same, but the building is occupied by former *langshengs*; their former dwellings right behind the lord's house are worse than the stables in the mansion's courtyard.

Then we climb onto a flat roof. There is one more room, where the lords probably rested and enjoyed the beautiful view of the mountains and fields where the manager was chasing serfs. Today, the room is ringing with children's voices; they are reading letters written by their teacher on a board. The board is the only furniture; the children are sitting on the floor, they don't have any notebooks, and chalk is scarce – but it's a school nevertheless. The first establishment opened by serfs, whose primitivism was so much despised by the lords.

We are looking down from the roof. There are people in the fields digging irrigation ditches and weeding the soil. No one is chasing them.

It's time to say good-bye. Paju wonders why we want to photograph him – he is just a common uneducated peasant. He would probably be very much surprised if someone told him: "Comrade Paju, you are the chairman of the first democratically elected government of this village, six months ago inhabited only by serfs. You are a historic figure!"

We have completed the first stage of our work in Lhasa and its surroundings. Our caravan leaves Lhasa on the same road we arrived on. We follow the Lhasa

River, with Drepung on our left, and continue along the Yangpa River up to Yangpachen.

We did not notice the place on arrival, although it is worth noticing. A group of buildings near the crossroads is not only a rest area for caravans coming from the north with their loads of goods or just a place where trucks coming from Lhasa take a break and wait until their engines cool down after the steep ascent along the Yangpa. Yangpachen is also the seat of the county authorities. The county administration building stands next to the place where drivers drink hot tea. The whole county comprises only a few dozen other buildings, mostly monasteries.

Inhabitants of Yangpachen county do not live in houses; they live in low black tents made of yak wool impregnated with yak blood. They are herdsmen, and most likely they are not numerous; nobody has counted them due to their nomadic lifestyle. The population density in the whole of Tibet is one person per square kilometre; three-quarters of its inhabitants live in agricultural regions, which occupy only a quarter of the country's area. The remaining 900,000 square kilometres are inhabited by 300,000 herdsmen, which means one person for every three square kilometres. However, these are just estimates. According to other data, pastoral areas cover one million square kilometres and are inhabited by only a quarter million people. These areas are home to five to six million head of cattle, mostly yaks and sheep. We turn to the southwest right after Yangpachen and take the road to Zhikatse.¹⁴³ There is a plateau overgrown with low sedge as far as the eye can see. We drive across the plateau for about four hours, and we can see only one small monastery and four small groups of tents. From time to time, we spot two or three men among hundreds of yaks, but for most of the journey, there is not a trace of human activity.

The herdsmen differ from people living in agricultural regions at first sight by their appearance. Although the weather here, 4,000 meters above sea level, is not warm even in August, many wear only a rough robe lowered down from their waist with the upper half of the body naked. Some have their hair plaited

into many thin braids. It has been noted by some travellers that they resemble American Indians in skin colour, face shape, and partly also clothing.

I am sorry we don't have the time to stop. The most difficult part of our journey still lies ahead, and every hour is precious. It has been the most serious shortcoming of our program: due to the limited time, difficult traveling, and a number of interesting activities that we simply could not skip, we don't have time for the herdsmen. Nonetheless, we have learned something about them.

The herdsmen are the most primitive stratum of Tibetan society. They were still living in the clan system when the aristocracy from the lowlands subjugated them. The scattered wandering tribes could not stand up to the organized army and state power of feudal lords. Because it would have been difficult to try to tame these half-savages by armed force, the Lamaist church contributed to their enslavement. Although the herdsmen formally preserved remainders of the clan system, including the election of chieftains, the elected had to be confirmed by the county administrator. It was the rule of Tibetan feudal lords that brought wealth inequalities and disrupted the fundamentals of clan democracy. Chieftain became a hereditary function limited to the richest families.

The supremacy of the feudal nobility has not changed the primitive, almost savage way of the herders' life, nor the backward methods of cattle breeding. The idea of selecting the best pieces for breeding is unknown; the cattle freely mate in pastures, and in remote areas, the coupling of domestic and wild yaks often happens. The herdsmen own part of the cattle, but the majority belongs to lords. Also, all the land was owned by lords – the aristocracy, the church, and the local government. A herder cannot live without grazing land, and thus land ownership is the main means of exploitation. The herdsmen have to take care of the lords' cattle and pay a tax on the pastures where their own cattle graze. In addition, other special forms of exploitation exist in Tibet; one of them is known as *jime chime*.¹⁴⁴

Jime chime means "alive or dead". The tradition dates to the fifth Dalai Lama, when the government gave

each herder's family an equivalent of one and a half silver coins. It was the value of one yak cow, although the real price was much higher even then. The herdsmen had an obligation to give butter and hair from this "cow" to the authorities from then on. Because a cow that never lived could not die, the obligation never expired and was extended by various gimmicks to include additional "cows". The result was that *jime chime* did not expire after the death of the head of the family or the death of all family members. In such cases, the chieftain determined another family to which the duty would pass.

Despite all these troubles the herdsmen were much better off than serfs in agricultural regions. They did not see their lord often, and they usually had enough sour yak milk to fill their stomachs. Democratic reform is underway in grazing regions, too, although it takes on a different form. The most important step in the first stage is to abolish *jime chime* and to decrease the amount of butter and wool to be given to the lord from the lord's cattle. Cattle is not being distributed for the time being: it is necessary to lay the groundwork and prevent lords' agents from killing off cattle in remote regions.

People who spot our caravan are curious, and when they see foreigners' faces in the trucks, they wave brightly, in the same way as in Lhasa. There is no trace of distrust or fear. This is important since we are driving in military trucks at a time when the Western media is spreading spine-chilling news about the oppression of the Tibetan people by the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

The first hills start to appear on both sides of the road after about a three-hour journey. As we go, there are more of them; they grow taller, and we can see a sparse forest. Finally, the chains of hills close in, we drive through a valley, we ascend, and the trees are soon left behind. At the end of the valley in front of us is a steep slope whose green colour changes into white and blends with the dense fog shrouding the mountain tops.

We have reached the slope; the road turns to the right and winds its way up the hill, meandering higher

and higher. The thin grass becomes covered with frost, soon turning into snow. The convoy stops after an hour. We are standing on the highest point of our Tibetan trip, Shokbula Pass, 5,200 meters above sea level.¹⁴⁵ We are getting out. The atmospheric pressure is only about 360 mm – hardly half an atmosphere. Because oxygen is heavier than nitrogen, we have less than half the amount of oxygen we are used to. Luckily, the human body is adaptable; only two weeks ago, when we arrived, we had difficulty breathing at an altitude 1,000 meters lower than now. Our breathing is normal today, but we cannot make quick movements, and we become tired after a few steps.

The hairpin-turn-filled road we took has drawn a beautiful pattern in the snow below. Unfortunately, the most wondrous sight is hidden in the mist: the white cone of Jomoganga, which towers above us, reaching a height of 7,001 meters.¹⁴⁶

After a while, we are descending the southern side of the mountain. Meadows with beautiful alpine flora appear a few hundred meters below, but we don't have the time to gather armfuls of edelweiss, gentian, and other flowers unknown to us. The trucks meander down the incline and enter a valley; the convoy stops half an hour later. There is a group of houses in front of us; it's time for a brief rest and refreshments prepared here by our cooks using supplies brought from Lhasa. You have to bring your own food on trips in Tibet, as inns have not been built on these mountain roads yet. While food is being carried to the table, we pounce on thermos flasks containing hot water and are grateful for the tins of Nescafé bought in Lhasa. The station at the foot of Jomoganga has no name. It's simply a half-way house on the road from Lhasa to Zhikatse standing on the border of the area commonly called Hou-tsang, Back Tibet,¹⁴⁷ which carries the official description of the "land under the rule of the Khenpo Council".¹⁴⁸ The area is nowadays most frequently called the "land of the Panchen Lama", who is the chair of the Khenpo Council and the highest representative of Back Tibet.

Today's main difference between the Panchen Lama's land and the rest of Tibet is that neither the Panchen Lama nor the Khenpo Council nor the Back

Tibet nobility took part in the March rebellion. Therefore, Back Tibet is not under military control, and the reforms are taking a slightly different course.

Why didn't the ruling class in Back Tibet take part in the adventure that was embraced by the rulers in Lhasa? The reasons must be sought in history. The roots of this different development lie deep in the past, when the Lamaist church reformer and founder of the Yellow Hat sect, Tsongkhapa, stipulated that two of his favourite disciples were the reincarnations of Buddha Amitabha and the god Avalokiteshvara, whose Tibetan name is Chenrezig. (I have never understood the complex system in which the relationship between Amitabha and Avalokiteshvara is similar to the relationships between the members of the Catholic Holy Trinity). Historical sources say that the relations between the two great lamas, whose names – Panchen and Dalai – are in fact honorary titles dating back to later times, have always been good. The bearers of these titles usually did not die at the same time, and thus the older one educated the younger one, and later, when the fifth Dalai Lama assumed secular rule over Tibet, it was the Panchen Lama who held the office of the regent until the Dalai Lama came of age. This changed relatively recently. The sharp change in the relationship between the two dignitaries is attributed to the spread of British influence in India. The English promised prominent Lhasa noblemen independence and support in their fight against the weak power of the crumbling empire. Strong, centralized state power was necessary to organize such a fight. This tendency toward centralization was supported by the increasing importance of money and the penetration of Indian goods onto the Lhasa market. As a result, the relationship between the feudal group centered around the Dalai Lama's government in Lhasa and the feudal lords in the Panchen Lama's territory, who insisted on the traditional, split-up government, quickly deteriorated. The conflict outwardly manifested itself in the decline of contacts between the Panchen Lama and the Dalai Lama. In the end, the predecessor of the current Panchen Lama had to flee Tibet – and never returned again. His successor, who was born outside of Tibet,

was seated in the Qinghai province and could return to Tibet and resume his traditional powers only after the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet in 1951.

The penetration of imperialistic influence and the tendency to separate Tibet from China went hand-in-hand with the effort to weaken the Panchen Lama's position and completely subordinate all aristocrats to the Lhasa government; thus, it was natural that the historical development of the ecclesiastical and secular nobility's attitudes in Back Tibet went in a different direction. These feudal circles strived to maintain the traditional alliance with China and opposed any attempt to separate Tibet from its motherland. Their attitudes were openly expressed during the March rebellion.

And so, as we descend the long mountain valley, where edelweiss grows right on the roadside, we find ourselves in a different world. Each man we meet near the road is a serf, if not in theory, then definitely in practice: although the resolution of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region on the liberation of serfs applies to all of Tibet, it is implemented only gradually, and old relations have persisted here.

We don't have the opportunity to examine the differences in the field. We have met only a few people and no settlement at all. We are descending lower, the sun has set, and there is no end to our journey. Hairpin turn after hairpin turn, now brightly lit by the headlights. It's not until ten at night that the valley starts to widen, the rock face on the left recedes, a moonlit monastery appears on the hillside to our right, and finally the trucks stop. We are at the ferry across the Tsangpo,¹⁴⁹ whose name down in India is Brahmaputra.

Although the river ferry is large enough, it will take some time to carry the long convoy over. Therefore, we take the necessities with us and get on the ferry with the first group of trucks. Once on the other bank, we stumble behind our guides to a gate and walk to a yard with plenty of horses, mules, and yaks. It is a kind of inn, but they don't serve meals. Travelers leave their horses or yaks in the yard and sleep on the floor in the

unfurnished cells that are all around. If they want to make a meal, there is a kitchen, which also offers yak dung for heating.

We got much better treatment. A truck that had come earlier brought straw mattresses, sheets, quilts, and pillows for everyone. We also have plates and cutlery and soon sit for dinner. We happily eat fried eggs and even more happily go to sleep. Some members of the group sleep in a room adorned with a throne and an altar – this is the room where the Panchen Lama rests when he travels to Lhasa.

When we get up in the morning, the place is a hive of activity. Outside, at the ferry, we can see people waiting to get to the other side and those coming from the other bank. The locals, naturally, are eyeing us as curiously as we are eyeing them. The daylight reveals the drive mechanism of the ferry. It's a gin propelled by manpower – a wooden drum with a number of crossbars along its perimeter, which are parallel to the drum axle, reminding me of a bucket wheel. The drum is fixed to a perpendicular axle and attached to the rope that pulls the ferry. At the ferryman's signal, eight people – mostly women – take up their positions around the drum. Each holds a long pole, which is inserted behind one of the crossbars. Then they walk around until the ferry gets to the other side. One of the women is young and pretty and likes being photographed.

We still have four hours to go before we reach Zhikatsé. We get in the trucks and leave the place of our night's rest. On departing, it occurs to me to ask about the name of the place. I learn that the name Tazuka¹⁵⁰ simply means a "ferry".

We are following the river. The road is poor; it's not long after the rainy season, when the Tsangpo bursts its banks and spits out rocks on the flat shore. Every now and then, we cross a tributary or a dried-up riverbed, where a stream had been running from the mountains just a few weeks before. Finally, after about three hours, the valley somewhat narrows, the road leaves the bank and winds its way among the hills fringing the river. The drive is more pleasant here. After a while, the river disappears from view, and when we see it again, it is somehow different, smaller, and

crossed by a bridge. This is not the Tsangpo anymore; it is its tributary, the Nienchu,¹⁵¹ and the bridge leads directly to the outskirts of Zhikatse. We have reached our destination.

Before we manage to cross the bridge, the convoy stops. By the road stands a group of dignified-looking gentlemen, some in the precious robes of high lamas, others in quality Tibetan clothing. We are welcomed by representatives of the Khenpo Council; from a distance, we can see them preparing white *khatags* to be given to us. The trucks stop about fifty meters from the waiting group; we should probably approach the officials in a similarly dignified manner as they are awaiting us.

Suddenly, something colourful and moving appears behind the waiting group. Before we realize what it is, we are ambushed by a huddle of children; some wear Tibetan clothes, some are plainly dressed in dark trousers and white shirts, but each of them wears the red scarf of the Young Pioneers and carries a large bunch of colourful flowers. Our arms are full of flowers, and each of us is surrounded by two or three little figures clinging to us. Modern times have perfectly spoiled the solemn dignity of the medieval welcome. The *khatags* discreetly disappeared; no one had empty hands to accept them, and we could hardly free one hand for a simple civil handshake.

We get back to our trucks, cross the bridge, and see two structures towering over Zhikatse, similar to Potala and Chakpori dominating Lhasa. These are Tashilhünpo Monastery¹⁵² – the spiritual seat of the Panchen Lama – and a castle of the Zhikatse county administrator. This is one of the oldest castles in Tibet, and its close resemblance to Potala is no coincidence: it served as a model for the castle of Tibetan kings. However, it is Tashilhünpo that undoubtedly outshines not only the castle but also the buildings of the large monasteries around Lhasa. Drepung is the largest Tibetan monastery by the number of monks, but its buildings are crammed in a narrow space, whereas Tashilhünpo extends over a wide, open hillside. Its main colours are identical – white, red, and golden – but its arrangement is more varied and livelier.

We have a quick wash, grab some food, and set off to the city streets. The city gives quite a different impression than Lhasa. Zhikatse is situated at a lower altitude and farther to the south; it's warmer and dustier. It reminds us of northern China with its air full of the ubiquitous loess; only here it's not loess but alluvium from the two rivers at whose confluence the city lies. It's not as busy as Lhasa. The whole town is somewhat sleepy; even trade seems less thriving, although the Indian border, from where all goods except tea came until recently, is half the distance away. There are fewer people on the streets, but enough scabby dogs. Chalk-drawn lines are visible at about a meter's distance from the walls of houses: the tenants marked where private property ends, so that people relieve themselves only on the public part of the street. Lhasa has already solved this problem in a different way: they built a number of public lavatories to keep the streets clean.

At first sight, nothing has changed here, but this is a false impression. Similar changes as in the rest of Tibet are underway here, too. They may only differ in methods and pace. It's not that easy. On the one hand, we have the Communist party policy regarding ethnic minorities, which is clear: the reforms are undertaken upon agreement with the aristocracy and high clergy; they agree and so do the masses. However, feudal circles still worry about two things: they are afraid that during the reforms they may be accused of treating serfs wrongly, and they are not sure what the purchase prices will be; they wish to know their financial situation following the reforms. On the other hand, the masses of serfs, who have heard what's happening in other Tibetan regions, are impatient.

“We don't have the movement of three antis and two concessions; we have two antis and two concessions,” explains the secretary of the party committee, Hu Bing. “The first ‘anti’ doesn't count since we didn't have the rebellion. It means that the reforms must be implemented peacefully, without struggle sessions. While other regions of Tibet used struggle sessions as part of the ‘face-to-face’ method, we advocate the ‘back-to-back’ approach: we try to prevent direct clashes between feudal lords and serfs. When serfs meet to tell

one another about the wrongs they endure, the lord is not present. But we inform the lords so that they know what the masses think, and we tell each of them what the serfs said about the others. And everyone can well guess what was said about him.”

The beginnings of the mass movement were spontaneous; it developed mainly in response to news from other parts of Tibet. When we arrived in Zhikatse, the first working groups left upon the consent of the Khenpo Council to villages to speed up the reforms. They could have sent them earlier but preferred to wait and prepare conditions for the participation of lower officials from the Khenpo Council in the working groups.

This is a nice illustration of the steps that could be taken in all of Tibet: a joint action with feudal lords, the purchase of feudal estates, ensuring the living standard of former lords and offering the opportunity to participate in political life to those who actively embraced the transformation.

It’s all perfectly logical and not entirely new to me. I know the principles of the Chinese Communist Party policy regarding ethnic minorities, and I have seen them being put into practice for other nationalities. However, after seeing what had been happening in Lhasa, after learning about the treatment of serfs, we have to ask: Is it possible that feudal lords were different here? Of course, they did not rebel, and they assented to democratic reforms, but there is hardly any major difference in the manner of exploitation and maltreatment of serfs. Seeing our pensive faces, Comrade Hu Bing smiles. “Don’t think our work is always easy. I took part in the land reform in the Hunan province, and trust me, we handed landowners over to the court for lesser crimes than those committed by noblemen here. The party teaches us that those who are willing to cooperate mustn’t be punished for their past. It’s not their fault they were born in a backward society because the main source of backwardness is centuries of the oppression of minorities by emperors and the Kuomintang.”

We are not arguing. It is clear that the procedure here is in line with the party’s plan for all of Tibet: feudal oppression is being removed in agreement with

feudal lords, and it would be illogical and incorrect to change the policy right here, where it has been successful. Nevertheless, we realize that the Middle Ages are coming to an end here, but they are not over yet.

The following visit to Tashilhünpo Monastery is convincing in this respect. We are received by Khenpo Ngawang Chingpa,¹⁵³ the head of one of the four *datsangs*¹⁵⁴ – meaning “schools” – of the monastery. The spiritual head of the monastery is the Panchen Lama, whose first predecessor, Tsongkhapa’s disciple Gendündrup,¹⁵⁵ had Tashilhünpo built on the site of an old hermitage where eight pious lamas had lived.

Here the old ways are still in place. The monastery still owns 2,000 *khe* of land, which is approximately 13,000 hectares. How many serfs does it have? Ngawang Chingpa shrugs his shoulders: “We have many, but there are no precise records.” He quickly moves to other issues; he tells us that the monastery houses four *datsangs*, one of them being equivalent to a Lamaist university. The monastery is managed by high hierarchs as it always has been. Ngawang Chingpa quickly adds, “Our dignitaries are all for democratic reforms. They have understood that feudal ways and serfdom should not be mixed with religion and must be denounced.” He says that they are worried the monastery could not be maintained once it rids itself of the traditional income and that they hope the government will help...

We are led to the main temple, where it is time for the great prayer. The lamas wear special ritual robes for the occasion. Their colour is a mixture of green, yellow, and gray, and the fabric reminds me of burlap. The room is crammed with thousands of monks sitting close to one another, swinging rhythmically back and forth, making wailing sounds. I am listening; the sound is unchanging, echoing round and round with terrible monotony. Boys in robes are climbing up the stairs, carrying huge copper jugs full of butter tea, which is drunk during the prayers to keep the monks awake.

It’s the first time I witness this regular ceremony in a Tibetan monastery. We are climbing up to the highest part of the monastery, and we are shown the doors to the chambers in which the Panchen Lama spends several weeks a year in meditation. We descend again

in about three-quarters of an hour, but the rhythmical wailing still sounds as if we had never left. Hours and hours: there used to be 50,000 lamas who spent most of their time making this horrible wailing. It seems an echo of a horrible life, a life where nothing has changed, where generation after generation perished through malnutrition, beatings, and unpaid drudgery. The wailing goes on and on. All of a sudden, I can't bear it anymore. I leave, and most of the group leaves with me. The others, more resistant ones, have stayed. That day I resolved I would never set foot in a monastery again. Maybe the Middle Ages are too much for my nerves.

The highlight of our stay in Zhikatsé was our visit to the Panchen Lama. We drove out of the city to his new residence; the original one was destroyed by a flood in 1955. Unfortunately, we didn't have the opportunity to compare the Panchen Lama's new palace with the Dalai Lama's new residence in Norbulingka; instead of the palace, we arrived at two tents pitched on a large meadow. Receiving guests in tents is not uncommon in Tibet, particularly if the guests are numerous. Tibetan architecture does not know large rooms, and tents are definitely more airy and pleasant than most Tibetan houses, where the rooms are small and poorly ventilated, and the whole house usually smells of smoke from butter lamps and yak dung, which is the main fuel here. The tents differ from the small low dwellings of yak wool that we saw in pastoral areas. The manufacture of rich, representative tents is of high quality in Tibet. The tents are spacious, the entrance is protected from wind with another, smaller canvas wall, and the roof and walls are made of beautiful white canvas, on the outside decorated with black ornaments, whose silhouettes impart a special atmosphere to the interior.

Before we enter the tent, we receive the obligatory welcome: the handing over of *khatag* by two selected members of our group, universal handshaking, and of course, taking photographs. The Panchen Lama's court photographer is running about; I notice he is a young man, while five years ago, when the first group of journalists visited, the office of the court photographer was held by an older bald lama. His successor is also

dressed in a red robe, and every now and then, he lifts his Leica or Graflex to capture another shot.

We are sitting in the tent, and it is quite an experience. The tent occupies an area of about thirty by fifteen meters; the entrance is in one of the narrow walls, and the others are lined with leather armchairs and small tables with refreshments – various pastry and unknown, shrivelled fruit, which I later identified to be wild apricots. Bearded lamas keep bringing heavy silver jugs adorned with massive golden ornaments and pour butter tea. Instead of grass, a luxurious thick carpet occupying the entire area of the tent lies beneath our feet.

Taking pride of place, opposite the entrance sits the Panchen Lama, whose full title is Panchen Erdeni, precious scholar, the incarnation of Buddha Amitabha, or Öpakme¹⁵⁶ in Tibetan. A young man with a calm regular face, clad in a magnificent brocade gown, a rosary wound around his left wrist and, next to it, a heavy gold watch with a gold band.

He holds several scribbled-on sheets of paper: he requested our questions in advance and prepared answers to them. He speaks in Tibetan; an interpreter sitting behind him translates into Chinese, and other interpreters translate into three European languages. The Panchen Lama apparently does not stick to the prepared manuscript. When something seems unclear or inaccurate, his speech is long and impromptu, and he often corrects the interpreter, too. The Panchen Lama's command of Chinese is excellent; however, he speaks Tibetan during official meetings.

The first set of questions is about religion. How was it possible that so many lamas took part in the rebellion if their faith prohibits them from even touching a weapon? How come that before the rebellion many monks breached religious principles and as executors of feudal "justice" killed serfs as well as monks who violated monastery rules? According to the Panchen Lama, what are the prospects of the Lamaist church and religion in Tibet?

The Panchen Lama calmly responds. He is sitting in a deep leather armchair, holding the notes in his left hand, which lies on an armrest, and gesturing with his right hand to emphasize certain words.

Buddhism, he says, is a deeply peaceful religion. It forbids harming any life. Therefore, the idea of a lama raising a weapon against anyone is incompatible with Buddhism. In spite of that, many have done so. It means that they did not understand the religion in all its depth, and they gave priority to certain church institutions over the genuine Buddhist faith. Had their belief been true and deep, they could not have joined the rebellion, even if coerced.

The rebel leaders misused the imperfection of the lamas' religious belief for their own ends. They also influenced some lamas with their authority. The lamas were accustomed to obeying higher ecclesiastical authority without thinking and without objecting. This unconditional obedience formed an obstacle to the subsequent reform movement. The lamas found it difficult to disclose the crimes of certain monastery hierarchs because they had been taught they did not have the right to judge the conduct of their teachers and superiors; they were not allowed to consider criticizing them even in their deepest thoughts.

I believe that fewer lamas would have taken up arms had the rebel leaders approached them and openly said: "Come and fight for the eternal preservation of serfdom in Tibet!" This is why the main insurgents hid their true aims and covered their criminal acts under the mask of protecting religion and national rights. Most people who embraced the rebellion had been deceived by that mask. Only a handful are truly against the people. However, from the religious perspective, the political attributes of the rebellion are not important.

"Those who had fought with a weapon in hand during the rebellion left the church. Such conduct is incompatible with Buddhism. I am sorry for those who were deceived or forced, but if a man violated the most fundamental principles of the religion, I cannot consider him a lama anymore."

Monastery walls had witnessed killings before. Over the course of history, monasteries became part of the feudal system in Tibet. Some of those who exercised authority in monasteries were good; some were bad people. Many of the good ones were changed by the

unlimited power, religious as well as political, they enjoyed. Their powers exceeded the monastery grounds; they were also active in the government, where their power was also boundless. The unlimited authority within the monastery seduced them to breach religious rules; unlimited authority in the government led them to breach the law. They killed without mercy and under the cover of religion.

"I think the acts of those who preferred power over faith contradict the Buddhist religion."

With this, he comes to the question of how the church and religion will develop further. The Panchen Lama talks about the principal Buddhist tenets with deep conviction that they are right and eternal.

The fundamentals of the religion are eternal and need not be changed. But these tenets determine the behaviour of the believers, who don't live outside of time and space, and thus their behaviour must change over history. This process needs reform. Six hundred years ago, Tsongkhapa came to Tibet. He saw arrogance in the monasteries. Lamas did not live by religious principles, the rules of conduct given by Buddha Shakyamuni to his believers 2,000 years before were not being followed, and many impurities and untruths had infested the church. Tsongkhapa did not change the tenets of Buddhism, but he reformed the church and founded the new Yellow Hat sect. Six hundred years have passed. The Lamaist church became an integral part of the Tibetan feudal system. Religious practice was infiltrated by many impurities that have nothing in common with the religion, which means that monastery life was permeated with feudal habits and the exploitation of serfs. This layer of sediment must be removed; the religion must be freed of feudal dirt.

The fundamental goal of Buddhism is peace and the elimination of suffering from the world. A true Buddhist acts in the interests of others at all times; he eats only to have enough strength to work for others. These principles are fully compatible with socialism.

Another part of the Panchen Lama's replies focuses on problems of reforms connected with the Khenpo Council. He says nothing new but clearly stresses the

necessity of reforms and their approval by aristocratic and ecclesiastical circles. Here he again returns to some religious issues when he speaks of the democratization of monasteries. He describes the attitude of clerical dignitaries toward the reforms as basically positive but mentions two frequent objections. The first one concerns the problem of criticism. A Buddhist, in particular a monk, has to choose a teacher; this is an important step in his religious life. The teacher not only conveys knowledge, but he is an example in all respects. Unconditional obedience and loyalty to the teacher are essential fundamentals of Buddhism. This principle is not compatible with democratic life where even a teacher must be criticized sometimes. Therefore, some clerical officials find themselves in a quandary. On the one hand, they can see the necessity of the reforms and all accompanying steps; on the other hand, they say the reforms and criticism will improve life – but this concerns only this life. What is going to happen in our next reincarnations in which we shall atone for our sins? Another quandary stems from the fear of many church representatives concerning the decline of religious influence on the masses and the material consequences of people's ceasing to give donations to monasteries. The Panchen Lama does not share these concerns. The people revolt against feudal additions to the religion, but their faith in the pure essence of the thousand-year-old religious tradition is unflinching.

“I hope that the wrong, backward, and dark features of religion will be eliminated through democratic reforms, that the government will provide us material aid, and that we will succeed in restoring the Buddha's pure religion.”

Everything the Panchen Lama says clearly suggests that there are a lot of conflicts he is trying to overcome. He keeps running into the contradiction between religion and the new situation. He looks for the source of the trouble in the dark, feudal features that infiltrated Tibetan Lamaism, but that's hardly a solution. Maybe it is possible to accept that the moral tenets of Buddhism are compatible with socialism; however, the foundation upon which these tenets lie, the faith and uncondition-

al obedience to the divine power and its earthly emissaries, is another thing. Also, it is quite unlikely that Buddhism will maintain its influence in Tibet for many more years to come. You will probably find believers here in the next generations, but the new reality, the new life will bring up a new generation who will learn to find happiness and truth directly on earth. The position of a Lamaist church official is not easy nowadays, although his personal status and standard of living are not jeopardized. We keep coming back to problems that the Dalai Lama was not able to overcome, while the Panchen Lama has stood the test. However, the conflicts have been escalating and when mentioned, it is clear that the young “precious scholar” is aware of them and is not sure how to find a way out. His speech is quite different, clear and resolute, when he speaks of such issues at his work as the acting chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region. He answers the question about what the prerequisites for finalizing the organization of this area are. He describes step by step how the democratic administration must grow from local elected bodies through county administration and culminate in the election of the Committee of People's Congress of the Autonomous Region.

“Peasants' associations as the basic bodies of democratic administration are beginning to function. The first stage of democratic reforms must be finalized under their leadership; then comes the second stage: land distribution. When the second stage is finished in the entire county, county bodies of the people's government can be elected. After such bodies exist in the whole of Tibet, the Committee of People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region will be elected. The work of the Preparatory Committee will thereby end. We think this is possible to accomplish in about two years, by 1961.” The Panchen Lama's answers to questions about the future of Tibet and its youth are equally clear and resolute.

“The future of Tibet is wide-ranging development and a happy life for all. In other words, Tibet will follow the path of reforms toward socialism. Under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and with



Fig. 113 / The Drepung struggle session — three victims standing and bowing in front of assembled monks.

Jan Vinař: "We are descending again. It's a long walk this time; at the point where the path turns left toward the exit from the monastery, we go to the right to another courtyard, which is smaller than the one we have just left and is shaded by many old willows. Several hundred lamas are sitting on the bare ground among the trees, all dressed in the simple greasy robes of poor lamas. Among them are young men, almost still boys, and old men with deeply furrowed, thin, dark faces. Three fat bowed figures in the rich gowns of monastery dignitaries stand across from them. A chest serving as a reading desk is behind them. We have come to a struggle session."

Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 114 / The Drepung struggle session — the accusation is recorded by one of the journalists.

Jan Vinař: "The speaker, a poor monk named Ngawang Nangdrak, furiously pounding the reading desk from time to time, is talking about the 'reincarnation' of a saint in Lozang Gonpo's mortal frame. 'What kind of a living Buddha are you, Lozang Gonpo? You bribed them to call you a living Buddha! You paid because you knew you would be richly rewarded; stealing from people as a living Buddha would be easier! When I entered your service, you told me that in a dream you had seen my mother in hell. I was a sucker, and I believed you. I begged you to pray for her soul; you heard my plea and made me pay you. Since then, you have blackmailed me — you said again and again: 'Ngawang Nangdrak, your mother is not saved yet. I will pray for her once more.' I was such a fool to pay with money I had to earn by begging. You are an old fraud, Lozang Gonpo!'"

Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 115 / The Drepung struggle session — a side view.

Jan Vinař: "You never studied to heal people; you sold them medicine you made from dirt picked up from the ground. Even that wasn't enough. When two peasants from a monastery village in Gampa dzong county approached you and begged you to heal their seriously ill mother, you said, 'It's a trifle. I am visited by a god every night. I can ask him.' You demanded 1,500 silver liang and barley and butter on top. They got into debt and had to pay long after their mother passed away. Did you give anything to anyone for free, Lozang Gonpo? You did indeed!" Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 116 / The Drepung struggle session — a view from the stage of the audience.

Jan Vinař: "An indescribable commotion erupts in the courtyard. Dozens of people spring up and run to the desk with similar amulets in their hands. Some hang the amulets around the 'living Buddha's' neck; others simply throw them on the reading desk. The monks raise their fists and shout: 'You sent our brothers to death! Confess now; we shall fight you until you admit your guilt! You call yourself a Buddhist, a living Buddha even, but you spat on our religion.'" Source: *Shots from Tibet*.

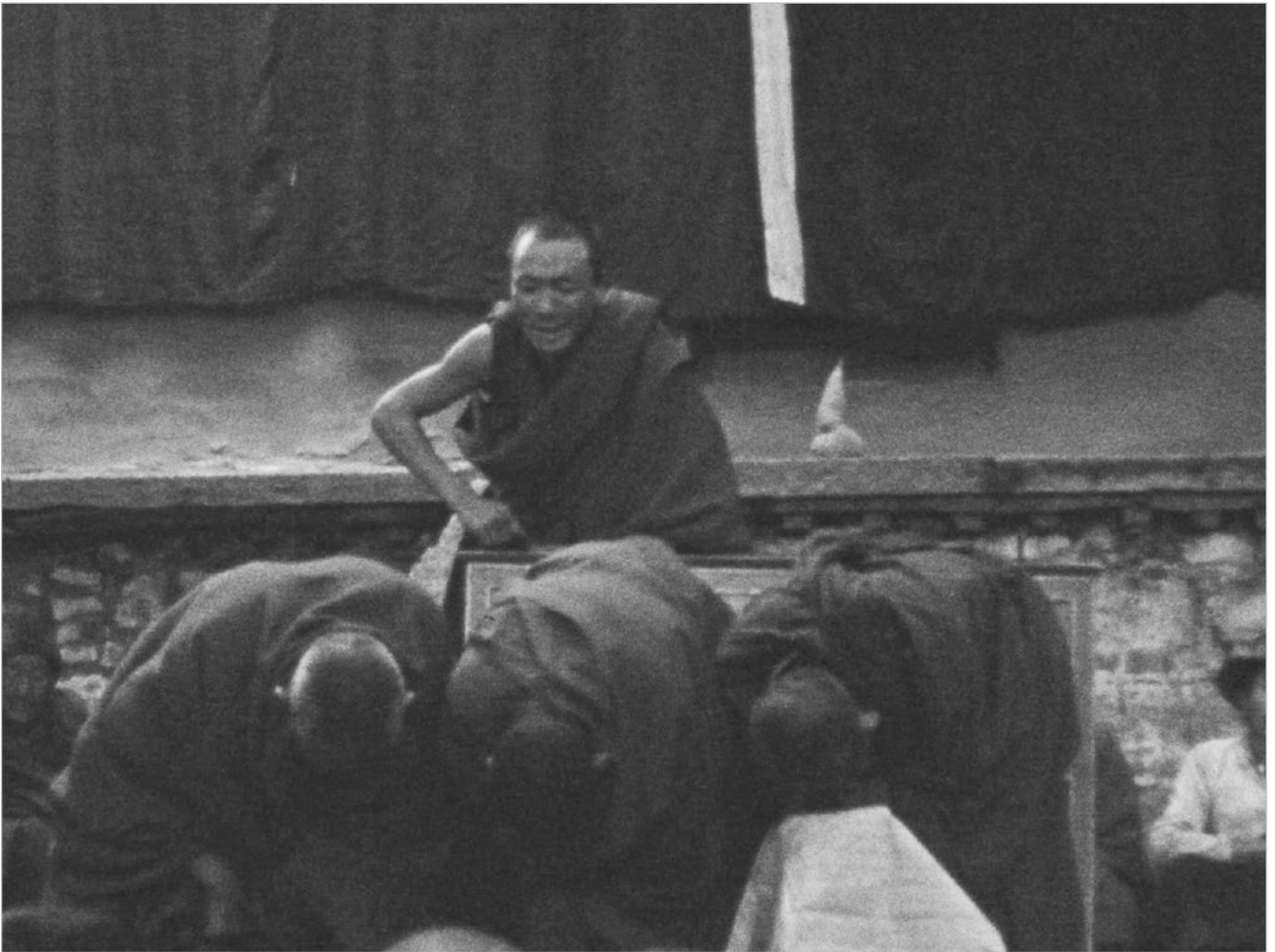


Fig. 117 / The Drepung struggle session — front view of the stage.

Jan Vinař: "The three standing here now aren't the main villains, however, they simply used their power to steal from individual monks. Their superiors didn't deal with such trifles; they stole directly from the rich monastery treasuries. Night is closing in, yet the session is not coming to an end. As we are leaving, I look at Tupten Nyima, who came with us. He is standing under a tree, watching the three bent figures, panic clearly visible in his face. His conscience is not clear, and he probably doesn't believe the assurance that old crimes will be forgiven those who did not take part in the rebellion. Once outside, we take a deep breath. Although we have spent several hours outdoors, the air is never clean inside the monastery even if there is no roof. We leave, and as we turn to the main road, we take one last glimpse back. The monastery stands as it has been standing for centuries, and it looks like a fortress. But even this fortress of darkness and superstition has been penetrated by new life." Source: *Shots from Tibet*.

its help, we shall overcome economic and cultural backwardness. Tibet will join the advanced nations of our great mother country. This is the only way; there is no other.”

Then he speaks about the prospects of the Tibetan youth. In earlier times, except for a few feudal children, Tibetan youth had no prospects for the future. Ula, debt, taxes, poverty – the Tibetan people were caught in a vicious circle.

“The old times will never return. Our youth have the same chances as all young people in the People’s Republic of China. However, their tasks are more demanding. The point is that Tibet, the most underdeveloped part of China, has to become the most advanced one. It’s a path from darkness to light, the path to a happy future.”

The interview has come to an end, but our day with the Panchen Lama has only begun. He is our host for the entire day, and his hospitality reminds me of spending a day in the court of a prince from *The Arabian Nights*. Except for the jeeps, which we are now getting in and which are taking us to a nearby valley. There are tents prepared for us, a little smaller and open on one side, serving as improvised boxes for watching the horsemanship of the Panchen Lama’s servants. They are forty young men who are his bodyguards, his cavalry, and, as well, his dance ensemble. They are riding small mountain horses and performing a kind of *jigitovka*,¹⁵⁷ shooting at targets from the backs of their galloping animals, first with bows and arrows, then with rifles; they pick up scarves from the ground and disappear behind the backs of their horses to show us how to hide from the eye of a searching enemy. Not everyone masters the tricks perfectly, but the overall impression is good. The gunshots echo through the surrounding mountains long after the performance.

We get in the jeeps and return to the tent where the press conference was held. Again, we are served tea, and the tables are full of desserts. We only sip tea and prepare our stomachs for lunch, which is being made in the even larger neighbouring tent. There the tables are laden with an abundance of food. We are

offered Chinese delicacies and a Tibetan specialty: big chunks of boiled ram, which are held by the bone and eaten as they are, and of course *Maotai*.¹⁵⁸ The Panchen Lama does not drink alcohol, but a man in a Chinese suit makes up for him and bravely empties several glasses in a row. He looks familiar, and finally I recognize him: it is Ngawang Chingpa, who clearly considers *Maotai* less dangerous for his future reincarnations than criticism...

We share the table with the Panchen Lama’s mother, a smiling lady who cannot make herself understood but gestures to encourage us to eat. She herself chooses only vegetables from the bowls and drinks only tea. It seems she adheres to the strict diet that is prescribed by the religion to her son. Anyway, the regimen seems to do her good. Her husband, who looks surprisingly youthful considering he has a grown-up son, walks about the tables and clinks glasses with everybody. He is a fine figure of a man, and apparently, he seems to be fond of keeping up his well-groomed appearance.

We have heard a lot of toasts, but one of them has stuck in my mind. The most powerful feudal lord in the region, the vice chairman of the Khenpo Council, something like the prime minister of the Panchen Lama’s local government, named Che Jigme,¹⁵⁹ stood up. He raised his glass in honour of the correspondents here who represent the radio and press in socialist countries as well as Communist papers based in some capitalist states, and he then drank a toast to the Communist parties all over the world. Although it may sound quite natural, I imagine what this feast would have been like in my country, when we had such lords as Mr. Che Jigme, let’s say the Lords of the Rose. It might be like this: the Lord of the Rose raised a goblet of crisp beer and drank to the Communist parties of the world... Sounds strange, eh? However, these lords live on the boundary between the old times, when their power was comparable to that of medieval feudal lords in central Europe, and the new times, about which their clerical prince spoke so warmly. It’s simple. They don’t live in thirteenth-century Europe; they live in the twentieth century, and they have started to realize it. Here in Zhikatsé, people have realized it in time...

Everything has an end, even the biggest feast – I must say we did not really regret it. Apparently, we did not inherit the stomachs of those lords who used to enjoy everyday feasts in our country. It's only the banquet that is ending; our day with the Panchen Lama, our *Arabian Nights* fairytale, is yet to continue. We get in the trucks and leave. I accidentally glance back and see something that emphasizes the unreality of the world where we have spent the day. As soon as we left the tent, dozens of servants grabbed the tables, chairs, and bowls and took everything outside; they folded the furniture, pulled out the pole and pegs that held up the tent. When we turn the first bend, only a light patch on the ground marks the place where we sat, drank, and ate just a few moments ago.

Tents again – this time they form a semicircle of canvas boxes, and opposite them, under another tent, is the stage. They hold a dance performance in our honour: Tibetan national dances and the famous devil dance,¹⁶⁰ which is performed in monasteries only once a year. Both the dancers and musicians are lamas. The dancers wear colourful costumes and fantastic masks; the dance alternates between wild whirling and grotesque postures. The individual numbers, in which dozens of various masks are used, are interspersed with folk dances. The girls' figures are conspicuously square, and it's easy to tell they are young men dressed as females; as a matter of fact, these are the fellows who demonstrated their horsemanship in the morning.

On tables in the tents are American cigarettes and cups of butter tea. The Panchen Lama's father again walks around and offers cigarettes from his cigarette case combined with a lighter – all made of massive gold. By coincidence, Tibetan runaways in India spread the news that the Panchen Lama has been arrested the very same day we were his guests. Some papers even presented a statement allegedly made by the Dalia Lama, where he commented on the "news". It says that the Panchen Lama was a compliant tool of the Communists. However, his father was an honest "patriot". When he had been tortured to death, his son protested, was arrested, and taken to Lhasa, where he was imprisoned in Potala.¹⁶¹

I read the news a few days later, and I thought that for a man tortured to death, the Panchen Lama's father looked remarkably well and content. There is another danger: that the father will torture us during lunch – with *Maotai*. It's dark when we say good-bye. It has been an interesting day, which has given us many things to think about. We have seen how changes in Tibet might happen: peacefully, without violence and needless casualties. We have seen the remnants of old feudal Tibet, which have disappeared elsewhere where the lords tried to turn the wheel of time backward. We have seen a young man who was told he was a god, but whose brains have remained unfettered. He thinks and tries to carry out the task bestowed on him by his status, although it's not easy. A man who is an embodiment of a religious tradition should lead the way to the new Tibet. However, try as he might, he won't be able to rid the tradition of its feudal content. He seems to be honestly trying to overcome the contradiction, but neither the setting of *The Arabian Nights* nor the title of the precious scholar will be enough to help him succeed.

We are leaving Lhasa again to the west through the Lhasa valley. This time, at the confluence with the Yangpa River, we turn left over the bridge and follow the Lhasa River to the south, where it empties into the Brahmaputra. The road leads through a wide and flat valley at first, with fields on both sides. The driver is cussing, and I am not surprised: local peasants have learned to make irrigation ditches to ensure a richer harvest; however, they don't know yet the simple way to lead the ditches across the road by covering them with flat stones. Therefore, we have to slow down every 200 meters or so, and carefully, front wheels first and rear wheels next, cross a channel that is a half-meter deep. When the Dalai Lama's caravan fled through this place five months ago, the channels weren't here yet. The serfs were not interested in increasing the harvest because they either tolled on the lord's field or, even if they worked on their own, the lords took any surplus from them.

At that time, the road wasn't here, either. It was a trail for mules and yaks; people and goods were transported

across the Brahmaputra in small boats made of yak hide. Horses, mules, and yaks had to swim. A GAZ-69 truck could move along the path with difficulties, but the river stopped any further movement. Trucks may be faster than mules, but they cannot compete when it comes to swimming. Therefore, when we planned the trip at the beginning of our stay, we were told: The drive to the Brahmaputra along a poor road will take about a day. Then you will be carried over by small boats. You will spend the night and follow in different vehicles. Everything has changed in two weeks' time. It took only three hours to reach the narrow part of the valley, where we drove along a narrow strip between the river and a steep rock face, which was decorated with large, multi-coloured paintings of Buddhas. Here the Lhasa River cuts its way through the mountains lining the northern bank of the Brahmaputra.

The Tsangpo, or Brahmaputra, is much wider in this place than in Zhikatse. Where we approached the bank, it is divided by an island of sedimentary rocks into two arms. The crossing is made possible by two brand-new ferries. They were assembled by soldiers in a simple way: they joined two pontoon boats with a platform that can carry two cars. Each pontoon has an engine, and the crossing takes only a few minutes. In a little while, we were nearing the other side, where Dzasang Monastery¹⁶² towers high above the river. We sat down to have lunch below its walls; this time we had the cold lunch that we got in the morning. We were surrounded by army tents: soldiers have been accommodated here since the People's Liberation Army forced its way across the river during the onset of the second stage of the rebellion's suppression.

Now it's peace and quiet. People with various loads are waiting for the ferry down on the bank, and the lazy river is flowing below us. About 200 meters downstream, right behind the rock where the monastery was built, lies another island in the middle of the river, a smaller and higher one, and a chain bridge leads to it. We learn that when the bridge¹⁶³ was built several hundred years ago, the river was much narrower. The bank used to be where the island is. The bridge has no purpose today; it leads to nowhere and serves,

like almost everything in Tibet, for hanging little cloths with printed prayers, which are blowing in the wind.

We are in the region of Lhoka, called Shannan by the Chinese¹⁶⁴. Both names mean "south of the mountains", and it's not hard to understand the meaning in the place where we sit. The northern bank of the Brahmaputra is lined with the mountain chain of the Gantis,¹⁶⁵ whose only opening is a narrow trough carved by the Lhasa River. The name of the area was probably coined in Lhasa, from where it is really "south of the mountains". I don't know the age of the name, but surely, it's not the original designation: this area was settled much earlier than Lhasa. Lhoka is the cradle of Tibet; this is where the first Tibetan kings resided.

Of course, this is no coincidence. The average altitude of Lhoka is "only" 3,200 meters, and the region is interwoven with several mountain ranges that stretch from west to east. This range together with the mountain chain lining the opposite northern bank of the Brahmaputra protects the lower parts of the area from the sharp north wind, which results in a relatively mild climate. Thus, corn prospers here better than in other parts of Tibet, and fruits can be grown here – apples, peaches, nuts, apricots, and even grapevine. The southern slopes offer excellent pastureland, where about 9,000 head of cattle graze.

Although King Songtsen Gampo¹⁶⁶ transferred the capital city to Lhasa, most of the largest aristocratic families maintained their hereditary estates in Lhoka. The main three monasteries owned a lot of land here as well. More than anywhere else, land ownership was concentrated in the hands of the richest and most reactionary group of secular and clerical feudal lords in Lhoka. For instance, the rebel boss Zurkhang¹⁶⁷ had six large *zhikas* in Lhoka; another rebel leader, Lhagyari,¹⁶⁸ owned a number of estates with 10,000 serfs. Because the soil was good, it paid off for the lords to cultivate it themselves. Therefore, the number of the poorest and most underprivileged serfs, *langsheng*, was much higher than anywhere else.

In recent years, Lhoka played a special role in the preparation of the counter-revolutionary rebellion. Both the abovementioned conditions and

Lhoka's strategic position were suitable for this purpose. Lhasa was separated from the region by the high mountain range of the Gantis and the wide Brahmaputra. On the other hand, the connection with India is perfect: the eastern foothills of the Himalayan chain are crossed by nineteen roads. Only one small garrison of the People's Liberation Army was located in the Lhoka region in the central village of Tsetang,¹⁶⁹ close to the Brahmaputra.

Therefore, the rebels counted on this base for several reasons. As early as in 1956, Khampa units formed here, referred to as "defenders of the faith volunteer army",¹⁷⁰ under the leadership of Andruksang,¹⁷¹ a rich Khampa trader. This force was later joined by thousands of lamas, sent by large monasteries. However, Lhoka played yet another important role in the insurgents' plans.

In the event of a defeat near Lhasa, all troops were to concentrate here. They thought that they would manage to defend the pass through the Gantis and maintain their positions in Lhoka, where food supplies would be secured, plus utilize the connection with India, which would send emissaries so the imperialist superpowers would intervene against the People's Republic of China.

Then, in the case of a complete defeat, the rebels counted on an easy escape abroad from Lhoka. As we could see, this plan was the only one that had partially worked out in the end.

It was planned that we would hear about the fighting later, after we arrive in Tsetang. At the ferry, where everything looks calm, we are reminded of the earlier fighting in Lhoka. A picturesque group of people – probably a family – is sitting away from the others who are waiting for the ferry. Judging by the rummage around them, we can see they are nomads, which is also clear because they have small children with them. "They are Loreba,"¹⁷² explains our guide.

Three hundred years ago, an uprising of serfs broke out in Lore, the southeastern part of Lhoka close to the border with Bhutan. It took two years before the feudal lords managed to drown the people's resistance in blood. Then they took a terrible revenge. Everyone

with any connection to the uprising was murdered; the others were driven out of their homes. "Loreba" – people from Lore – have no home, cannot rent land, are subject directly to the local government. They settle somewhere for a time; a few have managed to settle for good because they did work no one else wanted to do; for instance, butcher's work, where they daily violate the strict religious ban on killing (only lamas are forbidden to eat the meat of killed animals). A small number made their living by trade, but they couldn't settle down since it was forbidden by guild rules. Loreba mostly begged and lived off alms. Only now, thanks to the land reform, the descendants of the bygone insurgents are allowed to become people like everyone else and to settle down. They will be able to marry anyone they want, which was forbidden by law. They won't have to travel from all corners of Tibet to a place determined by a high official to pay the capita-tion tax every three years, on the fifteenth day of the fifth month. The official never asked where they would get the money for this tax, but woe betide the Loreba who didn't pay or who was caught elsewhere than in the meeting place at the given hour.

The Loreba are standing at the ferry below us, and Dzasang's walls tower over us. We learn that the monastery is occupied by the People's Liberation Army. The monastery monks took part in the rebellion, and it housed the headquarters of the rebel forces that defended the river to prevent soldiers from crossing it. The first place we visited in Lhoka reminds us of ancient as well as recent wars.

Further travel is less interesting. The road zigzags among rock sediments along the Brahmaputra, both banks of which are lined with mountains. Only occasionally does the valley let us glimpse the countryside to the south, dominated by even higher snowcapped mountain ranges. The farthest ones, hidden in the clouds, are the Himalayas, which form the border between China and Bhutan.

There are not many settlements near the river: isolated houses now and then, mostly walled in. From time to time, we can see something moving along the road, resembling a large cupboard walking by itself.

When we approach, we realize it's a boat being carried by its owner upstream. Before he can row to the other side, the river will carry him approximately to the point where he started to walk. We swallow more dust than we like, and it's not only the dust of the cars that drive in front of us, but also the dusty greeting of the cargo convoys that we overtake and meet. They drive with such a matter-of-factness, as if the road had been around for a long time and not just a few weeks; until then, transport was provided by mule caravans.

Later, when the sun behind our backs almost touches the mountain tops, we pass through several larger villages and suddenly a clay wall appears between two hills ahead and a row of one-story buildings behind it. It looks like a fortress, and the impression is correct. We have arrived.

It's late afternoon and after a brief welcome we have enough time for a short walk. We leave the gate and turn toward the river. After a few meters, the road turns to the right up the hill, and suddenly we find ourselves on the open side of a natural amphitheatre. Three sides are lined with houses, and two other buildings are right opposite: the monastery and the local administration office. I would have written "monastery and town hall," but Tibet didn't know even the simplest forms of local self-government. In the space between the two buildings is a playing field, and like everywhere else in the People's Republic of China, basketball is played here. A lot of spectators surround the field, including several old men and little children – maybe grandfathers babysitting so that the mothers can play.

A women's team from the People's Liberation Army is playing against the local women, and the Chinese clearly have the upper hand. It's no wonder: the women from the other team were serfs only a few months ago, and the lord was sure to employ his subjects from dawn to dusk. He wouldn't have allowed this jumping-around-with-a-ball nonsense. I think this unexpectedly encountered match aptly summarizes all the changes here. Where the most severe battles were fought three months ago, basketball is played now. It seems the entire town has gathered to amicably watch; the younger ones follow the game with professional interest. The

army members move about freely, without worries and weapons. Now we realize our hosts did not object to our taking a walk, and yet this would be a place calling for extreme caution.

We watch for a while, but soon begin to be cold. Tibetan men have hidden their hands in both sleeves of their robes, which hang lowered down from their waists during the day. They are better prepared for abrupt changes in the mountain air temperature than we are.

We are returning to go to bed. Music is playing in one of the houses, and some comrades invite us to the traditional Saturday night dance. The music plays until midnight, but that's what I learn in the morning; you sleep deep in the clear mountain air.

No, the place didn't use to be as peaceful as this. In the morning we are sitting at a long table joined by comrades: Zhang Zhenwen, the regional secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, and Lieutenant Bo Zhengya,¹⁷³ the political commissar of the PLA's Tibet Military Headquarters. A map of Lhoka hangs on the wall. Three places are marked with red stripes in the south near the border with India; one of them is merely a hundred kilometres from the place where we sit. When we entered the Lhoka area, border skirmishes with Indian troops were occurring. The comrades wouldn't tell us any more, only the names of places which have appeared in the world press. "Comrades, this is an international affair. When you return to Lhasa, ask the representative of the central government and comrades at the Foreign Office!"

Despite the secrecy, the discussion is interesting. We mention our first impression on arrival: several houses wedged between two hills, watchtowers on the hilltops, surround by a wall, in short, a fortress. And a fortress it was.

One hundred people, civil servants and soldiers lived here. One hundred people in an area of about 170,000 inhabitants, where rebellious Khampa units began to form in 1957. In the middle of 1958, they switched from preparations to direct action and assaulted individual patrols. The defence was difficult. The soldiers were outnumbered by the enemy, and they received a strict

order: Limit your action to the most necessary defence; do not counterattack under any circumstances!

The rebels had enough guns and ammunition. As far as we could discern, they were British weapons from World War Two. How did they get them? Part came from the stock of the Tibetan army and had been used in the war. Part were surreptitiously brought over the border; some were dropped by airplanes.¹⁷⁴ It is hard to tell how many times the airplanes dropped them. Three cases were identified for sure in October 1958. Only in one case was it possible to identify the amount of material: more than 5,000 crates.

But that was when there was fighting in Lhoka, several months before the Lhasa rebellion broke out. In September 1958, representatives of the central government protested the provocative actions of the rebels in the Lhoka region, and the *Kashag* sent its emissary, an official of the fourth rank, Namseling Paljor Jigme,¹⁷⁵ allegedly to “establish order.” His “establishing of order” was so successful that the first direct attack on the “fortress” occurred a week after his arrival. The rebels numbered 500, while there were just a hundred defenders. They drove the attackers away, nevertheless.

The rebels returned after a month – this time numbering 1,000 men. The siege lasted a week and then the rebels retreated. From then on, they avoided drawn-out operations.

The main battle for the fortress started in January 1959. The fortress housed 300 defenders (not only soldiers engaged in battle; everyone fought): Lhasa had sent reinforcements in response to the previous fighting. The proportion of forces, however, remained the same. A full 3,000 rebels were attacking the fortress. They got better weapons, and more experienced commanders. This time, the siege lasted a full seventy-four days, from January 25 to April 8,¹⁷⁶ when the attackers fled from the troops of the People’s Liberation Army that had crossed the Brahmaputra and approached Dzatheng [sic; probably meant Tsetang]. It was trial by fire, especially for the young Tibetan officials, who had come from Lhasa not long before. Several of them approached the secretary with their worries. “The rebels outnumber us ten to one,” they said. “That does not

scare us so much; we know how the people’s army can fight. But the rebels wear amulets that make them invulnerable!”

“What could you reply to that?” Comrade Zhang smiles. “We had to deploy persuasion by example: to fell as many amulet-wearing rebels as possible.” The rebels had tried in vain to directly attack the fort, and in March dug a shaft under it to blow it up. Luckily, the defenders found out in time and dug a tunnel leading to the enemy’s shaft to detonate it.

To continue: Lieutenant Bo Zhengya takes the floor. Military action against the Lhoka rebels started with the crossing of the Brahmaputra near Dzasang Monastery on April 5, 1959. Fifteen to twenty thousand rebels were concentrated in the area. People’s Liberation Army forces made simultaneous attacks in several waves and destroyed the rebels in forty-seven armed clashes during sixteen days. Then, in the next stage of the operation, it was only a matter of pursuing the scattered groups who hid in the mountains and mostly tried to escape to India.

What were the reasons for such a quick defeat of the core of the rebel forces in an area they had been expected to hold for at least several months? There were many circumstances working in their favour: they were used to the climate and life in the mountains, and they were mostly cavalry troops on mountain ponies, highly mobile, and quite well armed with rifles, machine guns, mountain cannons, and mortars. Their commanders had good military educations and chose the best tactics: to attack smaller People’s Liberation Army groups and use disruptive actions against larger units. They also counted on persuading the population to join them under the catchwords of “protecting the religion” and “fighting for national freedom”.

They faced units of the People’s Liberation Army, whose soldiers were unfamiliar with the mountainous terrain, were sent to Tibet at short notice, and didn’t have time to acclimatize.¹⁷⁷ It was an infantry army, and one more disadvantage was that they had to attack rebel positions in passes and on mountain tops.

If you add the complexity of the terrain and the large number of caves and other hideouts in the mountains,

it turns out that the rebels' hopes were based on realistic foundations.

Lieutenant Bo raises a finger:

“They only took account of the factors they had been taught about at military schools in old British India, where they were sent by the local government. We counted on their internal conflicts.

The biggest conflict consisted in their reactionary nature. For people to fight well they need a progressive idea that encourages enthusiasm. For what cause did the rebel soldiers fight?

There were two main categories. The first one was Tibetan army members and serfs who were ordered by their lords into the rebellion. These had no cause whatsoever. They opposed us simply because the lord had commanded it. Then, there were Khampas, who in 1956 really believed that they had to fight us to retain their religion or even that we wanted to eliminate the Tibetan nationality. Since then, however, the Khampas have had many opportunities to realize that what the commanders really cared about was their wealth, their estates, their serfs. Naturally, this undermined their initial fighting spirit.

Another conflict that escalated with every blow we inflicted on the rebels was the conflict between the Khampas and the soldiers of the Tibetan army. Tibetan officers considered the Khampa commanders to be illiterate outlanders who wanted to intrude and take over their positions, whereas the Khampas reproached the Tibetan army for its poor fighting spirit. At the same time, both the Khampas and the Tibetan officers argued with lamas. As a result, there were several armed clashes between these forces; one that occurred near the village of Pojung¹⁷⁸ had twenty victims.

The main conflict, however, took place between the rebels and most of the population. Rebel troops terrorized the villages. They looted, raped, forced villagers to labour for free, and made them join their ranks; if anyone dared to refuse, he was killed and his heart torn out of his chest. People were mostly afraid of us then: here in Lhoka, there weren't many opportunities to meet us directly, and the less they knew us, the more they listened to gossip. The rebels' behaviour was such

that people overcame their fear and helped us right since the beginning.”

A unique operation came into being. After the first sixteen days when the rebels' striking power was broken but thousands of enemies wandered the mountains in small groups, an order was issued: “To the field, to the families!” The People's Liberation Army units dispersed and transformed into agitation and working groups. This second stage of the “fight” ended on July 31. The overall outcome of Lhoka operations in both stages was as follows:

Of approximately 10,900 rebels

- 9 % were killed,
- 18 % were captured in battle,
- 7 % surrendered under siege, and
- 66 % surrendered as a result of political work.

It is not known exactly how many insurgents fled abroad; estimates say about 7,000 on top of the 10,900. This number includes not only armed troops but also various leaders of the rebellion who fled and processions of serfs who were taken along to carry their chattel. “Two-thirds surrendered as a result of political work” – of course, we are interested in more details. Comrade Bo smiles.

“In fact, the numbers are not precisely correct yet. The two-thirds are those who surrendered themselves as a result of political work. But there were many others who were either killed or captured in battle or surrendered due to the siege, and that was also the result of our political work. We wouldn't have caught them so quickly if local peasants hadn't helped.”

As it turns out, at the end of the first sixteen days the situation was still unresolved. The rebels' striking power had been destroyed, but only about thirty percent of the 10,900 had been disabled. The others held their positions in the mountains divided into smaller groups. In the inaccessible ground, hoping to establish a connection with foreign countries, they could conduct guerrilla warfare operations for a long time. However, they would have needed support from local people to succeed.

The rebels did not have such support. Here in Lhoka they had less than anywhere else. Their troops had been ravaging the area for some time and felt safer here than elsewhere. The departure of feudal troops was an immense load off the locals' chests. They welcomed the People's Liberation Army with relief and willingly repaired roads destroyed by the fleeing insurgents. Yet that was not enough.

The squads that escaped to the mountains had hidden supplies and could utilize the difficult terrain and the abundance of villages. They could not only raid secluded mountain dwellings to replenish their stocks; large herds were grazing on the hillsides and could serve as long-term supplies of food. The extensive active cooperation of Tibetan peasants was needed to quickly liquidate these groups. The transition to peaceful life and the speedy adoption of democratic reforms were not possible unless these gangs were destroyed soon.

The region of Lhoka, which had been the scene of the gravest battles, became a place where the old politics of the People's Liberation Army was put into action on the largest scale and in the most intensive manner. Entire units went out to villages during the spring field cultivation and started working zestfully. The soldiers helped with sowing, carrying manure, digging irrigation channels – the first in many places – aided the sick, repaired damaged houses, worked, and lived with the people. Like in Lhasa, the officer who spoke to us about the suppression of the rebellion talked more about the number of shifts worked, patients treated, and cubic meters of soil moved than about the numbers of the dead and the captured. Soldiers became teachers: the first teachers in the first

schools they built with their own hands. The Tibetan people, like the Chinese people, are fond of poetic expression: "The people's army is as strong as a mighty river; its heart is purer than a mountain spring." And words were turned into actions.

Masses of peasants actively helped in cleaning the mountains of rebellious gangs. Some worked as guides for the People's Liberation Army search commandos. Others, on their own initiative, organized expeditions to places where small groups of rebels were hiding and caught them. Elsewhere, and this was the most important thing, peasants ventured into the mountains and persuaded the scattered rebels to surrender. They told them the area was already firmly in the hands of the People's Liberation Army, which was treating not only prisoners well but also those who willingly surrendered. Almost all are released to go home; only the leaders wait for the trial.

This close active cooperation not only led to the Lhoka area's being free of the residues of rebellious gangs by the end of July 1959, but also encouraged increased political activity, which put the most backward part of Tibet on the frontlines of the new political development. At the time of our visit, most of Tibet was finalizing preparations for the land reform, while in Lhoka, the distribution of land had nearly been accomplished. When mountain barley was sowed, soldiers came to help in the fields. When, after our departure, the barley was harvested, it was done by free peasants in their own fields. In some places they harvested together, forming mutual aid groups – the germs of future agricultural cooperatives and people's communes. They managed to leap from feudalism to the path to socialism in only half a year.

Chapter 12

Here he stands, apparently unsure before so many foreigners. An ordinary young Chinese man, eyes downcast, not knowing what to do with his hands. And so, he picks up a cap he put on the table and is squeezing it.

This young man, Comrade Zeng Dao,¹⁷⁹ came to see us from Kesung *zhika*,¹⁸⁰ a village about fifteen kilometres away, where he works as a leader of the working group. Kesung *zhika* used to be the property of Zurkhang, a big boss in the rebellion. It wasn't bad property. The *zhika* has about 2,500 *khe* of arable land, and the lord kept about 1,600 *khe* for himself, to be cultivated by *langshengs*. Another 500 *khe* were rented out to *tsaipas*, and 400 *khe* were rented out otherwise. The whole *zhika* harvested 16,000 *khe* of barley (216 tons) annually, of which about three-quarters belonged to the lord. Sixty-three serf families that lived in the *zhika* had to split fifty-four tons, from which they paid taxes. They exchanged grain for tea and butter; they had only 100 kilograms of grain per person and year. That is not enough.

Zeng Dao puts down the slip of paper from which he read the data, or better, on which he had written the data. In fact, he knows this information by heart, and he barely looked at the notes during the introduction. He relaxed as soon as he started to speak, and he continues to talk about his work with no embarrassment.

The three-member working group – there is one young Tibetan man and a Tibetan girl besides the leader – came to Kesung *zhika* immediately after the fighting ended. The property manager who had lived in Zurkhang's house fled, so it was only natural for them to move into the empty house. They went to the village, talked to people, and everything seemed all right, maybe too all right. The people with whom they spoke praised the People's Liberation Army and the politics of the Chinese Communist Party. They did not speak about themselves or their families. When asked if there are rebels hiding in the *zhika*, the answer was: "No, they all ran away." When they spoke

about the old debts being cancelled and the interest reduced, the peasants said it was very good, but they apparently didn't believe it. In short, they got stuck in one place. The reasons were unknown then. It was clear that people were afraid, but that was nothing strange. The rebels spread terrifying rumours about the people's army: they are said to murder women and children and to drag men off to the inland to do forced labour. This rumour only lasted several days; then the truth about the people's army was spread by word of mouth. The panic passed, but still, no trust was won by the working group.

They learned the true reason much later. The *zhika* manager, a Mr. Situ,¹⁸¹ told the people before he left: "I am leaving, and new lords will arrive tomorrow. They won't stay long: our lord is coming back, and woe the man who betrays him!" A clever combination of threat and gossip. New lords – a concept well known in Tibet. An aristocratic family might become poor or fall out of favor. Their estates were confiscated by others who were richer and more powerful. Nothing changed for the serfs. The young people from the working group had no idea the initial failure was partly their fault. They moved to the lord's house, and the villagers thought they were the "new lord's" managers. They conferred in the lord's house every evening. No one came to see them; the big house was almost empty. In the end, they said: "The party tells us to go out to the people, but we are hiding from them." They moved away to stay with the poorest, paid for their beds, and helped in the field. They didn't live nicely. A small room for the whole family, including a dog. Filth and vermin. The house into which the young Tibetan moved was so small that he had to sleep by the door outside. It was quite awful, but soon they realized they'd taken the right path. The people in whose houses they stayed started to speak first; later they were joined by the others. It turned out that the situation in the village was not all right after all. The mayor, Kendzo,¹⁸² continued to spread rumours about the people's army and



Fig. 118 / Tibetan men and women repairing a road.

Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 119 / A street in Zhikatse.

Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 120 / The Chairman of a peasant association committee Paju (perhaps Pagyel) and his deputy Gaga (perhaps Gawa).

These two peasants were the village leaders in Yangta *zhika*. Jan Vinař wrote about them: "We say good-bye, get in the lorries, and after a while arrive in Yangta *zhika*. The village borders on several *zhikas*, and its name is derived from the largest one, belonging to the Lhalu family. We are welcomed by the Chairman of the peasants' association committee, Paju, and his deputy, Gaga. They wear typical Tibetan peasant's clothes: a shirt made of rough linen; trousers of undyed wool, spun and woven at home; high boots; a coat-like robe made of the same fabric as the trousers, pulled-up at the waist. The weather is warm today, and thus they wear only their shirts and have the sleeves of the robes tied around their waists. When the wind blows, they can easily slip into one or both sleeves — practical attire for a region with changeable weather, where the sun beats down from one direction and ice-cold wind blows from the other. Both men wear English hats that used to be imported from India. They wear them their way, reminiscent of Italian mountain dwellers. Elsewhere in Tibet, the hats are worn with the brim lifted on one side in the style of the Canadian Mounted Police." Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 121 / Yangta zhika.

Foreign journalists, their Chinese guides, and local villagers, all gathered in front of the gate to Yangta *zhika*. It must have been a special and unexpected occasion for the locals. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 122 / Yangta zhika — the surrounding mountains.

Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 123 / Yangta zhika — visiting a village house.

Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 124 / Yangta zhika — local inhabitants.

A view from a rooftop of one of the village houses — several villagers gathered at the entrance to their home. The gate is covered with a small roof which extends over the wall next to it. During the harvest it serves for drying crops. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 125 / Yangta zhika — a village house.

The photograph is taken from the same rooftop spot as the previous one. It shows the neighbouring house surrounded by a clay wall. Mountains rise on the horizon. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 126 / Yangta *zhika* and its surroundings.

There are steep rocks near the village. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 127 / Yangta zhika and the surrounding mountains.

Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 128 / A group of villagers in Yangta zhika.

Source: *Shots from Tibet*.

threatened that anyone who helped the Communists would suffer the consequences. He was supported in his efforts by a rich *tsaipa*, Zantui¹⁸³ the kulak. He insisted Communists would steal all the harvest from the peasants; when the call came to hand over weapons, he went and told everyone that the Communists took even pocketknives and sickles. The village had five or six more such lords. Through threats, they even managed to collect from certain peasants usurious interest on debts that had been abolished by the law.

It was at this stage that the working group realized the complexity of relationships in the *zhika*. “The lords have fled” – that was fine, but the kulaks remained, and some of them, although being serfs themselves, owned *langshengs* leased out by Zurkhang on a long-term basis. Now, when the serfs’ serfs started to raise their heads, the kulaks reproached them for their ingratitude. “We have sustained you for years, and you want to turn weapons against us now?!”

When the working group learned of the kulaks’ tactics, they convened the first public meeting on

the subject of “Who sustains whom?” In the end, the meeting turned into a struggle session against Zantui the kulak. As always, once people got started, they rid themselves of fear of the kulaks, who were still here, and of the lords, who had fled. They exposed a few other saboteurs and finally came to believe they didn’t have to pay abusive interest. They began to organize themselves and started to plan land distribution for July. The distribution was finished on August 5, and three mutual assistance groups were established in the *zhika*; the peasants’ association committee organizes common work for the collection of manure and for the construction of roads and a simple sewerage system in the village. A school was built thanks to the peasants’ joint efforts.

“It’s all very easy,” says Zeng Dao, “when people understand that the old times are really over. Then no one needs to boss them around; they know best what they need. But in the beginning... That wretched feudal house gave us a hard time.”

Chapter 13

A strange procession is leaving the town of Tsetang. Men, women, and children. They are not formally dressed; most of them don’t own any formal clothes. They have always worn the same clothes covered in patches, and only when the patches failed to hold the rotten fabric together were they given new ones by the lord. The procession is not headed by musicians. People do not carry placards, just stakes sharpened on one end, with a small plate inscribed with several ungainly Tibetan characters attached to the other end.

The sky is cloudless and so deeply blue as can only be seen here, thousands of meters above sea level. The bright alpine sun is shining on the procession, which has turned off the road and continues along winding paths and balks among fields.

The peasants of Tsetang have formed a parade to mark the lands allocated to them during the land reform. It took many weeks to finish all the preparations. A list of lands and families had to be made, and a reserve for monks who might return from monasteries was calculated. Long conversations were held with some rich *tsaipas* who had cultivated more fields than were assigned to them based on the size of their households and who had to be persuaded to voluntarily give up a part of their land. During the distribution of land, it had to be kept in mind that individual families got the same area but also approximately the same quality of land. The preparations have been finished, and everyone knows which plots of land they will get. They could simply go and mark their claims. The peasants, however, decided to celebrate this great occasion

together. The procession has stopped, and the peasants are lining up on a balk. The scrivener is reading several sentences from his papers, of which we only catch the name Palzang.¹⁸⁴ A young man steps forward out of the line, carefully treads among the rows of barley, which already reaches up to his knees, and another one follows with an ax. In the middle of the field, Pasang drives the point of the stake into the ground, and the helper hammers it down with a few blows of the upturned ax.

Pasang is twenty-seven. He spent four years of his life, from 1955 until the end of the rebellion, in constant fear. He used to be a *langsheng* of a rich Lhasa nobleman named Tsende.¹⁸⁵ When he was transporting rocks for the construction of a new house for the lord in spring 1955, he broke the wagon's axle. The lord had him whipped, and Pasang escaped. Here in Tsetang he pretended to be a *tuijung* and laboured for a rich *tsaiipa* named Nangachenjo.¹⁸⁶ The kulak suspected something was not entirely correct with his day labourer; he paid him less than was customary and gave him worse food.

Pasang got married two years ago. Today he gets a lot of land for one since he lives alone. His wife was raped by the rebels, and when she resisted, she was beaten to death.

The peasants intently watch as the stakes are hammered in. The procession goes on. Now it's the turn of an old woman. Her name is Sönam Drolma,¹⁸⁷ and she is fifty-five. I spoke to her yesterday; she talked with a remarkable sense of humor about her life, which had been full of drudgery and poverty... She was owned by the city administration, but her servitude was somewhat complicated. She herself was a *tuijung*, but because she wasn't able to earn enough to pay the capitation tax, the city administration leased her out to a kulak who fed her and paid the tax for her. Sönam Drolma worked her ula in the fields of the city administration; the ula formed a part of the ground rent for the kulak's fields. She married later, but her husband soon died and left her with a daughter who, in recent years, has worked as hard as her mother. In summer they slept in the field; in spring they spent nights in the

corridor of the city administration so that they could kick them out to the field as early as possible; in winter the kulak provided them with shelter in the cowshed. When asked how Nangachenjo fed her, she burst out laughing. She remembered she had meat once: "The insurgents were approaching Tsetang. Nangachenjo got scared because he had heard they took all cattle. Therefore, he slaughtered all the cows, and so I got a piece of meat. He was afraid it would go bad." Otherwise, the kulak gave her stale *tsampa* and sometimes a little bit of yak butter.

A solemn expression on her face, Sönam Drolma holds a stake that her daughter hammers into the ground.

And so it goes on, one field after another. Each field is marked with a plate bearing a name, and each name is associated with a life story that may serve as an indictment against the old feudal regime.

We can see a thirteen-year-old boy holding a stake in one of the fields. His parents were killed by the rebels because his father refused to fight in their ranks. The small Lingchu¹⁸⁸ now lives with his grandfather, who is sixty, and being ill, had to stay at home today. Those two will probably not have enough strength to cultivate their new land, but the peasants' association is ready to take care of such cases. The sun blazes high over the southern mountains. It's there, not far from this place, where the former lords who fled the country are sitting. It's there that the news is born that fills the pages of the reactionary Western press, news of the Tibetan people's suffering, news of crushing their ancient freedoms. Yet over yonder, on the balk, are standing peasants, watching with focused attention as a small boy hammers a stake into the ground where his father, his father's father, and the grandfather of his grandfather toiled. They laboured on the land for a lord as serfs without any rights. Now, the land belongs to the boy, and he will work it as a free farmer.

Just look at the faces of these people and you will see the futility of any attempt to restore the old order in Tibet. Only a few weeks ago, when the rebels had been defeated, the former serfs were full of fear; they didn't dare to believe in a future without lords. They

have grown up since then. They saw fear in the eyes of their ex-lords at struggle sessions, and they have learned of their right to the land they work and to the fruits it bears. No one will dare seize the land from them again!

No, that would be impossible. Tibet still has a long way to go. It is poor, its agriculture primitive, its mineral wealth unexplored, its industrial development hin-

dered by the lack of roads. Even cultural development is still at a low level. A lot of work must be done. But here, in these fields, the new Tibet is rising. Where the Middle Ages ruled yesterday, the main condition for the rich and happy development of this country on the “roof of the world” has been met today. The people of Tibet have stepped freely into their future. No power in the world could reverse their direction.

Chapter 14

Many times have we walked along Barkor Street, curious and interested; many times have we said that we will see this corner tomorrow. Now, it's strange to think: this is our last time here. Goodness knows where we shall be tomorrow; we probably won't see the Barkor, Lhasa, and Tibet ever again. We are sitting in the hotel feeling nervous since the weather is bad but may improve, and as soon as we get a call from the airport, we have to jump into the truck and leave.

There has been no call. We are still in the hotel the next morning. At noon, after we have resigned ourselves to the idea of sitting and waiting another day, an alarm breaks out like in the army. We get in the truck and at that moment, the dense blanket of clouds is torn apart and the midday sun is mirrored in the golden roofs of Potala. As if it was saying its last good-bye.

The road to the airport leads uphill, and the trip takes longer than our first journey to Lhasa. It's dark when we arrive; we can feel for ourselves how quickly the temperature changes at these altitudes. Airport soldiers invite us to the movies. We decline politely and wonder why anyone would willingly sit outside for fun – it's an open-air show. The pilots' wadded leather overalls may be better protection against the cold weather than our European clothes somewhat improved by Chinese wadded coats.

One last time shall we sleep the magical sleep you can only experience several thousand meters above sea

level; you could sleep till kingdom come. We are not allowed to. It's still dark when an energetic hand shakes me to wake up. When the ice-cold water in the washbasin touches my skin, it occurs to me that the idea of spending this night in a Xining hotel with bathrooms and wonderfully hot water is not at all that unpleasant...

The Ilyushin climbed over the ridges of the Tanglha mountains together with the sun. As a farewell, Tibet shows us its greatest beauty – the snowcapped peaks are first blood red, then pink. I am able to admire the splendour unperturbed this time; although I have an oxygen mask on, I would manage without it.

It's been almost a month since we flew in the opposite direction. Those days were so full of deep, often earthshaking experiences, it seems we arrived only yesterday. In Tibet, time is governed by different laws. Six weeks ago, I walked through the streets of Prague. A new book appeared in bookshop windows then. Its title was *The Land Where Time Has Stopped*.¹⁸⁹ Yes, it used to be true. Time had stopped in Tibet, and the entire authority of the local government and the Lamaist church tried to prevent it from being put into motion. This authority was overthrown, and time in Tibet has been moving with unprecedented speed. It has leaped a whole millennium in several weeks.

The events we witnessed in Tibet were just the beginning. I look from the window and try to see the bottom of a valley hidden below a cloud. A railroad will lead through these places in a few years,¹⁹⁰ bringing

machines necessary to uncover the riches of the mountains. The first large hydroelectric power plant whose construction we saw near Lhasa, and also dozens of larger and smaller power stations, will be in operation at that time. Tibet will have ceased to be an immense, poor, and barren territory fully dependent on little fields crowded in valleys and on yak herds grazing on the mountain steppes.

A new era has begun on the roof of the world. The feudal country, which was the subject of travelogues

and mystic legends, the country whose monasteries allegedly witnessed incredible miracles, has disappeared. Thank you very much. As one of the first foreigners, I had the opportunity to see the real state of the monasteries. I saw filth, backwardness, and cruelty. Today's Tibet shows other miracles, quite ordinary everyday miracles performed on a third of the globe by plain people with their skilful hands. The time of romantic travelogues is over. Nowadays, Tibet has much more interesting topics to offer.

JAN VINAŘ, PRAGUE 1960 / ZURICH, DECEMBER 1983

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Fig. 129 / A farewell before departure from Tibet.

The farewell with the locals was in the traditional style with indispensable white *khatags*. Men on the left side and women and girls on the right side offer them to foreign journalists and their Chinese companions. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 130 / A farewell before departure from Tibet — receiving *khatags*.

Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 131 / Women and young girls bidding farewell to the journalists.

Source: *Shots from Tibet*.



Fig. 132 / Women and young girls bidding farewell to the journalists — a close-up.

Tibetan women hold *khatags* to be offered to foreign guests; in the left corner of this photograph, a group of Chinese soldiers claps hands, probably also bidding farewell to the foreigners. Source: *Shots from Tibet*.

Notes:

- 1) *People's Daily* (*Renmin Ribao* 人民日报) is the best-known daily newspaper in the People's Republic of China, published as a press organ of the Communist Party since June 15, 1948; in addition to the Chinese version, it is also available online in English, Arabic, French, Japanese, Spanish and Russian.
- 2) At that time, Jan Vinař continued in his university education, which he could not finish because Czech universities had been closed down on November 17, 1939. Since 1955, he studied philosophy at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University (see the biographical chapter *Jan Vinař: His Life and Work*).
- 3) Zhang Jingwu 张经武 (1906–1971).
- 4) A soviet off-road truck GAZ-69, an analogy to the US Jeep.
- 5) Jan Vinař writes “Sugela”; Tibetan maps say Shokbula (*shog bu la* ཤོག་བུ་ལ་), the Chinese name is *Xuegula* (雪古拉). It is a mountain pass at the altitude of 5,452 m on the route from Yangpachen to Zhikatse, one of the highest places passable by motor vehicles in the world.
- 6) The airport Jan Vinař refers to is the original Damzhung (Chin. *Dangxiang* 当雄) Airport opened in 1956 at the altitude of 4,200 meters. New Gonggar Airport was opened in 1965 around 100 kilometres south of Lhasa. It is in a lower altitude of about 3,600 meters and protected from the northern winds which complicated the operation of the original airport.
- 7) Three Tatra 111 trucks that formed the Czechoslovak automobile expedition to Tibet together with two Praga V3S trucks. The expedition took place from August 24, 1956, when the trucks and a Jawa 350 motorcycle set off from Lanzhou to October 14 when they came back to the place. More details in Augustin Palát, “Expedice do Tibetu 1956. Úryvky z připravovaného rozhovoru s doc. Augustinem Palátem” [Expedition to Tibet 1956. Excerpts from the upcoming interview with doc. Augustin Palát], interviewed by Ivana Bakešová, *Fénix: Časopis Česko-čínské společnosti* 11/2 (2010): 38–42; Augustin Palát, *Cesty Čínou před půlstoletím: Malý archivní výběr fotografií z let 1954–1960* [Travels through China half a century ago: A small selection of archival photographs from 1954–1960] (Praha: Česko-čínská společnost, 2015); Luboš Bělka, “Czechoslovak Filmmakers, Journalists and Traders: Six Years in Tibet,” in *Experiencing Tibet from the Heart of Europe: Missionaries, Scholars, Filmmakers and Motorbikes*, eds. Luboš Bělka, Daniel Berounský, Petr Jandáček and Jarmila Ptáčková (Potsdam: Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences and edition-thetys, 2020), 107–127.
- 8) Jan Vinař writes “Tangla”, the full name is Nyenchen Tanglha (*gnyan chen thang lha* གཡོན་ཆེན་ཐང་ལྷ་).
- 9) The mountain called Jomoganga is also mentioned by Karel Beba: “The moment when we reached the highest point of the Sugela pass crowned the whole ascent; the pure-white Jomoganga towered before us. Silent, dignified; one of the greatest giants of the Trans-Himalayan range. Since then, it was the only mountain to attract our eyes and to dominate our horizon for most of the journey.” See Karel Beba, “*Tajemný*” Tibet [“Mysterious” Tibet] (Praha: Naše vojsko 1958), 219. The name of the mountain in international transcription (so called Tibetan pinyin) is known as Qiongmo Kangri, it is located in the south-western tip of Nyenchen Tanglha range and its elevation is 7,048 m. The Tibetan name is Jomo Gangri (*jo mo gangs ri* ཇོ་མོ་གངས་རི་) or Jomo Gangtse (*jo mo gangs rtse* ཇོ་མོ་གངས་རྩེ་).
- 10) Otang (*o thang* འོ་ཐང་), a swamp or lake in the valley of the Kyichu River, which, according to tradition, was drained by the Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo, who established there the most sacred temple of Tibetan Buddhism, Jokhang.
- 11) Jan Vinař – in concordance with the usage in Chinese – refers to all Tibetan monks as “lamas”. A lama (*bla ma* ལྷ་མ་) is in fact a Buddhist teacher, i.e., a monk with a higher education and rank. An ordinary monk is called drapa (*grwa pa* གྲལ་པ་). In Chinese, *lama* (喇嘛), usually means simply Tibetan Buddhist monk.
- 12) It is Nechung (*gnas chung* གན་ཆུང་) Monastery, in the past the seat of Tibetan state oracle.
- 13) Potala (*po ta la* བོ་ཏ་ལ་), in Tibetan known as Tsepodrang (*rtse pho brang* རྩེ་ཕོ་བྲང་), literally “palace on a hill” is a building complex functioning both as a fortress with living quarters and warehouses as well as a shrine, and until 1959 it served as the main residence of the Dalai Lamas.
- 14) The former name of Gerlach Peak (in 1949–1959), the highest mountain of Czechoslovakia.
- 15) People's Square (Chin. *Renmin guangchang* 人民广场) was the first square created below the Potala Palace after demolishing a part of former Shöl village and construction of the new administrative and Party headquarters just opposite the palace. In 1995 it was reconstructed and enlarged into the present-day Potala Square (Chin. *Budala gong guangchang* 布达拉宫广场).

- 16) Norbulingka (*nor bu gling ka* རོན་བུ་གླིང་ཀ་), literally the “Jewel Park” was the summer residence of the Dalai Lamas. Today, it is more a forest park resembling a somewhat derelict city park.
- 17) Jan Vinař writes “Parkor”; the correct transcription of the Tibetan name is Barkor (*bar skor* བར་སྐོར་). The information about it being an inner circle is not accurate because, as the Tibetan name suggests, it is the middle circumambulatory path. The inner circle is located in the Jokhang itself and is called Nangkor (*nang skor* ནང་སྐོར་), while the outer circle, which has been preserved only partially, is named Lingkor (*gling skor* གཞིང་སྐོར་) and was about ten kilometres long.
- 18) Jokhang (*jo khang* ཇོ་ཁང་), in Tibetan often called Tsuglakhang (*gtsug lag khang* གཏུག་ལག་ཁང་), is the most sacred Tibetan temple. It is situated in the center of old Lhasa and is encircled by the Barkor pilgrimage circuit. Its name comes from the statue of Buddha Shakyamuni called Jo (*jo* ཇོ), which was allegedly brought to Tibet by the Chinese princess Wencheng (文成) in the 7th century.
- 19) Chin. *Dayang* (大洋), also known as “Yuan [Shikai]’s head” (*Yuan da tou* 袁大头). According to Tibetan writer Tsering Woeser, the silver yuan used in Tibet in the 1950s were indeed not minted during Yuan Shikai’s era but were made by the PLA from silver confiscated to landlords during the land reform. See Weise 唯色, “Na dayang, duode xiang xia yu” (那大洋, 多得像下雨 [Those big yuan, numerous as drops of rain]), *RFA*, October 31, 2015, accessed March 11, 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/mandarin/pinglun/weiseblog/weise-10312015094248.html> .
- 20) Yuan Shikai, 袁世凯 (September 16, 1859 – June 6, 1916), was a Chinese general and politician, the second president of the Chinese Republic after Sun Yat-sen. He unsuccessfully attempted to bring down the republic, when he pronounced himself an emperor in 1915.
- 21) It is a stone stela, Tib. *doring* (*rdo ring* དོར་རིང་), dated 823 A.D. with the text of the Sino-Tibetan Treaty in Tibetan and Chinese. The text starts with the preamble: “The great king of Tibet, the Divine Manifestation, the [Tsenpo] and the great king of China, the Chinese ruler [Huangde], Nephew and Uncle, having consulted about the alliance of their dominions have made a great treaty and ratified the agreement. In order that it may never be changed, so that it may be celebrated in every age and every generation the terms of the agreement have been inscribed on a stone pillar.” See Hugh E. Richardson, “The Sino-Tibetan Treaty Inscription of A.D. 821/23 at Lhasa,” *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society* 2 (1978): 153–154.
- 22) Mikhail Domogatskikh mentions the half amount, a ton per day; however, Karel Beba in his “*Tajemný*” *Tibet*, 119, states two tons in concordance with Jan Vinař.
- 23) Only a few descriptions of the Jokhang interior were published by 1959 (e.g., Ernest Herbert Cooper Walsh, “The image of Buddha in the Jo-wo-khang temple at Lhasa”, *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society* 70/4 (1938): 535–540. It can be assumed that Jan Vinař knew Beba’s description from his recently published book; see Beba “*Tajemný*” *Tibet*, 118–122.
- 24) The statue of Jowo Rinpoche (*jo bo rin po che* ཇོ་བོ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་), the most sacred Buddhist artifact in Tibet. The statue portrays Buddha Shakyamuni at the age of twelve, when he was still Prince Siddhartha. The statue is enshrined in a special shrine in Jokhang, and legend has it that it was brought to Lhasa as a wedding present to king Songtsen Gampo by the Chinese princess Wencheng. The statue was damaged by the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution in 1966 like most of the other paintings and statues inside the temple. Its present appearance is different from the statue photographed in colour by Josef Vaniš and Vladimír Sís as the first in the world on December 23, 1954. See Vladimír Sís – Josef Vaniš, *Weg nach Lhasa. Bilder aus Tibet* (Praha: Artia, 1956), fig. 135; see also the English mutation: *The Road through Tibet* (London: Spring Books, 1956), fig. 135.
- 25) It is a golden urn, Tib. *serbum* (*gser bum* གསེར་བུམ་), a vessel donated by emperor Qianlong (乾隆) of the Qing (清) dynasty. See Max Oidtmann, *Forging the Golden Urn: The Qing Empire and the Politics of Reincarnation in Tibet* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).
- 26) Jan Vinař writes Tibetan names as he heard them from his Chinese companions, often betraying the Chinese transcription. This name can be identified as Ngawang Migyur (*ngag dbang mi ‘gyur* ངག་དབང་མི་འགྲུར་), which, written in Chinese characters, would be Awang Mingjiu (阿旺明久). Many names in this text remain unidentified.
- 27) Most probably, this was not a personal name, but a rank; *konyerpön* (*dkon gnyer dpon* དཀོན་གཉེར་དཔོན་); Chin. *guiniben* 规尼本) was a monk who took care of the main shrine, where Jowo Rinpoche’s statue was located.
- 28) Jan Vinař’s original note no. 1: The so-called movement of “three antis and two concessions” [from Chinese *san fan shuang jian* 三反双减] means: Against rebellion, against personal dependence, against forced labour, and for the reduction of rent and usurious interest rates.

- 29) This is only partially true. The fact is that Tibetan Buddhism really knows a ritual vessel made of a human skull, namely its upper part, in Latin *calvaria*. Its name in Sanskrit is *kapala*, Tib. *töpa* (*thod pa* ཐོད་པ་) and it serves for storing the so-called nectar of immortality, used by monks in certain rituals. There is no evidence for Vinař's statement that "the lords used them as drinking vessels". On *kapala* see e.g. Robert Beer, *The Handbook of Tibetan Buddhist Symbols* (Boulder: Shambhala, 2003). The truth is that drinking from skulls is a common ritual mainly in Eurasian steppes stretching from Japan to Europe and this custom probably came to Tibet together with Tantra from India. If skulls were used for drinking, it was part of a ritual analogous to Holy Communion, including the concept of symbolic body and symbolic blood.
- 30) There are doubts about the authenticity of this document: the exhibition was Chinese anti-Buddhist propaganda. Similar practices using human entrails and other such properties in Tibetan monasteries have been unheard of. Monasteries, in particular those of the Gelugpa order, reprobated human or animal sacrifices of any kind. Such sacrifices were substituted with sculptures made of *tsampa* and butter, called *torma* (*gtor ma* གཏོར་མ་), of corresponding shapes and colours, whose meaning was symbolic. It applies accordingly to the following passages, describing "stories of victims who personally experienced all those torments exhibited".
- 31) The word "inland" (Chin. *neidi* 内地) is used in Chinese language to refer to "inner China" in contrast to Tibetan areas.
- 32) Jan Vinař never *expressis verbis* mentions the name or exact location of the building in which the neighbourhood committee had their office. This can be established from the text by Zbyněk Málek, who writes: "Until recently, the building was occupied by a well-known Lhasa aristocrat, a high official of the former local Tibetan government, named Khantara, one of the participants in the feudal rebellion of March this year. The Lhasa no. 1 neighbourhood committee now works in the building, from where networks run that guide the emerging new life of the entire neighbourhood." (Málek, "Setkání ve Lhasě", 3). The name "Khantara" is in fact Tsarong Dazang Dradul (*tsha rong zla bzang dgra 'dul* ཚར་རྫོང་ལྷ་བཟང་དབྱལ་དུལ་འདུལ་). Tsarong was undoubtedly one of the most important figures of the 20th century Tibet; his life came to an end in 1959 when he was imprisoned by the Chinese army as one of the top leaders of the March rebellion (the arrest, of course stage-managed, is depicted in the Chinese 1959 propaganda film *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*) and subsequently died in prison.
- 33) For illustration we can quote the official English version of this document, which was in that time translated also into Czech, but Jan Vinař probably did not have access to it during the process of writing this reportage and used materials provided by the Chinese organizers of the expedition: "In order to safeguard the unification of the motherland and national unity, Premier Zhou Enlai of the State Council issued an order on March 28 which, in addition to enjoining the Tibet Military Area Command of the People's Liberation Army to put down the rebellion thoroughly, announced the decision that as from that day the Tibetan local government which instigated the rebellion would be dissolved and the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region would exercise the functions and power of the Tibetan local government." "Communique on Rebellion in Tibet," in: *Concerning the Question of Tibet* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1959), 4. (Issued by the Xinhua News Agency on March 28, 1959.)
- 34) Here we can again quote the official English version of the communique: "In order to wipe out the rebel bandits thoroughly, the State Council has ordered the units of the Chinese People's Liberation Army stationed in Tibet to assume military control in various places in Tibet. The tasks of the Military Control Commissions are: to suppress rebellion; to protect the people and the foreign nationals who observe the laws of China; to set up, with the authorization of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region and the Tibet Military Area Command of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, administrative bodies at various levels in the autonomous region of Tibet, and organize self-defence armed forces of patriotic Tibetans to replace the old Tibetan army of a little more than three thousand men, which was rotten to the core, utterly without fighting capabilities and has turned rebel. The Military Control Commission in Lhasa was formally established on March 23. Military control commissions will be set up in succession in other places with the exception of Shigatse, the capital of Houtsang [Tsang] area which is under the leadership of Panchen Erdeni, and where there is no need for one." "Communique on Rebellion in Tibet," in: *Concerning the Question of Tibet*, 12. (Issued by the Xinhua News Agency on March 28, 1959).
- 35) Jan Vinař's original note no. 2: It would be correct to write of the original Lhasa Military Control Commission; since then, the city administration and exercise of government powers have been taken over by the Committee of People's Deputies, and the first elected mayor of the city was a former member of the commission, Mr. Tsuiko. Tsuiko, who comes from a noble family used to be an official of the old local Tibetan government. [Jan Vinař refers to the name in Chinese transcription, the full name is Tsuiko Dunzhu Tsiren (崔科·顿珠次仁, Tib. *Tsogo Döndrup Tsering, mtsho sgo don grub tshe ring* མཚོ་སྐོར་ཅན་གྱུ་བ་ཚེ་རིང་).]

- 36) Zbyněk Málek mentions concrete numbers when he writes about the work of the Military Control Commission in Lhasa: “As in the country, so in Lhasa. We were told about it by Djuiko Tenjutser (another variant of the the name Tshogo Döndrup Tsering), Tibetan aristocrat, a former secretary of the local government and current vice chairman of the Military Control Commission. Let me mention the most important facts of all the interesting things he said. Jobs were given to 3,340 unemployed in the city; 189 orphans and old people were put in shelters; over 50 tons of grains were distributed, and another thousand tons were lent as stock with no interest.” Zbyněk Málek, “Úsvit nad Tibetem” [Sunrise over Tibet], *Rudé právo* (October 1, 1959): 3
- 37) Shedra (*bshad gra* བཤད་གྲ་) is the name of a significant Tibetan aristocratic family, from which two *kalöns* (ministers) and one regent of the Dalai Lama originated.
- 38) *Tamdzing* (Tib. *‘thab ‘dzing* འཕམ་འཛིང་; Chin. *pidou* 批斗), for details about struggle sessions see the relevant chapter of this book.
- 39) These two names are difficult to identify.
- 40) *Duiqiong* 堆穷, Tib. *düchung* (*dud chung* དུ་ཚུང་; also transcribed as *du-jung*, literally “small smoke”) were families of the landless and poor peasants who cultivated only a small piece of land for their own use. Jan Vinař uses the serf categories in correspondence to the classification according to the Chinese historical and sociological surveys, affected by the ideology of the time; see e.g. Liu Zhong 刘忠, “Xizang chaibaxing zhuangyuan chutan” 西藏差巴型庄园初探 [Preliminary Study of the Trelwa Manors in Tibet], in: *Xizang fengjian nongmuzhi yanjiu lunwen xuan* 西藏封建农奴制研究论文选 [Selected Studies on the Feudal Serf System in Tibet] (Beijing: Zhongguo Zangxue chubanshe, 1991); Ma Rong, *Population and Society in Tibet* (Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 145–147. Western historians and Tibetologists who dealt with the issue of serfdom include Melvyn Goldstein, see e.g. “Serfdom and Mobility: An Examination of the Institution of ‘Human Lease’ in Traditional Tibetan Society,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 30/3 (1971): 524–525; or Tom A. Grunfeld, *The Making of Modern Tibet* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), 12–15.
- 41) Jan Vinař’s original note no. 3: Explanation on serf categories see Chapter II.
- 42) Jan Vinař’s original note no. 4: Tsaipa is a serf category.
- 43) Jan Vinař’s *tsaipa* is misspelled from the Chinese *chaiba* (差巴, Tib. *khral wa* ཁྲལ་ཡ་). According to the Chinese classification, these were serfs (literally “taxpayers”) who worked on the land owned by the government, feudal lord or monastery and paid various taxes and provided free labour. See Melvyn Goldstein, “Taxation and the Structure of a Tibetan Village,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 15/1 (1971): 4.
- 44) Corvée carrying tax. As described by Goldstein (“Taxation and the Structure of a Tibetan Village”, 10): “Taxes in Tibet included both corvée (*rkang ‘gro* ཀྲང་འགོ་) service as well as payments in-kind and money (*lag ‘don* ལག་འདོན་). Corvée services, in turn, included wu-lag (*‘u lag* ལུ་ལག་) or human corvée service, ta-wu (*rta‘u* རྟལུ) or riding animal corvée, and kay-ma (*khal ma* ཁལ་མ་) or carrying animal corvée...”
- 45) Jan Vinař’s original note no. 5: The fact that a woman could be a member of a guild is typical for the equality between men and women in Tibet; however, it exclusively concerned work. The main reason for such equality is probably the lack of a male workforce attributed to the fact that a quarter of all men wear the red robe of the lamas.
- 46) Jan Vinař wrote “ping”, but in fact it should be *ding* (錠), Chinese standard ingot, which was equal to 50 taels (Chin. *liang*). See H. B. Morse, “Currency in China,” *Journal of the North-China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 38 (1907): 36. Tibetan currency used until 1959 was known as sang (*srang* སྲང་), which was originally a weight unit equivalent to tael/liang (37.5 g).
- 47) Liang (两) = tael = sang = 37.5 g of silver.
- 48) Jan Vinař wrote Tsangpa, which resembles the Chinese transcription of the Tibetan name Jampa (*byams pa* བྱམས་པ་, Chin. Qiangba 强巴). A character of this name later appeared in the key Chinese propaganda film with the theme of Tibet *The Serf* (Chin. *Nongnu* 农奴, Tib. *zhing bran* ཞིང་བློན་; 1963, directed by Li Jun). Although concrete causes and details of Jampa’s suffering are different, the main story line is identical. This type of “real-life plays” performed for mostly illiterate audiences was an indispensable part of the Chinese Communist propaganda already at the wartime stronghold of Yan’an. The well-known propaganda story *The White-Haired Girl* (*Bai mao nü* 白毛女) was originally created at Yan’an as a “folk play”, later was adapted for a film of the same name (1950) and the theme was finally adapted to the “model play” in 1972, during the Cultural Revolution.
- 49) Jan Vinař writes “dzogpen”; the correct transcription of the title of the head of local administration is dzongpön (*rdzong dpon* རྫོང་པོན་).

- 50) *Dob dobs* (*ldab ldob* ལྷན་ལྷན་) were monks who maintained order during ceremonies, especially public ones. They are sometimes referred to as monastery police. See e.g. Melvyn C. Goldstein, “A Study of the *Ldab Ldob*,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 9/2 (1964): 123–141.
- 51) From Chin. *qingke* (青稞) – Chinese term for mountain barley, the basic Tibetan cereal used for making *tsampa*, roasted barley flour, which is a staple of the Tibetan diet.
- 52) These are the foundations of the “big Chinese nation” (*Zhonghua minzu* 中华民族) formulated by the founder of Republic of China Sun Yat-sen (Sun Zhongshan 孙中山) at the beginning of the twentieth century. Sun Yat-sen’s concept guaranteed political autonomy to five ethnic groups (or “races”) of the big Chinese nation: Han 汉, or ethnic Chinese, Manchus (*Man* 满), Mongolians (*Meng* 蒙), Tibetans (*Zang* 藏) and Uighurs (*Wei* 维). These five nationalities were symbolically represented on the flag of The Republic of China by five colours: red, yellow, blue, white, and black. On the national flag of the People’s Republic of China they are represented by one large and four smaller stars. See e.g. Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 142.
- 53) Jan Vinar’s original note no. 6: The name Tibet is a corruption, whose origin has not been fully revealed. The Chinese name for Tibet is Sitsang [Xizang], i.e., West Tsang. Tibetans call their homeland Bod.
- 54) After the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911, the thirteenth Dalai Lama formally declared independence in January 1913. One month earlier it was discussed with the representatives of Mongolia who also declared independence and both regions mutually recognized their declarations. The question of possible Tibetan independence was negotiated at the Simla conference one year later, however, the Chinese republican government did not accept the solution suggested by Great Britain to split Tibet into “inner” (i.e. Chinese) and “outer” (i.e. formally independent) as it happened with Mongolia. The Tibetan government took the Chinese refusal of this compromise as a confirmation of the status quo, which was de facto independence of Tibet. See Wangchuk Deden Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History* (New York: Potala Publications, 1984), 246–256.
- 55) So called Tibetan-inhabited areas include the traditional Tibetan “three provinces” (*chol ka gsum* ཇོ་ཁ་གསུམ་), that is Ü-tsang (*dbus gtsang* དབུས་གཙང་), Amdo (*a mdo* ཨ་མདོ་), and Kham (*kham* ཁམས་). Parts of Amdo and Kham are not administered under the Tibetan Autonomous Region, but are historically parts of the so-called “four provinces” (*si sheng* 四省): Qinghai 青海, Gansu 甘肃, Sichuan 四川, and Yunnan 云南.
- 56) Territorial disputes between China and India culminated in a brief war waged from October 20 to November 21, 1962, which was, on the global scale, somewhat eclipsed by the Caribbean Crisis. PLA units under the command of Lieutenant General Zhang Guohua (since 1955) made a successful attack on Ladakh in the east; in the west, they struck the state of Arunachal Pradesh. Thus, China took control of a part of Indian territory. This show of force, which cost hundreds of lives on both sides, was ended by the withdrawal of Chinese troops from the occupied territories. General Zhang Guohua who was a commander of the 18th south-eastern brigade, previously led the battle of Chamdo and directed the military occupation of Tibet in 1950–1951. In 1965–1967 he was the secretary of the Communist Party of China in the Tibetan Autonomous Region. During the Cultural Revolution he became one of the main targets of the Red Guards and was forced to leave Lhasa. After negotiations with the central government, he was appointed as the governor of the Sichuan province from 1968 to 1972, when he died aged 57. The territorial disputes between China and India still last and there is a certain tension in the area, which turns into armed skirmishes of varying intensity from time to time. The disputes in Ladakh escalated into an armed conflict with casualties on both sides in 1967 and 2020, even though in the latter case fighters used sticks and stones, not firearms, but still, there were dozens dead and wounded.
- 57) Yadong (亚东) the Chinese name of a village in southern Tibet; its Tibetan name is Dromo (*gro mo* གྲོ་མོ་).
- 58) The fourteenth Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso had two regents. The first one was Radreng Rinpoche (*rwa sgreng rin po che* རལ་སྐྱེང་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་; known in English as Reting), full name Tupten Jampel Yeshe Gyeltsen (*thub bstan jam ‘dpal ye shes rgyal mtshan* ཐུབ་བསྐྱེང་འཇམ་དཔལ་ཡེ་ཤེས་རྒྱལ་མཚན་; 1911–1947, in the office 1934–1941). The second regent was Takdrak Rinpoche (*stag brag rin po che* ཐག་བྲག་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་) Ngawang Sungrab Tutop (*nag dbang gsung rab mthu stobs* འག་དབང་གསུང་རབ་མཐུག་སྟོབས་; 1874–1952, in the office 1941–1950), see e.g. Tenzin Gyatso (the Fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet), *Freedom in Exile: The Autobiography of the Dalai Lama* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991).
- 59) Chin. *Zhongyang renmin zhengfu he Xizang difang zhengfu guanyu heping jiefang Xizang banfa de xieyi* 中央人民政府和西藏地方政府关于和平解放西藏办法的协议), known as “Seventeen-Point Agreement” was signed on 23. May 1951 in Beijing by a delegation led by Ngaphö Ngawang Jigme (for the official Chinese to English translation of the text see <http://www.china.org.cn/english/>

- zhuanti/tibet%20facts/163877.htm). The Tibetan government in exile published a collection of articles with the hitherto unpublished circumstances related to the origination of the agreement; see Central Tibetan Administration, *Facts About The 17-Point “Agreement” Between Tibet and China* (Dharamsala: Department of Information and International Relations, 2011). Scholars who dealt with the topic include e.g. Tsering Shakya, “The Genesis of Sino-Tibetan Agreement of 1951,” in: Gray Tuttle – Kurtis R. Schaefer (eds.), *The Tibetan History Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 609–631. For the Chinese official interpretation see e.g. Wang Furen – Suo Wenqing, *Highlights of Tibetan History* (Beijing: New Press, 1984), 177–178.
- 60) The tenth Panchen Lama Chökyi Gyeltsen (*chos kyi rgyal mtshan* ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་མཚན་; February 19, 1938 – January 21, 1989).
- 61) The ninth Panchen Lama Tupten Chökyi Nyima (*thub bstan chos kyi nyi ma* ཐུབ་བསྟན་ཚོས་ཀྱི་ཉི་མ་; 1883–1937).
- 62) (不骂不打不拿) – it is symptomatic that the “Tibetan people” expressed their view in Chinese for the foreign visitors.
- 63) Jan Vinar’s original note no. 7: *Kalön* [*bka’ blon* བཀའ་བློན་] is a minister of the local Tibetan government.
- 64) Full name is Lukhangwa Tsewang Rabten (*klu khang ba tshe dbang rab brtan* ལུ་ཁང་བཀོད་བང་རབ་བརྟན་), lived in 1895–1966, died in Indian exile. He left in 1952 in protest against the Chinese rule in Tibet after he and the other – monastic – prime minister Lozang Tashi (*blo bzang bkra shis* ལྷོ་བཟང་བཀྲ་ཤིས་; died in the notorious Lhasa prison in 1966) were released from duty by the fourteenth Dalai Lama on April 27 upon insistence by Beijing.
- 65) *Zhou* (州) is a Chinese administrative unit superior to a county and subordinate to a province, usually referred to as a prefecture. “Tibetan autonomous prefectures” (*Zangzu zizhi zhou* 藏族自治州) were established outside of the (future) Tibetan Autonomous Region in the territory of provinces of Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan.
- 66) The expression “jade orchard” is probably an expression of the author’s sinoromantism, because jade (Chin. *yu* 玉) is a mineral associated with Chinese rather than Tibetan culture. The name of the Dalai Lamas’ summer residence Norbulingka should rather be translated as “park of jewels” where the word “jewel” (*norbu* རོན་བུ་) refers to the person of the Dalai Lama.
- 67) General Tan Guansan (谭冠三; 1905-1985) was one of the most important military figures leading the Chinese invasion to Tibet, after which he served as political commissar of the Tibet Military Region. In 1955 he was promoted to general and in 1957 became a member of the PCTAR and vice-chairman of the CCP’s Tibet Work Committee. For the full text of the letters see “Letters Exchanged between the Dalai Lama and General Tan Kuan-san, Acting Representative of the Central People’s Government in Tibet and Political Commissar of the Tibet Military Area Command,” in *Concerning the Question of Tibet*, 26–35; the Dalai Lama’s interpretation of the events is provided in his autobiography, see Tenzin Gyatso, *Freedom in Exile: The Autobiography of the Dalai Lama*.
- 68) The building mentioned here is the new palace built for the fourteenth Dalai Lama, Takten Migyur Podrang (*rtag brtan mi ‘gyur pho drang* རྟལ་བརྟན་མི་འགྲུང་ཕོ་བླང་).
- 69) Jan Vinar writes “Kesangpodzang”; the correct version in Tibetan is Kelzang Podrang (*bskal bzang pho brang* བསྐལ་བཟང་ཕོ་བླང་). It is the oldest palace in Norbulingka built by the seventh Dalai Lama Lozang Kelzang Gyatso (*blo bzang bskal bzang rgya mtsho* ལྷོ་བཟང་བསྐལ་བཟང་རྒྱལ་མཚན་; 1708–1757, in the office from 1720).
- 70) The term “living Buddha” deserves some explanation. In Tibetan Buddhism, there is an important principle of identification, or finding, or recognition of significant religious figures, such as Dalai Lamas, Panchen Lamas, Karmapas etc., in their childhood. In these (and many others; there are at least hundreds of lineages) cases we are talking of a “recognized rebirth”, i.e., an individual who, upon his own decision, is (re)born to the human world to help people on their way to awakening. In Tibetan terminology, this is *trülku* (*sprul sku* ལྷུ་ལ་སྐུ་). In Chinese language, such individuals are referred to as *huofo* (活佛), translated as a “living Buddha”. This is an utter misunderstanding of the institution of bodhisattva, for a Buddha is one who will never be reborn because he achieved awakening; this is the main difference from a bodhisattva, who is reborn again and again. Therefore, every “living Buddha” would have to be the last birth in the given lineage who would end the cycle of rebirths. In this context, “embodiment” or “reincarnation” is often mentioned. From the Buddhist perspective, there is no (re) incarnation (not to speak of *transmigration of the soul* or “an embodiment of the soul of a Buddhist saint” as Vinar writes); such an individual is reborn, not reincarnated, at his own discretion. Ordinary people, unlike *trülkus* and bodhisattvas, are reborn on the basis of their karmic totality, i.e., a set of thoughts and actions.
- 71) Gyatsoling Tupten Kelzang Rinpoche (*rgya mtsho gling thub bstan skal bzang rin po che* རྒྱལ་མཚན་གླིང་ཐུབ་བསྟན་བསྐལ་བཟང་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་; 1910–1974). Superior of Gyatsoling Monastery in Pelbar near Chamdo and one of the teachers of the fourteenth Dalai Lama. He held political offices even before the uprising; beside others, he was a vice chairman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, a key organization of the United Front in Tibet. He did not follow the Dalai Lama into exile in 1959 and engaged

- in critical campaigns against the “treacherous Dalai clique”. In 1964 he actively participated in the criticism of the tenth Panchen Lama, but during the Cultural Revolution, he himself became a target of many “struggle sessions”. See Tsering Woesser – Robert Barnett (eds.), Susan T. Chen (transl.), *Forbidden Memory: Tibet during the Cultural Revolution* (Dulles: Potomac Books, 2020), 108.
- 72) Jan Vinař writes “kasha”. *Kashag* (*bka' shag* བཀའ་ཤག) is Tibetan government consisting of „ministers“ (*kalöns*).
- 73) Chensel Podrang (*spyang gsal pho brang* རྒྱལ་གསལ་ཕོ་བློན་པོ་) is a palace in the north-eastern part of Norbulingka built in 1926. It used to be a summer residence of the thirteenth Dalai Lama and it includes a large hall for audiences and meetings with dignitaries. The central palace is surrounded with parks and enclosed with a high wall; total area is about 6,800 square meters.
- 74) The third large complex of Norbulingka is Tsokyl Podrang (*mtsho dkyil pho brang* མཚོ་དཀྱིལ་ཕོ་བློན་པོ་), formed by three islets with gazebos and bridges in an artificial pond built in the place of a healing spring where the seventh Dalai Lama, the Norbulingka’s founder, liked to bathe. The place is dominated by a Chinese-style pagoda, erected in 1784 by the regent Demo Hotoktu Delek Gyatso (*de mo ho thog thu bde legs rgya mtsho* དེ་མོ་ཧོ་ཐོག་ཐུ་བདེ་ལེགས་རྒྱ་མཚོ་; ruled in 1757–1777). The pond was built by the thirteenth Dalai Lama a hundred years later. The name mentioned by Jan Vinař could be Drudzin Podrang (*gru 'dzin pho brang* གུ་འཛིན་ཕོ་བློན་པོ་), built by the eighth Dalai Lama in the rear of the pond area.
- 75) The story is also mentioned by the official Dalai Lama’s biographer who adds further details: “Heinrich Harrer, a champion skier, often skated on the frozen Kyichu River behind the Potala Palace and popularized the art of ‘walking on knives’, ice skating, in Lhasa. After finding several pairs of skates left in the city by British diplomats, he organized skating parties, which were also attended by His Holiness Dalai Lama’s brother Lozang Samten.” Tenzin Geyche Tethong, *His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama: An Illustrated Biography* (Northampton: Interlink Books, 2020).
- 76) Jan Vinař’s original note no. 8: The Dalai Lama lived in Potala during the winter and moved to Norbulingka in the spring.
- 77) In the spring 1959, the *Kashag* was composed of four *kalöns* (ministers); three laymen and one monk: Ngaphö Ngawang Jigme (*nga phod ngag dbang 'dzhigs med* འཇམ་དཔལ་དབང་འཛིན་མེད་); Zurkhang Wangchen Geleg (*zur khang dbang chen dge legs* རྩུ་ཁང་དབང་ཚེན་པོ་ལེགས་); *kalön-lama* Neushar Tupten Tarpa (*sne'u shar thub bstan thar pa* སྤེལ་ཤར་ཐུབ་བསྐྱེད་ཐར་པ་) and Samdrup-Podrang Tsewang Rigdzin (*bsam grub pho brang tshe dbang rig 'dzin* བསམ་གུབ་ཕོ་བློན་པོ་འཛིན་པོ་) plus two vice *kalöns* with the title of *katsap* (*bka 'tshab* བཀའ་འཚབ་), who were, in fact, considered *kalöns*: Gyurme Topgye (*'gyur med stobs rgyas* འགྲུ་མེད་སྟོབས་རྒྱལ་པོ་) and Yutok Tashi Döndrup (*g'yu thog bkra shis don grub* གཡུ་ཐོག་བཀྲ་ཤིས་དོན་གྲུབ་པོ་). Half of the ministers (Zurkhang and Neushar) and both *katsaps* went to exile together with the Dalai Lama. Although Zhou Enlai declared the dissolution of the *Kashag*, the Chinese prime minister did not establish it (this was not within the authority of the Beijing government) and could hardly dissolve it. Whilst in exile, the fourteenth Dalai Lama restored the *Kashag*, and Ngaphö and Samdrup-Podrang were replaced by the above mentioned *katsaps*. The fifth member of the first *Kashag* in exile was the Dalai Lama’s older brother Gyalo Döndrup (*rgyal lo don 'grub* རྒྱལ་ལོ་དོན་གྲུབ་པོ་).
- 78) Zhang Guohua 张国华 (1914–1972) one of the military leaders during the invasion to Tibet and top military and party official in Tibet until the Cultural Revolution.
- 79) Jan Vinař writes “Zhang Hua-ü”, the correct name of the PLA Major General (*shaojiang* 少将) is Zhan Huayu (詹化雨; 1911–1984).
- 80) Military ranks were introduced in the PLA in 1955; the rank of “Senior Colonel” really exists and it is the highest officer rank (*daxiao* 大校), followed by general ranks. A Senior Colonel is denoted by four stars on two stripes.
- 81) Jan Vinař writes “Wang Kung” (Wang Kang 王亢; 1911–1992).
- 82) Jan Vinař writes “Lü I-san” (Lü Yishan 吕义山; 1912–1991).
- 83) On February 14, the Dalai Lama was moving from Potala to the Jokhang Temple for the annual Great Prayer Festival (Tib. *mönlam chenmo*; *smon lam chen mo* མྱོན་ལམ་ཚེན་མོ་), a religious ceremony connected with Tibetan New Year’s celebrations. The “provocative actions” refer to the incident which happened during the procession when crowds gathered along the road to greet the Dalai Lama on his journey. Two armed members of Chinese militia were arrested by Tibetans for alleged “attempted assassination” of the Dalai Lama. On February 21 he took in Jokhang his final *geshe lharampa* (*lha rams pa'i dge bshes* ལྷ་རམས་པའི་དགེ་བཤེས་) examination. See e.g. Li Jianglin, *Tibet in Agony: Lhasa 1959* (Cambridge – London: Harvard University Press, 2016), 99. The term “explaining sutras” is a literal translation of the Chinese expression *nianjing* 念经 (to “read sutras”), meaning to recite prayers or give teaching (by a lama).

- 84) *lcags po ri* ལུགས་པོ་རི་, Chin. *Yaowang shan* 药王山, the original location of Mentsikhang (*sman rtsis khang* ལྷན་རྒྱུ་རྩིས་ཁང་), the most famous Tibetan medical and astrology college. The college was severely damaged in 1959 and had to be taken down; a tall telecommunications tower stands in its place nowadays.
- 85) Lhasa's second most important temple (*ra mo che* རམོ་ཆེ་).
- 86) Jan Vinař's original note no. 9: Although the local Tibetan government retained its powers concerning internal affairs pursuant to the 1951 agreement, international relations fell within the authority of the central government. Therefore, a Foreign Office existed in Tibet as well as in the other autonomous regions and provinces. It was in charge of relations with foreign consulates and international delegations. Because Tibet developed extensive relations with India, Nepal, etc. on the basis of various treaties, the Tibetan Foreign Office is somewhat bigger. Its superior office is the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- 87) Tib. *lha klu gling ka* ལྷ་ལྷུ་གླིང་ཀ་.
- 88) Lhalu Tsewang Dorje (*lha klu tshe dbang rdo rje* ལྷ་ལྷུ་ཚེ་དབང་རོ་རྗེ་) held a ministerial office of *tsipön* (*rcis dpon* རྩིས་དཔོན་), the highest finance administrator or finance minister, in the Tibetan government from 1946 to 1952.
- 89) His father was Lungshar Dorje Tsoygyel (*lung shar rdo rje mtsho rgyal* ལུང་ཤར་རོ་རྗེ་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་; 1880/1881–1938), a Tibetan politician, soldier, physician, poet and philosopher, close collaborator of the thirteenth Dalai Lama.
- 90) Tsarong Dazang Dradul (*tsha rong zla bzang dgra 'dul* ཚོ་རོང་རྩ་བཟང་དབྱེ་བྲུ་) was born in 1888 and died on May 14, 1959, as a prisoner of the Chinese in Lhasa. See e.g. Heather Spence, “Tsarong II, The Hero of Chaksam, and the Modernisation Struggle in Tibet 1912–1931”, *Tibet Journal* 16/1 (1991): 34–57; Tsarong Dundul Namgyal, *In the Service of his Country. The Biography of Dasang Damdul Tsarong. Commander General of Tibet* (Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 2000); Tsarong Dasang Damdul, “The autobiography of Tsarong as told to Raptan Kazi, interpreter for the Schäfer Expedition,” in: Isrun Engelhardt (ed.), *Tibet in 1938–1939: Photographs from the Ernst Schäfer Expedition to Tibet* (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2007), 103–109.
- 91) Jan Vinař writes “Namgang”; the correct transcription of the Tibetan name is Nangdrak (*nang grags* རན་གྲག་).
- 92) Jan Vinař writes “Robchen”, according to the Chinese transcription (Rezhen 热振), Tibetan name is Radreng Rinpoche (*rwa sgreng rin po che* རྩ་གྲེང་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་), in English also known as Reting Rinpoche.
- 93) Jan Vinař writes “Geda” according to the Chinese form of the name *Geda hufo* (格达活佛), correctly Getak; full name is Getak Rinpoche Lozang Tendzin Drakpa Taye (*dge rtags rin po che blo bzang bstan 'dzin grags pa mta' yas* དགེ་རྒྱལ་འཛོལ་ཆེ་ལྷོ་བཟང་བསྟན་འཛིན་གྲགས་པ་མཐའ་ལས་; 1902–1950). He was the superior of Kandze Monastery in Sichuan and joined the Communist regime in 1950. He died under mysterious circumstances in Chamdo on the way to Lhasa, where he was going in August 1950 to persuade the Tibetan government to accept an agreement with Chinese Communists.
- 94) The name could not be verified. Jan Vinař writes “Zebabandenq”, obviously based on Chinese. A similar-sounding Tibetan name may be Zhepa Palden (*bzhad pa dpal ldan* བཞད་པ་དཔལ་ལྷན་).
- 95) Tibetan names of ordinary Tibetans are difficult to verify. Here, Jan Vinař writes “Tsudza”, which is somewhat similar to Chuzang (*chu bzang* རྩ་བཟང་).
- 96) Phonetic record of a Tibetan name.
- 97) Jan Vinař writes “Tanlantawa”, which might be Trinle Dawa (*'phrin las zla ba* འཕྲིན་ལས་རྒྱལ་བ་).
- 98) Jan Vinař writes “langshen”, which roughly corresponds to the standard (Beijing) pronunciation of the Tibetan term *nangzen* (*nang zan* རན་བཟན་; Chin. *langsheng* 郎生). It was the lowest class of serfs, referred to in the Chinese propaganda as “slaves”; they were domestic servants who belonged hereditarily to the family in which they served all their lives.
- 99) Jan Vinař was right only partially: Lhalu was released from jail in 1965; he was politically rehabilitated in 1983 under the reform politics of Deng Xiaoping. As part of the new United Front, he became a vice chairman of the Tibetan Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, one of the many formally high-ranking officials whose real power was very limited. He died in 2011 at the venerable age of 98.
- 100) We were unable to verify the Chinese doctor's name.
- 101) This is clearly not a personal name; the use of the word Osman – a Persian variant of an Arabic personal name – in Czech language suggests it was a Muslim, in this case Chinese Muslim, one of the officially recognized “ethnic minorities”, Hui 回. The most famous militarist in Qinghai was Ma Bufang (马步芳), but it could be someone else; there were more warlords like him in the area at that time.

- 102) Jan Vinař writes “Dinzheng”, which is derived from the Chinese transcription of the Tibetan name Tendzin.
- 103) Jan Vinař writes “Domo”; the correct transcription of the Tibetan name is Demo (*de mo* དེམོ་). This is a lineage of recognized rebirths, Tib. *trülku*, whose tenth rebirth was Tendzin Gyatso (*bstan ‘dzin rgya mtsho* བསྐན་འཛིན་རྒྱལ་མཚོ་). He was born to the Ngaphö family in the south-Tibetan town of Nyigtri (*nying khri* ཉིང་ཁྲི་); at the age of four, he was recognized as Demo Rinpoche in the Lhasa monastery of Tengyeling (*bstan rgyas ling* བསྐན་རྒྱལ་ལིང་). When he was 38, he married a rich bride from Lhasa, with whom he had six children. Demo Rinpoche was also one of the first Tibetan photographers, see Gao D., “The Eye of the Living Buddha: The First Photographer of Tibet Lopsang Jampal Loodjor Tenzin Gyatso Demo (1907–1973),” *Photographers International* 39/20 (1998): 1–90.
- 104) Jan Vinař writes “Ngawangpintso”, which might be Ngawang Püntso (*ngag dbang phun tshogs* འགྲོ་འཕགས་ཕུན་ཚོགས་).
- 105) Probably the Jampaling Monastery (Tib. *byams pa gling* བྱམས་པ་གླིང་; Chin. *Qiangbalin* 强巴林) in Dranang (Tib. *gra nang* གྲ་ནང་; Chin. *Zhanang* 扎囊) in Lhoka.
- 106) See Beba, “*Tajemny*” *Tibet*, 144.
- 107) Perhaps Rigzin Püntso.
- 108) Jan Vinař writes “Ngabo Mgawangjigme”. Ngaphö Ngawang Jigme (*nga phod ngag dbang ‘dzhigs med* འགྲོ་འཕགས་དབང་འཛིན་གསལ་མེད་; Chin. Apei Awang Jinmei 阿沛·阿旺晋美; February 1, 1910 – December 23, 2009) was one of the most prominent political figures in Tibet collaborating with the Chinese after surrendering Chamdo to the People’s Liberation Army in October 1950. He headed the Tibetan delegation to Beijing in May 1951 and signed the Seventeen-Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet. For details about Ngaphö’s position, views and attitudes, which utterly conformed to the Beijing stands, see e.g. “Deputy Ngapho Ngawang-Jigme’s Speech at the First Session of the Second National People’s Congress,” in *Concerning the Question of Tibet*, 108–119.
- 109) According to Tsering Shakya: “He was the illegitimate son of a nun from one of the leading aristocratic families of Tibet, Horkhang, who had acquired the surname of Ngabo by marrying a young widow of Ngabo Shape.” See Tsering Shakya. *Dragon in the Land of Snows. A History of Modern Tibet after 1947* (London: Pimlico Press, 1999), 15.
- 110) Jan Vinař uses a rough phonetic approximation of the Tibetan term *chikhyap* (*spyi khyab* རྫོགས་ལྷོ་བྱེད་) based on its Chinese transcription (*jiqiao* 基巧); it is an administrative unit and at the same time an office (approximately corresponding to that of a prefect), adopted by the Chinese Communist administration from the Kuomintang government of the feudal Tibet. In 1956 the Chinese established local offices of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region on the level of eight “prefectures” (Chamdo, Dromo, Gyantse, Lhoka, Hor, Zhikatse, Kongpo, Ngari). See Zhu Lishuang 朱丽双, *Minguo zhengfu de Xizang zhuanshi (1912–1949)* 民国政府的西藏专使 (1912–1949) [Representatives of the Kuomintang government in Tibet, 1912–1949] (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2016), 465.
- 111) Tibetan term for an administrative unit on the level of a county (*rdzong* རྫོང་).
- 112) “Khenpo Council” (Tib. *mkhan po nang ma khang* མཁན་པོ་ནང་མཁའ་རང་; Chin. *banchan kanbu huiyiting* 班禅堪布会议厅) or, according to Goldstein Kanting (Tib. *mkhan po thing*; 185), was established by the ninth Panchen Lama in 1923, following a dispute with the thirteenth Dalai Lama and an escape to China. The council was dissolved after the completion of “democratic reforms” in 1961. For explanation of the role of the Panchen Lama in Sino-Tibetan relations see Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Vol. 4: In the Eye of the Storm, 1957–59* (Berkeley – Los Angeles – London: University of California Press, 2019), 184–202.
- 113) Jan Vinař writes “shika”; Tibetan term *gzhis ka* གཞིས་ཀ་ (Chin. *xika* 谿卡) can be translated as manor or estate (belonging to a feudal lord).
- 114) From Chin. *san da lingzhu* 三大领主, literally “three big lords”.
- 115) His full name is Tsongkhapa Lozang Drakpa (*tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa* ཚོང་ཁ་པ་བློ་བཟང་གྲགས་པ་; 1357–1419).
- 116) A school of Tibetan Buddhism called Gelug (*dge lugs* དགེ་ལུགས་).
- 117) Jan Vinař writes “Naijung” according to Chinese transcription (*Naiqiong* 乃琼), Tibetan name of the monastery is Nechung (*gnas chung* གནམ་ཚུང་). The monastery was the seat of Tibetan state oracle who after 1959 accompanied the Dalai Lama into the Indian exile.
- 118) The term “red hats” refers to three older schools of Tibetan Buddhism, Nyingmapa, Sakyapa, and Karmapa.
- 119) Jan Vinař writes “dungchin” (from Chinese *tongqin* 筒欵), in Tibetan it is *dung chen* དུང་ཚེན་.

- 120) Jan Vinař writes “sola”, which corresponds to the Chinese term *suona* 唢呐. It is a short wind instrument, in Tibet called *gyaling* (*rgya gling* རྒྱ་གླིང་), literally “Chinese trumpet”.
- 121) Jan Vinař writes “Tsumerendzhen”, probably derived from a Chinese transcription of a Tibetan name, which might be *chos nyid rin chen* ཚོས་ཉིད་རིན་ཆེན་.
- 122) Jan Vinař writes “Tutenima”, which may be *thub bstan nyi ma* ཐུབ་བསྐྱེད་ཉི་མ་.
- 123) These names cannot be identified or verified.
- 124) Jan Vinař writes “Tyayangtyuete”, the correct name is Jamyang Chöje Tashi Palden (*'jam dbyangs chos rje bkra shis dpal ldan* འཇམ་དབྱངས་ཚོས་རྗེ་བཀྲ་ཤིས་དཔལ་ལྷན་; 1379–1449).
- 125) Bodhisattva of compassion, Tib. *spyan ras gzigs* སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས་.
- 126) From the Chinese *tiebang lama* (铁棒喇嘛) literally “lama with an iron staff” (Tib. *dgo bskos* དགོ་བསྐོས་).
- 127) Jan Vinař’s original note no. 10: Those monasteries where all superiors took part in the rebellion are considered rebellious. Where part of the superiors supported the rebellion, only those individuals are considered rebels. In Drepung, all the highest hierarchs not only participated in the rebellion but were also its main instigators.
- 128) *Shehuizhuyi hao* (社会主义好) is one of the most famous propaganda songs.
- 129) These two names could not be identified or verified.
- 130) Zbyněk Málek, who was also present on this expedition, writes somewhat different forms of the names: “The three men who were the subject of this meeting are the ‘living Buddha’ Nanwanamda and two former ‘iron clubs’ or top monastery policemen, named Ishijuma and Chungpeyjuda. The term ‘living Buddha’ should really be put in quotation marks this time, because the way Nanwanamda came by was rather profane. One of the poor lamas in his speech clearly reminded the assembly that he had never been a true ‘living Buddha’ and the title had been acquired through fraud and bribes.” See Zbyněk Málek, “Hořkost se vylila” [The bitterness spilled out], *Rudé právo* (November 29, 1959): 3. It must be stressed that the “Nanwanamda”, as Málek put it, is in fact Ngawang Nangdrak (*ngag dbang nang drag* འགྲ་དབང་ནང་བླ་གླ་), whom Vinař calls “Awangnanda”. What is much more important: the Czechoslovak journalists contradict each other; for Málek, “Nanwanamda” is a fraud who is attacked at the struggle session, while according to Vinař, “Awangnanda’s” role is quite opposite. This shows that the records of names and roles are not perfect. A similar confusion can be seen in the above-mentioned account by Anna Louise Strong.
- 131) It is a county with a fort near the Sikkim border, under the Zhikatsé administration. The British expedition led by Colonel Younghusband unsuccessfully waited here for talks with Tibetan and Qing representatives about a peace and trade treaty for several months in 1903. The fort was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.
- 132) The names of Tibetan monks could not be verified and are recorded phonetically.
- 133) This is probably a village below the Nechung Monastery, today a part of Lhasa’s suburbs.
- 134) Jan Vinař writes phonetic approximations of Chinese terms for Tibetan serf categories. They are: *düchung* (*dud chung* དུང་ཆུང་; Chin. *duiqiong* 堆穷) – landless or poor peasant; *trewa* (*khral wa* ཁྲལ་བ་; Chin. *chaiba* 差巴) – taxpayer; *nangzen* (*nang zan* རང་བཟོ་; Chin. *langsheng* 郎生) – slave. The “alternative pronunciation” mentioned by Vinař is a pronunciation of Chinese speakers coming from various parts of China.
- 135) The correct transcription is *khel* (*khal* ཁལ་). It is a measure corresponding to a certain amount (ca 13–15 kg) of grain and indicates the area that can be sown with this amount of grain. See “Tibetan Oral History Archive Project: Glossary,” *Library of Congress*, accessed March 5, 2024, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/tibetan-oral-history-project/articles-and-essays/glossary/>.
- 136) *Ulag* (*'u lag* ལུ་ལག་; Chin. *wula* 乌拉).
- 137) Jan Vinař’s original note no. 11: In some travelogues, ula refers to statute labour for the local government. The authors probably only encountered this form, in particular the obligation to provide transport to all persons who got a permit from the relevant authority. In fact, ula means any statute labour.
- 138) Jan Vinař’s original note no. 12: This does not include the monks of Drepung Monastery, which is also in the district.
- 139) Jan Vinař’s original note no. 13: A similar method of calculating the acreage was once used in our country (korec) [0.287 hectare/2877 square meters].
- 140) Throughout the text, “local government” refers to Tibetan government, i.e. the *Ganden Podrang* originally established by the fifth Dalai Lama. The term “local government” (*difang zhengfu* 地方政府) is used in Chinese sources in opposition to the

(Chinese) central government (*zhongyang zhengfu* 中央政府), indicating that Tibetan government was subordinated to the Chinese government in Beijing.

- 141) Jan Vinař's original note no. 14: Land ownership in all of Tibet was distributed as follows: local government 38,9 %; aristocracy 24,3 %; monasteries 36,8 %.
- 142) Unverified names.
- 143) The first motorable way to Zhikatse led through Yangpachen, first heading north from Lhasa on the Qinghai – Tibet highway and only in Yangpachen turning south-west to Zhikatse. The new road leads directly south-west from Lhasa through Chushul.
- 144) This is a phonetic rendering of the Chinese transcription of a Tibetan term (Chin. *jiemei qimei* 节美其美; Tib. *skye med 'chi med* སྐྱེ་མེད་འཛི་མེད་), which literally means “neither alive nor dead” (the Chinese equivalent *bu sheng bu si* 不生不死). However, the meaning corresponds to Vinař's “alive or dead” (i.e., the tax is calculated from the determined number of cattle regardless of how many heads have died). There was also a less strict method called *you sheng you si* 有生有死, where the tax was paid according to the actual number of heads in the herd. The terms are part of the Chinese ideological description of the traditional Tibetan society, see e.g. Zhang Yun 张云, “Zheng jiao heyi: fengjian nongnu zhidu xai de Xizang siyuan bing fei yi fang jingtu 政教合一封建农奴制度下的西藏寺院并非一方净土 [Unity of politics and religion: Tibetan monasteries under the feudal serf system were no Pure land], *Zhongguo Zangxue* 1 (2009); http://www.tibet.cn/zxyj/xzsm/rm/201103/t20110326_973447.htm.
- 145) Current measure of elevation is 5,452 m above sea level.
- 146) Current measure of elevation is 7,048 m above sea level.
- 147) The Chinese expression Back Tibet (*Hou Zang* 后藏) refers to the part of Tibet under the administration of Zhikatse, i.e. Tsang (*gtsang* གཙང་); this is a geographical division from the Chinese, not Tibetan, perspective. The Chinese designation for Central Tibet (Ü; *dbus* དབུས་) is Front Tibet (*Qian Zang* 前藏).
- 148) Jan Vinař's original note no. 15: *Khenpo* – the highest title in the Lamaist church that is not connected with “reincarnation” [i.e. abbot of a monastery]. It is difficult to find an analogy with the Catholic church. Lamaism, regardless of the reincarnation doctrine, does not distinguish between monastic and other titles – all ecclesiastical life is concentrated in monasteries. The superior is a “living Buddha”, after whose death the title passes over to his next reincarnation. However, some monasteries, especially in Back Tibet, are under the leadership of a *khenpo*. Larger monasteries that have a living Buddha also have one or more *khenpos*.
- 149) The full name of Tibet's biggest river is Yarlung Tsangpo (*yar klungs gtsang po* ཡར་ལུང་གཙང་པོ་, in Chinese *Yalu Zangbu jiang* 雅鲁藏布江).
- 150) Jan Vinař writes “Tazuka” close to the Chinese name Dazhuka (大竹卡); the Tibetan name is Takdrukha (*stag grukha* སྐྱག་རྒྱུ་ཁ་).
- 151) Tib. *nyang chu* རྩང་ཚུ་.
- 152) Tib. *bkra shis lhun po* བཀ་ཤིས་ལུང་པོ་.
- 153) *ngag dbang byings pa* འག་དབང་བྱིངས་པ་
- 154) Tibetan Buddhist monastic college (*grwa tshang* གྲ་ཚང་).
- 155) Gendündrup (*dge 'dum grub* དགེ་འདུན་རྒྱལ་; 1391–1475), the first Dalai Lama.
- 156) Jan Vinař writes “Röbame” the correct transcription of the Tibetan name is Öpakme (*'od dpag med* འོད་དཔག་མེད་).
- 157) The Russian word *jigitovka* (Джигитовка) originated from the Turkish expression *jigit* – an excellent horseman who is capable of acrobatic stunts on a galloping horse.
- 158) Jan Vinař's original note no. 16: A popular Chinese Kaoliang liquor made of large-grain Chinese millet. This spirit is not only strong, but a special distillation method gives it a smell that most foreigners find repugnant.
- 159) Tretong Che Jigme (Tib. *bkra shi mthong ce 'jigs med* བཀ་ཤིས་མཚོང་ཅེ་འཇིག་མེད་; Chin. Zhandong Ji Jimei 詹东·计晋美) or Jigme Drakpa (Tib. *'jigs med grags pa* འཇིག་མེད་གྲགས་པ་; Chin. Jinmei Chaba 晋美查巴; 1910–16.1.1978) was, together with Lhamön Yeshe Tsultrim, one of the two top officials in the Panchen Lama's Administrative Council (the “Khenpo Council”). He was one of the important pro-Chinese officials in Panchen Lama circles, see e.g. Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Vol. 2, The Calm Before the Storm: 1951–1955* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 269–296. In 1926 he went to study to Beijing and later worked for the 9th Panchen Lama and cooperated with the Kuomintang. As a delegate of the tenth Panchen Lama, he

travelled to Xi'an to negotiate with the PLA commander-in-chief Peng Dehuai in June 1950. In 1956 he was appointed as deputy director of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibetan Autonomous Region and served in various political functions. He was jailed in 1964 as a part of the “Panchen Clique” after the tenth Panchen Lama sent his 70,000-character petition to Zhou Enlai in 1962. On Che Jigme's life see Renzhen Wangmu 仁真旺姆, “Ji Xizang zhuming de aiguo renshi – Zhandong Ji Jimei” 忆西藏著名的爱国人士 -- 詹东·计晋美 [Remembering Famous Tibetan Patriot Tretong Che Jigme], *Zhongguo Xizang* 3 (2010).

- 160) Meaning the Buddhist ritual masked dances called *cham* ('*cham* རམས་).
- 161) The same Panchen Lama sent a petition, the so-called 70,000 Character Petition, to the Chinese prime minister Zhou Enlai on 18. May 1962, complaining about the Chinese politics implemented in Tibet and claiming redress. This action resulted in the removal of the tenth Panchen Lama from all posts, his public criticism and long imprisonment. For the text of the petition see *A Poisoned Arrow: The Secret Report of the Tenth Panchen Lama* (London: Tibet Information Network, 1997).
- 162) Apparently, this is the monastery known as Chakzam Chuwori (*lcags zam chu bo ri* ལུགས་ཟམ་ཚུ་བོ་རི་), founded in 1444 in the place of the original Nyingmapa shrine, which was built near meditation caves associated with the Indian Buddhist teacher Padmasambhava (known as Guru Rinpoche in Tibet) and the legendary king Trisong Detsen (*khri srong lde btsan* ཀྲི་སྲོང་ལྷེ་བཙུན་) in the 8th century. The monastery was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. See Manfred Gerner, *Chazangpa Thangtong Gyalpo. Architect, Philosopher, and Iron Chain Bridge Builder*, trans. Gregor Verhufen (Thimphu: Center for Bhutan Studies, 2007), 32.
- 163) There was a historical suspension bridge called Chushul Chakzam (*chu shul lcags zam* ཚུ་ཤུལ་ལུགས་ཟམ་) across the Brahmaputra, built in 1430 by the famous Tibetan blacksmith and bridge builder Tangtong Gyelpo (*thang stong rgyal po* ཐང་སྲོང་རྒྱལ་པོ་, 1385–1464 or 1361–1485). According to tradition, he built 108 suspension bridges in Tibet and Bhutan. His work and bridges he built are described in detail in the above-mentioned book by Manfred Gerner. In the first half of the twentieth century, the bridge was unusable and was demolished at the end of the 1950s. A new concrete bridge over the Brahmaputra was soon constructed in the same location, close to today's town of Chushul (in Tibetan also written as Chushur, *chu shur* ཚུ་ཤུར་; in Chinese *Qushui* 曲水).
- 164) Ch. *Shannan* (山南), Tib. Lhokha (*lho kha* ལྷོ་ཁ་).
- 165) From the Chinese *Gangdisi* 岗地斯, i.e. Trans-Himalaya.
- 166) (*srong btsan sgam po* སྲོང་བཙུན་སྐམ་པོ་).
- 167) Zurkhang Wangchen Geleg (*zur khang dbang chen dge legs* ཚུར་ཁང་དབང་ཆེན་དེ་ལེགས་) was born in Lhasa in 1907 to a well-known aristocratic family as the oldest of seven children of Zurkhang Wangchen Tseten (*zur khang dbang chen tshen brtan* ཚུར་ཁང་དབང་ཆེན་པོ་བརྟན་; 1891–1953), an army general, *dapön* (*mda' dpon* མངའ་དཔོན་), also known under the name Zurkhang Zurpa (*zur khang zur pa* ཚུར་ཁང་ཚུར་པ་). Zurkhang Wangchen Geleg followed in his father's footsteps and became a member of the government, *kalön*, in August 1943 at the age of thirty-three. In March 1959, he accompanied the Dalai Lama into exile, and he remained a member of the administration until 1961. Then he moved to the United Kingdom, and in 1964 settled in the USA, where he worked at the University of Washington until 1971. In the end, he moved to Taiwan, where he died in 1977 at the age of seventy.
- 168) Jan Vinař writes “Langdeyaltso”, which is most probably Lhagyari Namgyel Gyatso (*lha rgya ri nam rgyal rgya mtsho* ལྷ་རྒྱུ་རི་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་རྒྱལ་མཚོ་; 1927–10.6.2003). His family descended from the Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo and had an estate in Lhoka, which was deliberately used by the Chushi Gangdruk as one of their main bases; see Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Vol. 4: In the Eye of the Storm, 1957–59*, 157–8. Lhagyari Namgyel Gyatso was arrested and was not released until after the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1979. He was appointed as a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, but in 1982 he left for Indian exile.
- 169) *rtse thang* རྩེ་ཐང་
- 170) Known as Chushi Gangdruk (*chu bzhi sgang drug* ཚུ་བཞི་སྐང་དུག་) or “Four Rivers Six Ranges”, full name is “Kham Four Rivers, Six Ranges Tibetan Defenders of the Faith Volunteer Army” (*mdo stod chu bzhi sgang drug bod kyi bstan srung dang blangs dmag* མངའ་སྲོད་ཚུ་བཞི་སྐང་དུག་བོད་ཀྱི་བསྐྱེད་སྲུང་དང་བླངས་དམག་). See for example Mikel Dunham, *Buddha's Warriors: The Story of the CIA-backed Tibetan Freedom Fighters, the Chinese Invasion, and the Ultimate Fall of Tibet* (New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2005).
- 171) Andruksang published his memoirs in the Indian exile, see Andruksang Gampo Tashi, *Four Rivers Six Ranges: Resistance Movement in Tibet* (Dharamsala: Information and Publicity Office of H. H. The Dalai Lama, 1973).
- 172) Most probably Lhoba (Tib. *lho pa* ལྷོ་པ་, Chin. *Luoba* 珞巴), which was originally a general Tibetan designation for “southerners” (as the name translates). Even though they have been in 1965 after the establishment of the TAR recognized as one of the 55 official “ethnic minorities” in the PRC, they are in fact not a homogenous ethnic group, but rather an amalgamation of

several groups of “tribespeople” inhabiting the southern slopes of the Himalayas on both sides of the Sino-Indian border. In the TAR they live predominantly in Pemako (Metok County) on the border with Arunachal Pradesh in India. In the Lhoka region they live in the south and south-east (Lhünzé and Tsona counties), bordering to Indian Tawang region and the problematic border with Bhutan. For geostrategic reasons, they have been a subject of Chinese propaganda since the 1950s, including the claims of their oppression by Tibetan government in the past. See for example introduction of Lhoba on the website of the PRC State Council Information Office: “People of this ethnic group were oppressed, bullied and discriminated against by the Tibetan local government, manorial lords and monasteries under feudal serfdom in Tibet. Being considered inferior and ‘wild’, some were expelled and forced to live in forests and mountains. They were not allowed to leave their areas without permission and were forbidden to do business with other ethnic groups. Inter-marriage with Tibetans was banned.” See “Lhoba Ethnic Group,” *The State Council Information Office (PRC)*, Jun 7, 2017, accessed March 5, 2024, http://english.scio.gov.cn/m/chinafacts/2017-06/07/content_40982171.htm.

- 173) The two Chinese names have not been verified.
- 174) On the CIA program in Tibet see Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Vol. 4: In the Eye of the Storm, 1957–59*, 469–70 (about the airdrops of weapons and trained Tibetan agents).
- 175) Jan Vinař writes “Panchajime”, the correct name is (*tsipön*) Namseling Paljor Jigme (*rnam sras gling dpal 'byor 'jigs med རྒྱལ་མཚན་གླིང་དཔལ་འབྱོར་འཛིན་མེད་*). Goldstein considers him “an important anti-Chinese nationalist” (see Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Vol. 4: In the Eye of the Storm, 1957–59*, xxxi). On Namseling’s delegation to Chushi gangdruk see *ibid.* 246–270.
- 176) The siege is mentioned by official history of the Communist Party in Tibet (see Xizang zizhiq dangshi ziliao zhengji weiyuanhui, *Zhonggong Xiazang dangshi da shiji: 1949–1966* 中共西藏党史大事记: 1949–1966 [Important Milestones in the History of Communist Party in Tibet] (Lasa: Xizang renmin chubanshe, 1990), 82–83). For English translation see Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Vol. 4: In the Eye of the Storm, 1957–59*, 333.
- 177) Jan Vinař’s original note no. 17: When in 1905 the English colonel Younghusband led a military expedition against Lhasa, he first spent five months with his troops in the mountains to give them time to get used to the thin mountain air.
- 178) Probably Podrung (*pho brung ཕོ་བླུང་*, Chin. *Pozhang* 颇章).
- 179) Unverified name.
- 180) Jan Vinař writes “Kesung” in accordance with the Chinese form Kesong (克松); in Tibetan, the name is Khesum (*khe gsum ཁེ་སུམ་*).
- 181) Unverified name.
- 182) Unverified name.
- 183) Unverified name.
- 184) *dpal bzang དཔལ་བཟང་*.
- 185) Unverified name.
- 186) Unverified name.
- 187) Jan Vinař writes “Sunamdjuma”, which is probably Sönam Drolma (*bsod nams sgröl ma བསོད་ནམས་སྐྱེལ་མ་*) from Chinese (Suolang Zhuoma 索朗卓玛).
- 188) Perhaps Lhündrup (*lhun grub ལུན་གུབ་*).
- 189) Vladimír Sís – Josef Vaniš, *Země zastaveného času* [*The Land Where Time Has Stopped*] (Praha: Mladá fronta, 1959). A similar title appeared two years earlier: Vladimír Sís – Josef Vaniš, “V zemi zastaveného času,” [*In the Land Where Time Has Stopped*] *Nový orient* 11/9 (1956): 137–139.
- 190) The railway section from Golmud to Lhasa was opened as late as on June 1, 2006.

A Turbulent History of “Peaceful Liberation”: The Chinese Narrative of Tibet

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Tibet (Chin. *Xizang* 西藏) is considered an “inseparable part of China” in the official Chinese narrative supported by carefully formulated and highly selective historical and ideological arguments. According to this narrative, the territory, later to become the “Tibet Autonomous Region” (TAR), was subject to “Peaceful Liberation” (*heping jiefang* 和平解放) between 1950–1951 from the hands of ‘foreign imperialists’ and ‘the Tibetan people’ (*Zangzu renmin* 藏族人民) thus ‘emancipating’ themselves from the exploitative subordination to feudal lords and clergy. The perception of Tibet and the ‘Tibet question’ on the international scene has tended to be formed by claims made by the exiled Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government in exile. In this sense, the denomination ‘Tibet’ (so-called ‘ethnographic Tibet’)¹ is generally used for the broader area of the Tibetan cultural circle consisting of the so-called ‘three provinces’ (*chöl ka gsum* རྩོམ་ཆེན་གསུམ་), i.e. Ü-tsang (*dbus gtsang* དབུས་གཙང་), Amdo (*a mdo* ཨམདོ་), and Kham (*kham* བམ་མཁའ་)² and the self-proclaimed Chinese ‘Liberation’ is re-interpreted as occupation and colonisation of an originally ‘independent’ entity.

Both constructs are simplifying and primarily serve political purposes. These two opposing narratives are important factors, however, shaping the perceptions and opinions of supporters of both sides around the world as well as of people in Tibet and China proper. While it is an undeniable fact that Tibetans in Tibet have been, ever since 1959 or even earlier, deprived not only of their right for self-determination, but also of their history due to the intense propaganda and

ensorship, the image of Tibetans as passive victims of Chinese policy in the region and as non-violent pastoralists and devoted Buddhists stuck in the past centuries is a construct, which in reverse threatens to deprive Tibetans of their future or – as the Beijing government ideologically reframes it – of their “right to development” (*fazhan quan* 发展权).³ As Mills pointed out, “whilst we valorize the West in terms of its transformation – according to narratives of modernity, freedom, civilization – but valorize and demonize Others (and there are few that have been so consistently Other than the Tibetans) in terms of their unchanging identity.”⁴

With the rise of Chinese economic power during the last three decades, Chinese political influence has been reaching further than ever before. As a consequence, the two opposing narratives contribute to the strong polarisation of opinions about Tibet globally. This chapter will briefly sum up the background of the official Chinese narrative of Tibet, which is now broadly disseminated via a sophisticated net of Chinese outbound propaganda organs, including Chinese embassies and state media, both domestic and international, using not only traditional platforms, for example online English-language news services, multi-language television and radio networks, China Global Television Network and China Radio International, but also through influential Western online platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, or Twitter. The Chinese government has also been promoting its narratives through paid commercials in major international newspapers,

including *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* or *The Daily Telegraph*.⁵ The official narrative has been built around the notion of ‘liberation’, giving agency to Tibetan people who, rather than being ‘colonized’ by another nation (i.e. China) are represented as themselves having contributed to the process of overthrowing the exploitative “feudal serf system” (*fengjian nongnu zhidu* 封建农奴制度) of the ‘old Tibet’ (*jiu Xizang* 旧西藏).

3.1 The Long March to “Liberation”

The roots of the CCP’s mission to ‘liberate’ Tibet reach back to the 1930s. During the Long March, which took place between 1934–1936, various parts of the Chinese Peasants’ and Workers’ Red Army (*Zhongguo gong nong hong jun* 中国工农红军) made a loop through the Tibetan areas of Kham and Amdo on their way from the original base in Jiangxi province to Yan’an in Shaanxi. The first encounters with ‘Tibetan people’⁶ – as described for example by Elliot Sperling⁷ – were anything but smooth: the Communist army, exhausted by an arduous journey across mountains during cold winters and suffering from a lack of supplies had to negotiate and sometimes even fight with KMT-oriented warlords, local landlords and chieftains. They managed to make contacts, however, and even recruit cadres that would help them in the future. The Chinese Communist presence in Tibet has been from the beginning framed as “the liberation of Tibetan people” in accordance with the Marxist concepts of historical and social development. The people of Tibet were to be reframed as ‘serfs’ (*nongnu* 农奴) exploited by both monastic and lay feudal lords. The new regime was supposed to bring freedom to the broad masses of Tibetan people who should have celebrated the arrival of the PLA as their saviours.

The reality was much more complex. Not surprisingly, as Goldstein formulated it, “virtually all of the elite saw the PLA as an army of occupation, not liberation.”⁸ Nevertheless, even for the common people, who were supposed to be the very subjects of the ‘liberation’,

the Chinese presence created a heavy burden, which eventually outweighed the gains. Already in the early 1950s, the ‘Tibetan people’ began to establish grassroots organisations known as ‘People’s Associations’ (*mi dmangs tshogs* ‘du མི་དམངས་ཚོགས་འདུ), which were, however, not only critical of the Tibetan government, but were essentially “anti-Chinese and anti-Communist”.⁹ These associations later played an important role during the Tibetan uprising in Lhasa and the Dalai Lama’s escape to exile.

Yet another, very practical problem of the Chinese mission in Tibet was the lack of natural resources to provide enough food to soldiers. All the areas inhabited by Tibetans and some other closely related ethnics are either high-altitude plateaus or steep mountain slopes ridged by deep valleys, which both provide quite harsh living conditions. The society consisting of largely independent or even isolated communities was characterised by a fragile balance between human society and nature and the intrusion of an alien army disrupted this balance in both economic and religious terms. It would be an oversimplification to understand the complex relationship between lay society and monasteries simply as exploitation and oppression because monasteries and lamas provided religious and other services and spiritual support to rural and pastoralist communities living in peace with both nature and spirits.

Despite the high level of the PRC’s censorship of these events, there are historical as well as literary works¹⁰ showing that ‘Tibetan people’ were far from being unequivocally eager to be ‘liberated’ by the Chinese. It was therefore essential that the CCP came up with a consistent ideologically supported narrative, which would legitimize its actions in Tibet. The official narrative is based on the presupposition that Tibet “has [always] been a part of China” (Chin. 西藏是中国的一部分). Disregarding the historical verifiability of this claim, ‘China’ (*rgya nak* རྒྱལ་ཁབ་) and ‘Tibet’ (*bod* བོད་) are perceived as two different entities in both Tibetan and English. While the Chinese term *Zhongguo* (中国; lit. the ‘Middle Kingdom’) can be understood in the broad sense of the historical Chinese Empire or circle of Chinese

civilisational influence, it also connotes the contemporary PRC as the direct successor of the ancient ‘Middle Kingdom’. In English, as well as in other western languages, ‘China’ is primarily understood in accordance with the modern state-nationalist concepts of the state inhabited by ethnic Chinese. While ‘*Zhongguoren* 中国人’ is a “person [inhabiting] the Middle Kingdom”, who can be of ethnic Chinese (Han), but also Tibetan or other origin,¹¹ the English term ‘Chinese’ is generally understood as an ethnic category in the narrow sense of Han Chinese. Tibet is – as the present matter of fact – a part of the People’s Republic of China, but not of China as such.¹²

3.2 Tibet as “Part of China”

The official historical narrative of the CCP thus aims to legitimise the incorporation of Tibetans into the “large Chinese nation” (*Zhonghua minzu* 中华民族) as it was formulated around the beginning of the twentieth century by the founder of the Chinese republic Sun Yat Sen (*Sun Zhongshan* 孙中山),¹³ by providing ‘evidence’ that Tibetans have always been part of the larger cultural circle of Chinese civilisation. This narrative was decisively pronounced in an English language volume *Concerning the Question of Tibet* published in the aftermath of the Tibetan uprising in 1959 by the Foreign Language Press in Beijing. As pointed out by Sperling,¹⁴ “Tibet’s status as either a part of China or an independent state” are “relatively recent constructs” serving as political arguments of the respective sides of the Sino-Tibetan conflict.

Historically, Tibet had a close relationship to the Chinese empire starting with the Yuan (元) dynasty,¹⁵ which ruled inland China between 1271–1368, although Central Tibet was conquered by the Mongol ruler Möngke Khan as early as 1253. Being incorporated into the large Yuan Empire is therefore interpreted as “being a part of the territory of China ever since” in the present Chinese narrative.¹⁶ The connection between Mongol Emperors and Tibetan rulers was formally described as priest-patron (*mchod yon* མཚོན་ཡོན་). In

the twentieth century, this understanding was symbolically applied to characterise Tibet-China relations during the Yuan and later Qing (清) dynasties, and Tibetan government representatives and scholars have used it as an argument that “it had not been based on the subordination of one to the other.”¹⁷ The special term “suzerainty” has often been used, which denotes a kind of protectorate with a significant degree of autonomy in internal affairs. Sperling has effectively shown how it has become a key part of the counter-narrative of Tibetans in exile,¹⁸ which, however, fails to recognise the actual institutional structures of the Yuan and especially the Qing courts in Tibet.

The contemporary Chinese narrative of Tibet as part of China has been otherwise supported by a much earlier connection between two empires – the Chinese Tang dynasty (唐; 618–907) and the Tibetan Empire established by the Buddhist King Songtsen Gampo (*srong btsan sgam po* སྲོང་བཙན་སྐམ་པོ་; 605/17–609). The seventh to ninth centuries were the heyday of the Tibetan Empire, when the Tibetan army posed a genuine threat to the Tang to the extent that the Chinese side actively sought to form an alliance with Tibetans through the so-called “marriage policy” (*heqin* 和亲). The first time when a woman from (a minor branch of) a ruling family was sent to Tibet was the marriage of the Chinese Princess Wencheng (Chin. *Wencheng gongzhu* 文成公主, Tib. *mun cang kong co'i* མུན་ཅང་ཀོང་ཚེ་འི་, better known as ‘Chinese wife’ *rgya bza'* རྒྱ་བཟང་), to the Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo in the seventh century. As pointed out by Slobodník, there are two quite different accounts of her story, a Chinese one and a Tibetan one. The original Chinese account was recorded in the official dynastic chronicle of the Tang. In these accounts, the princess “embodies the traditional role of a missionary of Chinese civilization among ‘barbarians’.”¹⁹

In (later) Tibetan (Buddhist) sources she is, in contrast, “credited with the bringing of the statue of the Buddha Śākyamuni (in Tibetan referred to as *jo bo* ཇོ་བོ་) to Tibet, which according to Tibetan authors greatly contributed to the dissemination of Buddhism in Central Tibet.”²⁰ She is also “credited with bringing divination books, astrological manuals, medical treatises,

advanced agricultural techniques, water mills as well as various handicrafts to Tibet.”²¹ While Wencheng, in historical Chinese sources, is just one of the many examples of Chinese women sent to ‘barbarians’ in order to help spread peace and Chinese civilisation to Central Asia, Tibetan Buddhist sources, as based on legends, represent her as one of the major figures contributing to the formation of the specific Tibetan Buddhist civilization.

The important role that Princess Wencheng assumed in Buddhist Tibetan narratives, regarding formation of Tibetan identity, was perhaps the reason why the CCP chose Wencheng as a symbol of Sino-Tibetan unity. A new narrative of Princess Wencheng has arisen as the “official version of [Sino-Tibetan] history”, where “the ethnic labels of Han nationality (*Hanzu* 汉族), Tibetan nationality (*Zangzu* 藏族) and a unified Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu* 中华民族), which appeared at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century as an attempt to squeeze the multinational empire into a nation state, are adopted for the situation in the seventh century in order to confirm the current ethnic setup of the PRC”.²² This narrative is further supported by ‘evidence’ provided by written records of the Sino-Tibetan treaty of 821–822, which is “cited in its inscribed form as a monument to the unity between Tibet and China” in *Concerning the Question of Tibet*.²³ The only remaining of the original three stelae, with the mirror inscriptions in Tibetan and Chinese, is still placed in front of Jokhang Temple in Lhasa.²⁴

Apart from this Tang-Tibet alliance, which can hardly be interpreted as direct subordination of one nation to another, there are two historical periods, when Tibet could be clearly considered part of the ‘Middle Kingdom’ – during the Yuan (1271–1368) and the Qing (1644–1911) dynasties. Paradoxically, neither of the two dynasties was ruled by ethnic Chinese emperors. In addition, both the Mongol rulers of the Yuan dynasty and the Manchu rulers of the Qing dynasty adopted the Tibetan form of Buddhism, which enabled Tibetans to perceive this relationship as the priest-patron rather than based on dominance and subordination. In contrast, the Chinese narrative focuses mainly on the

role of the imperial representatives in Tibet, the ambans²⁵ who served as intermediaries between the Qing court and the Tibetan government in Lhasa. More recent propaganda has focused on picturing the ambans as “national heroes” who often risked or even sacrificed their lives for the “unity of the fatherland”, as the government officials and official press presented it for example during the opening of a new museum in the reconstructed Tromsikhang manor, the original seat of the first ambans in Lhasa.²⁶ It is further emphasised that the Dalai Lamas, the factual rulers of Tibet, as well as the Panchen Lamas and top government officials had to be recognised by the Qing court. At the end of the eighteenth century, a new institutionalized form of this process was introduced, known as the “golden urn draw” (Chin. *jinping cheqian* 金瓶掣签, Tib. *gser bum skrug pa* གསེར་བུམ་སྐྱུག་པ་),²⁷ during which the name of a candidate used to be drawn from the golden vase to be officially recognised by the Qing Emperor. This institution was reinstated two hundred years later, when it served since the 1990s as the Chinese government and presumably atheist CCP to legitimise their right to decide about the new reincarnation of the eleventh Panchen Lama and other influential *trülkus*.

Following the fall of the Qing dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911, the new Kuomintang (Guomindang 国民党; KMT) government never actually secured full control of Tibet and the decline of the colonial era that was already in the air gave rise to Tibetan aspirations for independence as a starting point for the process of modern nation-state building. It was not sanctioned, however, by Western powers either after the first declaration of independence by the Tibetan government in 1912,²⁸ or in 1951, when the Tibetan government filed a complaint against the Chinese occupation at the UN. After a massive Chinese offensive in Eastern Tibet, which led to the fall of the Kham capital Chamdo in October 1950, the delegation representing the Tibetan government was pressured to sign the so-called “Seventeen-Point Agreement” (officially known as “Agreement of the Central People’s Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet”)

on 23 May 1951. According to Slobodník, it confirmed, from the beginning, “the special place of Tibet in Chinese religious policy towards national minorities in general”,²⁹ as it “explicitly mentions the issue of religious freedom in Tibet”. In the seventh provision it stipulates that “the policy of freedom of religious belief [...] will be protected” and “the central authorities will not effect any change in the income of the monasteries”.³⁰ The agreement was confirmed by the Dalai Lama later in October that year and the social and religious system in political Tibet was temporarily kept untouched as guaranteed by the agreement.

The CCP was free, however, to launch so-called “democratic reforms” (*minzhu gaige* 民主改革) outside the Tibetan territory directly administered by the Ganden Podrang,³¹ in Amdo and Kham. These areas, inhabited by ethnic Tibetans and related ethnics, such as Gyalrong or Qiangic populations,³² were historically not under the political authority of Lhasa and their ‘Tibetan’ (*bod pa* བོད་པ་), Buddhist (*nang pa* རྣམ་པ་) or simply ‘tsampa-eaters’³³ identity was perceived rather vaguely, based on religious and cultural affiliations. During the Qing times, the local ‘kingdoms’ or ‘chiefdoms’ retained a considerably high degree of autonomy, with local rulers, known as *gyelpo* (*rgyal po* རྒྱལ་པོ་) in Tibetan and *tusi* (土司) or sometimes *qinwang* (亲王) in Chinese, being formally recognised by the Qing court.³⁴ In the first half of the twentieth century, almost the entire territory of Amdo and a large part of Kham were incorporated into several Chinese provinces – Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan (with most of Kham under a separate province Xikang [西康]), and Yunnan – and were administered directly by the KMT government, although the actual power was often in the hands of local chieftains or warlords.

This situation enabled the CCP to take direct action against local ruling elites in peripheral parts on the eastern and north-eastern edge of the Tibetan plateau and as early as the beginning of the 1950s these areas had already become the subject of the “democratic reforms” inspired by the land reform taking place in the “liberated areas” (*jiefangqu* 解放区) of China since the 1940s. Highly insensitive steps, carried out in

Tibetan-inhabited areas by the Chinese, including persecution of local aristocratic families and high lamas or *trülkus*, resulted in deep social disorder, as the traditional theocratic feudal system was suddenly dissolved in a mass Communist experiment. Many members of local elites, both lay and religious, were persecuted and thousands of monks were expelled from monasteries and often pressured to disrobe and break their vows by getting married. The situation finally escalated into a nation-wide uprising, which hit the capital of Lhasa at the beginning of 1959.³⁵

3.3 Telling the “Chinese Story”

After the armed uprising was pacified with massive deployment of the PLA, the Communist regime sought to legitimise its actions in Tibet with further developing the lead narrative of ‘liberation’. It followed two different lines: liberation from the hands of foreign imperialists and people’s war against their feudal oppressors. A massive propaganda campaign was focused not only on Tibetans, with the aim of forming a “united front” with influential allies by coopting local elites and recruiting loyal personnel serving the new government. One of the strategies implemented to push these narratives was also engaging foreign journalists, sympathetic with the regime, to help spread the story of ‘Peaceful Liberation’ abroad.

There were two delegations of foreign journalists officially invited to visit Tibet during the 1950s, as described by Luboš Bělka in the next chapters of this book. The second expedition, which Jan Vinař was part of, was organised very soon after the elimination of the uprising in the summer of 1959 with the aim of showing the world that the “uprising of feudal lords and slavers against the people” from March 1959 had been completely suppressed. The journalists, mostly from allied Communist countries or left-wing Western intellectuals, toured in Central Tibet for about one month and were allowed to meet with the representatives of “Tibetan people” and coopted elites (like the tenth Panchen Lama) who provided them with an “authentic

Tibetan voice” narrative of the uprising and a comprehensive plan for the newly introduced “democratic reforms”.

The original class struggle narrative, which was used to legitimise the ‘liberation’ and expanded into a more sophisticated, history-based form since the late 1950s with the publication of the volume *Concerning the Question of Tibet*, has continued to be promoted by the PRC authorities, recently with increasing intensity. After the 2008 unrest, this narrative was used massively in outbound propaganda campaigns aimed at countering the unceasing global Tibet human rights campaign led by the Central Tibet Administration in exile and numerous NGOs across the world, but namely to ‘re-educate’ the “lazy and ungrateful”³⁶ rebellious Tibetans and justify the continuing restrictive policies in Tibet and silencing of Tibetan voices from within the PRC.

Starting with the fiftieth anniversary of “democratic reforms” in 2009, 28 March, the day of the final elimination of the 1959 revolt after the fourteenth Dalai Lama’s escape to exile when the then-Premier Zhou Enlai and the State Council issued an order to dissolve Tibetan government (*Kashag*), began to be celebrated as the “Emancipation Day of Millions of Tibetan Serfs” (Chin. *Xizang baiwan nongnu jiefang jinianri* 西藏白农奴解放纪念日). It clearly was a move to counterbalance the annual commemoration of the “Tibetan Uprising Day” on 10 March, a date which not only marks regular worldwide surge of activism, but is also often accompanied by domestic protests in Tibet, as it occurred in the late 1980s and again in 2008.

The official critique of the so-called “old Tibet” highlighted the inequality and cruelty of the “feudal serf system”. Feudal lords – members of the aristocracy and clergy – were pictured negatively, often almost grotesquely emphasising the immorality of their behaviour, as is also apparent in Vinar’s diary, namely in the scene when the delegation was invited to Drepung monastery to watch an amateur drama troupe’s performance about monastery life in the ‘old times’. Atrocity and inhuman handling of subjects were without any doubt the everyday reality of lower class Tibetans, as it is evident from numerous accounts of people who

experienced life in both ‘old’ and ‘new’ Tibet.³⁷ This in itself can never justify the reality of “political dominance of a majority nationality, the Han, and the political subordination of a minority nationality, the Tibetans”³⁸ who practically lost control over Tibetan affairs under the PRC.

In comparison with inland China, the feudal system in Tibet was different. It is often described in Tibetan as “having two [powers]: religious and political” (Tib. *chos srid gnyis* ཚོས་སྲིད་གཞིས་) because “the supreme political and religious power was in the hands of the successive reincarnations of the Dalai Lama”.³⁹ An important role in this system was secured for high lamas and especially *trülkus*, reincarnated lamas, who were revered as emanations of Bodhisattvas. Large monasteries often housed several *trülkus* holding considerable power. Apart from land and people belonging to monasteries, parts of land in Tibetan areas were always held by lay aristocracy and feudal lords, making the burden for the rural population even heavier. Villagers usually had duties not only towards their monasteries, but also to local feudal lords and the central government. Goldstein has argued in his early research that: “With the exception of about 300 noble families, all laymen and laywomen in Tibet were *serfs* (*mi ser* མི་སེར་) tied via ascription by parallel descent to a particular lord (*dpon po* དཔོན་པོ་) through an estate.”⁴⁰

It is thus not surprising that one of the main focuses of the Communist propaganda in Tibet since the 1950s was a critique of the clergy and religion in general. Tibetan Buddhism, also in the West denominated as ‘Lamaism’, was known in Chinese known as “teaching of lamas” (*lama jiao* 喇嘛教). Both terms are not only incorrect (‘lama’ *bla ma* བླ་མ་) is the Tibetan word for a senior monk or teacher of Buddhist Dharma, similar to the Sanskrit term ‘guru’, but also derogative. The neutral term would be “Tibetan Buddhism” (*Zangchuan fojiao* 藏传佛教 in Chinese), however, in the Tibetan language it is referred to simply as ‘religion’ (*chos* ཚོས་). In the early propaganda, which found its most pronounced expression in the 1965 film *The Serf* (Chin. *Nongnu* 农奴, Tib. *zhing bran* རྒྱུང་བློན་), Tibetan Buddhism was critically represented as an anachronism imbued

with “feudal superstitions” and antagonistic to the modernisation efforts of the new regime armed with science and industrialisation. One of the main arguments was the economic as well as social ‘uselessness’ of monks who formed according to Goldstein as much as 15% of the whole population and up to 30% of the male population in Tibet.⁴¹ While the ordinary monks were mostly pictured as helpless victims of the monastic system, lamas were depicted not only as stupid and cruel, but also depraved or even perverse.

In accordance with Marxist dialectical materialist philosophy, the Beijing regime considered religion per se ‘unscientific’ and ‘backward’ and certain practices of Tibetan Buddhism, such as the belief and institution of reincarnation or tantric rituals, were labelled as “feudal superstitions” (*fengjian mixin* 封建迷信). The critique of religion in Tibet stemmed out of a progressive and scientific outlook formulated by Mao Zedong’s thought and based on Western philosophical concepts of progressive history. As remarked by Slobodník, the “references to magic and cruelty, as well as sexual interpretations of Tibetan Buddhist art reflected the distorted image of Tibetan Buddhism in the West” and “can be traced back to the negative presentation of the Tibetan religion in the monograph by the British explorer, army surgeon and Tibetologist L. A. Waddell titled *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism* published in 1895.” Tibetan Buddhism is in this book “presented as primitive ‘Lamaism’ – a corrupt form of Indian Buddhism which [the author] associated with devil worship and the overall degeneration of religious practice”.⁴²

The negative depiction of Tibetan Buddhism was rooted in the key notion of modernity based on rationality and a scientific world-view, which was appropriated by progressive Chinese intellectuals after the 1919 May Fourth movement and later reformulated by Mao Zedong in his “new democratic culture” (*xin minzhu zhuyi wenhua* 新民主主义文化).⁴³ The critique of ‘superstitions’ as opposed to the ideas of modernity and progress had not been uncommon in Western as well as Chinese thinking and after the Communist takeovers of the late 1940s, it became one of the main targets of propaganda both in the PRC and Eastern Europe.

Slobodník has described how the travelogues written by Czechoslovak members of official delegations to the PRC provided “an idealized image of China full of enthusiasm for the building of socialism” and, logically, depicted Tibet in a very negative way: “The scientific truth is a huge magic wand, which may awaken Tibet from a century-long incantation; the world of an average Tibetan is controlled by nightmares, demons, monsters, ghosts and devils. There are as many of them as the feverish fantasy of a sick child, left alone in a dark room, is able to produce.”⁴⁴

With the “reforms and opening up” (*gaige kaifang* 改革开放) in the post-Mao era and namely with the economic boom followed by explosive development of – primarily domestic – tourism, the official Chinese narrative of Tibetan history began to be promoted in a popular form for the broad public. This narrative permeates not only the whole history, but also various aspects of present-day life, as it is exhibited not just in museums as a performance of the dead past, but even many active religious sites have been turned into tourist attractions, being gradually deprived of their religious value as sacred places of worship.⁴⁵ Such places include historical monuments as well as recently established Buddhist academies, such as Larung Gar or Yarchen Gar, which have become important centres of Tibetan education and culture, thus threatening the power of the central government. Finally, the sacred *kora* around Jokhang Temple in Lhasa, the Barkor, has been changed into “Barkor Old Town tourist area” (*Bakuo gucheng lüyouqu* 八廓古城旅游区), and a huge building imitating the architecture of Potala Palace has been built right across the river from the old palace to host the magnificent performances of the great story of Princess Wencheng for Han Chinese tourists, while the Han Chinese tour guides explain the history of Tibet on strictly limited and monitored tours within Potala Palace.

Such ostentatious performance of sinicized Tibetan-ness in the urban public space is further supported by sinicization of Tibetan names, geographical and personal. The first step was the use of the so-called “Tibetan pinyin” (*Zangwen pinyin* 藏文拼音), the official

romanization of Tibetan, which has been used in the PRC as an alternative to international transcription and transliteration systems (based on English spelling and pronunciation) since 1976⁴⁶ and has been approved internationally by the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) in 1982.⁴⁷ This system is used predominantly in maps. Other than geographical/cartographic usage, however, it clearly inclines towards the use of pinyin not as reflecting the Tibetan script, but rather Chinese characters used for transcription of Tibetan words to Chinese. It is the case for place names (such as Qomolangma vs. Zhumulangma) as well as personal names (like Zhaxi or Luobu) and in some cases the Tibetan name is completely substituted by a Chinese name, for example when the Jokhang is transcribed as Dazhaosi in the “English version” of a street sign. The sinicized Tibetan names appear in all Chinese English-language publications and symbolically approximate Tibet to China in readers’ eyes.

One of the main reasons for the recent widespread popularisation of the original propagandist narrative and its transformation into a consumerist product for tourists, both domestic Han Chinese and foreign, is the effort to resolve the long-term unrest in the region caused by the government’s ethnic policy and sharpening social inequalities. It led in the past to major and sometimes violent protests, such as the last one in spring 2008, and to a wave of self-immolations after the re-introduction of strict ethnic and religious policies and securitization in the region in the last decade.⁴⁸ The propagandist narrative thus helps not only to legitimise the Chinese long-term presence in Tibet, but at the same time seeks to re-write history with a twofold aim: to avoid ethnic violence in Tibetan areas in the future and to counter the Western critique of freedom and human rights issues in Tibet by an alternative narrative of development and common well-being.

Notes:

- 1) E.g. Melvyn Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon: China, Tibet, and the Dalai Lama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), xi.
- 2) A plausible academic argument problematising the concept of so-called ‘great Tibet’ (*bod chen po* བོད་ཆེན་པོ་) is that it “denies the true boundary of the Ganden Podrang’s (*dga’ ldan pho brang* དགའ་ལྷན་པོ་ལྷོ་བླང་; i.e. the Dalai Lama’s government) political sovereignty and leaves out the complex and long-lasting ethnic heterogeneity of the regions under debate.” See Martin A. Mills, “Who Belongs to Tibet? Governmental Narratives of State in the Ganden Podrang,” in: Gerard Toffin – Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka (eds.), *Facing Globalization in the Himalayas: Belonging and the Politics of the Self* (London: Sage, 2014), 397). In other words, there is a difference between “active political sovereignty and ritual suzerainty” of the Dalai Lamas or “between the religious authority of the Dalai Lamas, and the political authority of their governments” (ibid., 406).
- 3) It was declared as one of the basic human rights by the UN General Assembly in 1986 (“Declaration on the Right to Development,” conclusion date: Dec 4, 1986, United Nations OHCHR, GA/41/128).
- 4) Martin A. Mills, “Who Belongs to Tibet? Governmental Narratives of State in the Ganden Podrang,” 414.
- 5) Julia Bergin and Louisa Lim, “Inside China’s Audacious Global Propaganda Campaign,” *The Guardian*, Dec 7, 2018, accessed March 11, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/dec/07/china-plan-for-global-media-dominance-propaganda-xi-jinping>.
- 6) It should be noted that the very term ‘people’ (Chin. *renmin* 人民, Tib. *mi dmangs* མི་དམངས་) was introduced into the Tibetan language only in the early 1950s for the purpose of ‘liberation’. (E.g. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Volume 2: The Calm Before the Storm: 1951–1955*, 317).
- 7) Elliot Sperling, “The Red Army’s First Encounters with Tibet: Experiences on the Long March,” *Tibetan Review* 11/10 (1976): 11–18.
- 8) Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Volume 2: The Calm Before the Storm: 1951–1955*, 544.
- 9) Ibid., 314.
- 10) In recent years, several Tibetan literary works managed to be published in an unofficial way in the PRC, whose narratives are based on childhood memories of witnesses of Chinese ‘liberation’. In all probability the best known is Naksang Nulo’s memoir *My Tibetan Childhood: When Ice Shattered Stone*, which has been translated into English (Tib. orig. *Nags tshang zhi lu’i skyid dug*

- [Joys and Sorrows of the Naksang Boy] [Xining: Qinghai Xining yinshuachang, 2014]). Another example is the full-length novel *Rlung dmar 'ur 'ur* (རླུང་དྲན་ལུང་ལུང་, *Red Wind Howling*, 2009) by Tsering Döndrup (*tshe ring don grub* ཚེ་རིང་དོན་གུབ་), translated into French by Françoise Robin (*Tempête rouge*, Éditions Philippe Picquier, 2019). Excerpts in English appeared in Robert Barnett, Benno Weiner, and Françoise Robin, *Conflicting Memories: Tibetan History Under Mao Retold* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).
- 11) A similar construct is the term ‘American’ inclusively denoting all the inhabitants of the USA.
 - 12) “In [the] Tibetan language there was no word which meant ‘China.’ The author who worked as a translator during the negotiations, then notes that the Chinese name for China had to be transliterated to provide a usable term [i.e. *krung go* ལྷུང་གོ་].” See Elliot Sperling, *The Tibet-China Conflict: History and Polemics* (Washington: East-West Centre, 2004), 34. Quot. from Huang Mingxin, “The Tibetan Version of the 17-Article Agreement,” *China’s Tibet* 2, 3 (1991): 12–14.
 - 13) Sun Yat Sen’s concept guaranteed partial political autonomy to five ethnics or races forming the large Chinese nation: Ethnic Chinese (*Han* 汉), Manchu (*Man* 满), Mongol (*Meng* 蒙), Tibetans (*Zang* 藏), and Uighurs (*Wei* 维). These ethnics were on the original flag of the Republic of China symbolised by five different colours: Red, yellow, blue, white, and black. They are represented on the PRC flag by one big and four smaller stars. See for example Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, 142.
 - 14) Sperling, *The Tibet-China Conflict: History and Polemics*, 23.
 - 15) Concerning the history of Tibet during the Yuan dynasty, see e.g. Luciano Petech, *Central Tibet and the Mongols: the Yüan-Sa-skya Period of Tibetan History* (Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1990).
 - 16) Sperling, *The Tibet-China Conflict: History and Polemics*, 10.
 - 17) Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 246.
 - 18) Sperling, *The Tibet-China Conflict: History and Polemics*, 21.
 - 19) Martin Slobodník, “The Chinese Princess Wencheng in Tibet: A Cultural Intermediary between Facts and Myth,” paper presented at the conference *Trade, Journeys, Inner and Intercultural Communication East and West (up to 1250)* (Dolná Krupá, June 2.-6., 2004), 270.
 - 20) *Ibid.*, 271.
 - 21) *Ibid.*, 272.
 - 22) *Ibid.*, 273.
 - 23) Sperling, *The Tibet-China Conflict: History and Polemics*, 10.
 - 24) This stela is also mentioned in Vinar’s text as the “uncle and nephew pillar”. It was so revered by the Chinese authorities that in Spring 2020 during the first Covid-19 lockdown a Chinese-style pavilion was built over it, right in front of the (long closed) main entrance to Jokhang, where the devotees usually pray. See Woesser, “Shocking: During the Epidemic, Two Chinese-Style Pavilions Appear in Front of Jokhang Temple (Part 1),” *High Peaks Pure Earth*, Jun 3, 2020, accessed March 6, 2024, <https://highpeakspureearth.com/shocking-during-the-epidemic-two-chinese-style-pavilions-appear-in-front-of-the-jokhang-temple-part-1-by-woesser/>.
 - 25) Amban is a Manchu word meaning in general ‘high official’. In Tibet and some other territories under the Qing Empire (Mongolia, Xinjiang) they were considered ‘Imperial representatives’ (*zhuzha dachen* 驻扎大臣). For more about Qing ambans in Tibet, see Josef Kolmaš, “The Ambans and Assistant Ambans of Tibet,” *Archiv orientální. Supplementa* 7 (1994).
 - 26) See Kamila Hladíková, “Purple Ruins: Tsering Woesser’s (re)Construction of Tibetan Identity,” *Archiv orientální* 89 (2021): 199.
 - 27) See Max Oidtmann, *Forging the Golden Urn: The Qing Empire and the Politics of Reincarnation in Tibet* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).
 - 28) The independence after the fall of the Qing Empire was formally declared by the thirteenth Dalai Lama in January 1913, after it was discussed with representatives of Mongolia about a month earlier. Both territories mutually recognised their independence from China. The possible independence of Tibet was discussed internationally one year later at a conference in Simla, although the Chinese government did not accept the solution suggested by Great Britain, to divide the territory into ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ Tibet as was the case with Mongolia. The Tibetan government, at that time, interpreted the Chinese hesitation in reaching any compromise solution as a confirmation of the present status quo, i.e. the de facto independence of Tibet. See Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 246–256.
 - 29) Martin Slobodník, “‘Strengthen Party and Government Leadership and Consolidate Management of Religion’: Religious Policy Towards Tibetan Buddhism in the 1990s,” in *Religion und Politik in der Volksrepublik China*, ed. Wiebke Koenig and Karl-Fritz Daiber (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2008), 339.

- 30) Ibid., quot. Michael C. van Walt van Praag, *The Status of Tibet: History, Rights, and Prospects in International Law* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1987), 339.
- 31) Ganden Podrang was Tibetan government established by the fifth Dalai Lama Ngawang Lozang Gyatso (*ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho* འགྲུབ་ལྷོ་བཟང་ལྷ་མཚོ།, 1617–1682) with the help of the Khoshud Mongol ruler Gushrikhan (1652–1655). It was represented by a counsel called *Kashag* (*bka' shag* བཀའ་སྐབས་གཞི) and functioned in Lhasa until 1959, after the uprising and fleeing of the Dalai Lama to India and substituted by the Central Tibetan Administration in exile.
- 32) The Qiang (*Qiang zu* 羌族) were in the Chinese “nationalities identification” (*minzu shibie* 民族识别) process classified in the 1950s as a ‘minority nationality’ (*shaoshu minzu* 少数民族) while Gyalrong (*Jiarong* 加绒) who are speakers of one of the Qiangic languages are considered a subgroup of ‘Tibetan nationality’ (*Zangzu* 藏族).
- 33) See Shakya, *Dragon in the Land of Snows. A History of Modern Tibet after 1947*, 210.
- 34) The complicated symbiosis of local rulers with the Imperial and KMT governments, that served as the basis for building of local relations for the Communists after 1949, was on the example of Amdo region (Gansu and Qinghai) thoroughly described by Benno Weiner, *The Chinese Revolution on the Tibetan Frontier* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020).
- 35) While the situation in Kham was roughly known thanks to the American CIA programme supporting the resistance in Kham, see e. g. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Volume 4: In the Eye of the Storm: 1957–1959* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019), 55–60, the situation in Amdo was documented in more detail recently by Benno Weiner.
- 36) Emily T. Yeh, *Taming Tibet: Landscape Transformation and the Gift of Chinese Development* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2013), 66.
- 37) Some of the most valuable personal accounts are the memoirs of Tashi Tsering and Püntso Wanggyel published by Melvyn Goldstein: Melvyn Goldstein – William R. Siebenschuh – Tashi Tsering, *Struggle for Modern Tibet: The Autobiography of Tashi Tsering* (London: Routledge, 1997); Melvyn Goldstein, William R. Siebenschuh, Dawei Sherap, *A Tibetan Revolutionary: The Political Life and Times of Bapa Phüntso Wangye* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
- 38) Goldstein, *A Tibetan Revolutionary: The Political Life and Times of Bapa Phüntso Wangye*, xiii.
- 39) Phuntsog Wangyal, “The Influence of Religion on Tibetan Politics,” *The Tibet Journal* 1/1 (1975): 78–81.
- 40) Melvyn Goldstein, “Taxation and the Structure of a Tibetan Village,” *Central Asiatic Journal*, 15 (1971): 4.
- 41) Melvyn Goldstein, “Tibetan Buddhism and Mass Monasticism,” in: Adeline Herrou – Gisele Krauskopff (eds.), *Des moines et des moniales dans le monde. La vie monastique dans le miroir de la parenté* (Presses Universitaires de Toulouse le Mirail, 2010), 3.
- 42) Martin Slobodník, “‘Lamaism, the Living Anachronism’ – A Depiction of Tibetan Buddhism in Czechoslovak Travelogues from the 1950s,” in *Proceedings from the 8th Annual Czech and Slovak Sinological Conference 2014*, ed. Martin Lavička and Martina Rysová (Olomouc, 2015), 119.
- 43) See Mao Zedong, “On New Democracy” (*Xin minzhuzhuyi lun* 新民主主义论, *Zhongguo wenhua*, 1 [1940]), in English https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_26.htm.
- 44) Slobodník, “‘Lamaism, the Living Anachronism’ – Depiction of Tibetan Buddhism in Czechoslovak Travelogues from the 1950s,” 122. Quot. from Beba, “*Tajemný*” *Tibet*, 35. It is worth noting that the Chinese side was closely monitoring the way Tibet was represented in friendly Communist regimes such as the Czechoslovak one, as it is evident from a remark of the then Czechoslovak Minister of Information Václav Kopecký. He reflected on the Chinese critique of the 1950 Czechoslovak documentary *Čína v boji* (China in Struggle) by Emanuel Kaněra in his book, see Martin Slobodník, “Socialist Anti-Orientalism: Perceptions of China in Czechoslovak Travelogues from 1950s,” in *Postcolonial Europe? Essays on Post-Communist Literatures and Cultures*, ed. Martin Lavička and Martina Rysová (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 125; quot. from Václav Kopecký et al., *Ve veliké čínské zemi* [In the Great Land of China] (Praha: Orbis, 1953), 40.
- 45) The early influence of tourism on Tibetan monasteries at the beginning of an enormous boom that culminated before the Covid-19 pandemic was described by Martin Slobodník and Luboš Bělka, “Vplyv turizmu na tibetské kláštory – príklad Labrangu” [The Influence of Tourism on Tibetan Monasteries – the example of Labrang], *Hieron* VI-VII (2001–2002): 24–33.
- 46) *Shaoshu minzuyu diming Hanyu pinyin zimu yinyi zhuanxiefa* 少数民族语地名汉语拼音字母音译转写法 [A phonetic transcription of geographical names in minority languages into Chinese pinyin].
- 47) UNGEGN Working Group on Romanization Systems, “Report on the current status of UN romanization systems for geographical names, Tibetan” Version 4.0 (September 2013).
- 48) See Robert Barnett, “Political Self-Immolation in Tibet: Causes and Influences,” *Revue d’Etudes Tibétaines* 25 (December 2012): 41–64.



Jan Vinař: His Life and Work

Luboš Bělka / Kamila Hladíková

(transl. Kamila Hladíková)

4.1 Jan Vinař: Formerly Heinz Wiener

Heinz Wiener¹ was born on 15 July 1914, two weeks before World War I was declared, to a wealthy Prague Jewish family who lived at an excellent address Vrchlického sady 3, in central Prague.

His father was Jiří Wiener, born on 6 May 1878, his mother was Valerie, née Schreyerová, born on 3 March 1884. Jiří Wiener was the central director of Schöller, a company that owned the historical sugar factory in Čakovice. According to his grandson, i.e. Jan Vinař Jr., “he had a fairly large property”.² Jan Vinař himself was not utterly destitute since he states in the personnel questionnaire of 6 June 1953 that “he owns half of a residential building”.³ It is of interest that he never mentions this fact in any other questionnaires that inquire about property. It is not clear whether the reason was that his financial situation became settled as late as 1953 or whether he did not want to disclose the information in questionnaires. His parents died together in 1941⁴ when they “committed suicide before they had to join the transport of Jewish citizens to a concentration camp in Poland.”⁵

Jan Vinař had an older sister Matylda, who was born on 20 August 1909⁶ and who legally stayed with her husband and daughter in the USA, where she died in 2003 aged ninety-four. After she got married, her surname was Beckmann; she never used the name Vinařová (at Bauhaus, she was registered as Mathy Wiener). She graduated with a degree in philosophy and German and also obtained a teaching qualification in

English and French. She completed the basic course at the renowned Bauhaus in Dessau, where she moved in 1930 and where she met her future husband Hannes Beckmann (1909–1977), a German, then Czechoslovak and finally an American citizen.⁷ The couple arrived in Czechoslovakia in 1934 after they got married in 1932, and they were financially supported by Matylda’s father Jiří Wiener. Matylda was a member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia before World War Two.⁸

Very little information is known about the wider family, and it all comes from various documents prepared by Jan Vinař for his employers, that is from Communist party personnel materials. In one of the questionnaires in his answer to question no. 50 (“Do any relatives or friends live abroad?”) Vinař mentions not only his sister Matylda, but also three cousins: E. Petšková (“USA, never lived in the Czechoslovak Republic”); G. Kornfeldová (“USA, never lived in the Czechoslovak Republic”) and M. Berlová (“Israel – she emigrated in 1946 or 1947”).⁹ Further details about them can be found in the document of 3 December 1963, which mentions that “they emigrated to the USA after the onset of Nazism (one had lived in Germany and the other in Austria). One cousin left for Israel in 1946. It is not known whether they are still alive”;¹⁰ however, the names of those cousins are not stated.

Part of Jan Vinař’s family lived in the West, which was frowned upon by the Communist establishment in the 1950s. He went, however, on long-term business trips to Great Britain and the USA and was sent abroad by the state authorities as a diplomat even though his

family history must have been known to the sending institutions. Everyone who worked in the West after February 1948 was subject to thorough screening and monitoring by the relevant bodies of the Ministry of the Interior.

4.2 Before World War Two: A Student

Jan Vinař started his education in 1920 at a primary school in Královské Vinohrady in Prague; the first (but not last) police record concerning his person dates back to 31 January 1925, when the district police inspector Rudolf Jahoda in his neat but not quite legible handwriting made an official record of “damaging another person’s property”.

The fifth-grade pupil Jan Wiener and his classmate Otfried Menzel were detained “at the request of the municipal park superintendent Mr. Šprysl” by constable Leopold Domkář, brought to the police station, and a record was written on the young men’s conduct, which says: “The above-named boys damaged benches in Rieger Gardens by jumping on them with their [sic] dirty shoes, whereby damaging the new paint thereon. They were detained and subsequently released.” This was not, however, the end of the affair: an offence must be followed by punishment. The next page of the police record bears the note on top, dated 25 February 1925: “Returned with reference to testimony of Josef Rak and a receipt for 20 crowns.” The signature is illegible, but seems to be “Dr. Kopecký”. We do not know yet who were the last-named gentlemen, but certainly it is not particularly important.

The record continues with further steps taken by the authorities in the matter: “Marta Menclová [sic], mother of Otfried Mencl, presented herself; she was informed about her son’s misdeed. She was asked to take due care of her son and to punish, or rather, reprimand him for his naughty behaviour.” The record was signed by “Martha Menzel” on 17 February 1925.

That was not the end of the affair. Another police record of the same day follows: “I refer the cause to Station III for further proceedings due to Wiener’s res-

idence.” The words ‘further proceedings’ are underlined in blue and a question mark is added. Whether the note was attached by a clerk whose red rubber name stamp appears on the reverse side of the record three times, is impossible to tell; however, it is not important. The only entry written on a typewriter reads: “Belongs to Station III. Station IV. 20 February 1925.” This entry, which means only that Police Station III shall not deal with the cause and refers it to Police Station IV, has attached another name stamp, this time of the colour black and probably reading “Rüfs”.

The red tape adventure continues on the bottom of the page, which is unfortunately so damaged by the ravages of time that its ending is not reliably legible: “Josef Rak, an employee of Schöller sugar factory, appeared and said that as a proxy to Jiří Wiener, father of the identified boy, who is currently in Stockholm, and mother, who is ill, acknowledges the information about the misdeed of Jan Wiener and commits himself to supervising him so that a similar deed is not repeated. I voluntarily deposit 20 crowns for charitable purposes.” The signature is unclear, but it seems to be the signature of the above-named Josef Rak, who, like the other culprit’s mother, confirmed with his signature that appropriate consequences would follow.

The police archives contain additional material connected with the affair, a document numbered 91, which after half a century testifies that Jiří Wiener donated 20 crowns to the Union of Civil Security Guards in the Czechoslovak Republic, based in Prague. The receipt was signed by Dr. Kopecký, whose signature is also at the top of the reverse side of the official record.

In summary, two eleven-year-old boys, Jan and Otfried, fifth grade classmates, could not resist and stepped on freshly painted benches (or maybe just one) on the last day of January. They were caught by a guard, assisted by the police authority. The two whole pages of the police record also mention ten other names and are covered with five official stamps. The whole affair was finally resolved by father Jiří, who sent twenty Czechoslovak crowns from Sweden, which represented the price of three kilos of sugar that could be bought by the Union of Civil Security Guards for the

fine. For illustration: a clerk made about 1,500 crowns per month and a worker made about 500. It is probably better to remain in the dark about the cost (in manhours) of this two-page document. Ten adults were kept busy in various ways from 31 January to 25 February 1925 with two schoolboys who “jumped on benches in dirty shoes, whereby damaging the new paint thereon”. It might be relevant to mention that Franz Kafka¹¹ had been dead for not even a year. He died aged forty, while his colleague Jaroslav Hašek died a year before him at the age of thirty-nine. Each of them would not be surprised by this affair of “damaging another person’s property”. They would have, on the contrary, understand it perfectly and would have rendered the matter in detail, though certainly more masterly than I attempted in the present text.

Those were the historical conditions which formed the personality of the young man Jan Vinař, or maybe rather Heinz Wiener, who finished primary school and continued studying at the German public Realschule in Prague 2 where he passed his school-leaving examination and obtained the “adulthood certificate” in 1933. He was active in the youth section of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and as we read in a questionnaire of 1954, he was in pre-trial custody in 1933; we do not know for how long and mainly why. He was a member of the Czechoslovak Union of Communist Youth, ‘Komsomol’, until the year 1935. He was not just a rank-and-file member; he eventually became “the head of *Kostufra* (Communist student fraction) at German universities and a member of the regional leadership”.¹² According to a questionnaire from 1953, he was an active journalist, “before the war — news coverage of working youth; after the war — several notes and one longer article in *Tvorba* (Creations), translations from English — Pritt: *Star-Spangled Shadow*; Marion: *The Communist Trial: An American Crossroads*; together with my wife: *Genocidium*; now working on Kahn: *The Game of Death*.”¹³ And, as he mentions elsewhere, he cooperated with the magazine *Mladá garda* (Young Guard).¹⁴

The second Vinař cause, this time of real gravity, was found in the Police Archive in Prague. We can read in the documents about the detainment of Jan Vinař for

the “suspicion of an offence against the Protection of the Republic Act, committed in July 1933, ref. no. T.V. 225/33”;¹⁵ a letter carried by Jan Vinař was captured by the police in Kroměříž which testified to the act. What was the offence that was allegedly committed by Jan Vinař? Some details can be found in the “Form for the Application for the Travel Passport” filed by Jan Vinař in 1934, to which is attached a typed note:

According to the present records, the applicant was arrested by the police in Kroměříž in July 1933 and sent to pre-trial detention. He had come to Kroměříž on 21 July 1933 and immediately started to establish connections with the leaders of the local Communist Party; at that time, illegal communist flyers called *Alarm* were distributed about the town. A letter carried by Wiener was found, which proved he maintained connections with Communist agents. With regard to the above-mentioned facts, the local authorities are not convinced that the applicant would not misuse the issued travel passport in a way that would seriously compromise state interests.

An illegible signature follows.

The whole matter was concluded as follows. The case was stopped during a preliminary inquiry at the Regional Court in Uherské Hradiště on 10 July 1934, and the relevant *Official Certificate* literally states: “It is hereby confirmed that the preliminary inquiry regarding the motion of the Public Prosecutor’s Office¹⁶ commenced against you has been stopped for there is no reason to continue in your prosecution.” The affair was to be continued, however, as the passport department in Prague refused to issue the travel passport to Vinař with the following reasoning:

The conclusions stated in the attached appeal are not decisive for assessing whether the denial of the travel passport was justified or not. Although the appellant claims his prosecution was cancelled, the present authority maintains that the appellant is still suspicious of connections directed against the internal security

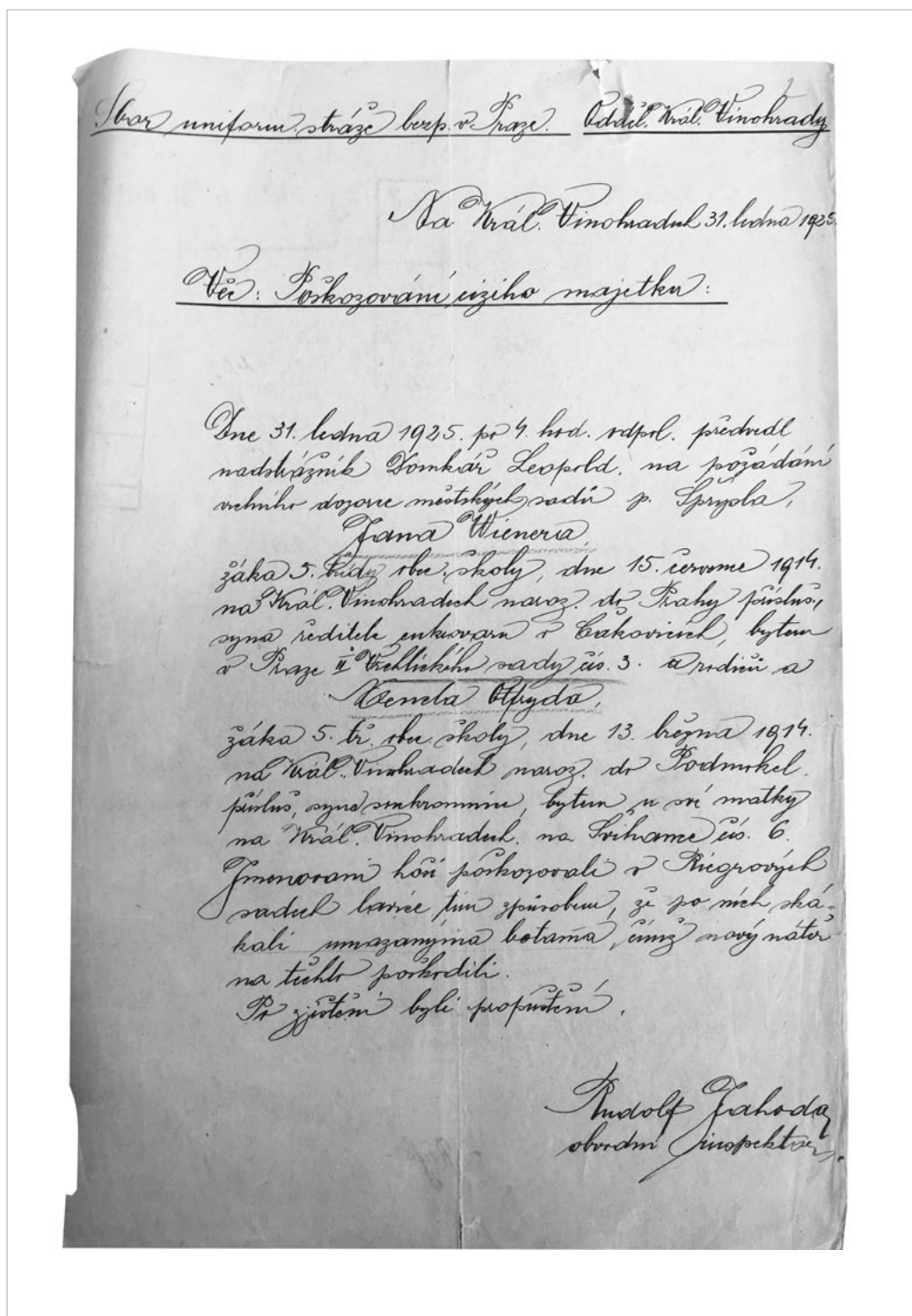


Fig. 133 / Police record about "damaging public property" from 1925, page 1. Source: Family Archive "Heinz Wiener — Jan Vinař".

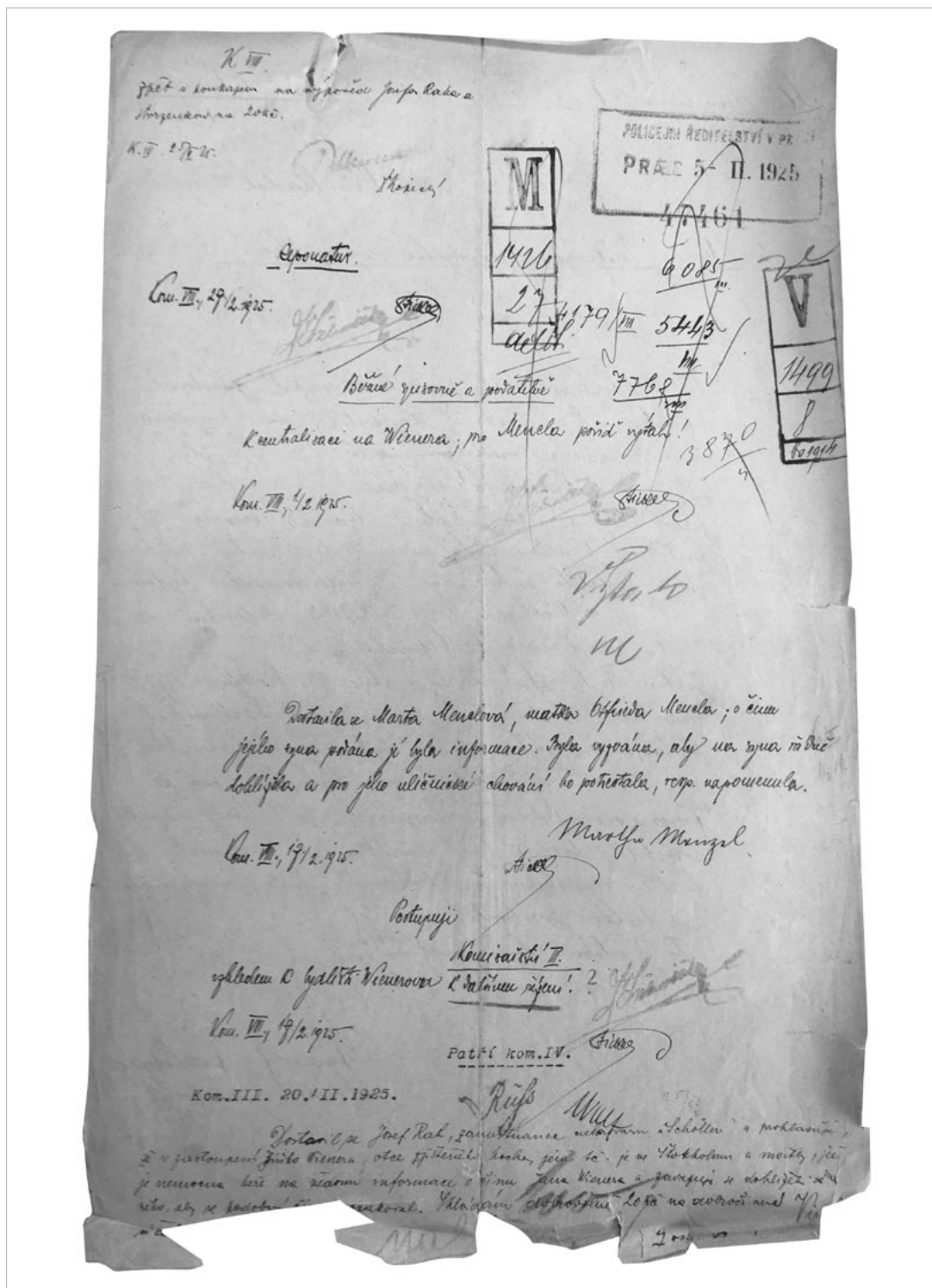


Fig. 134 / Police record about "damaging public property" from 1925, page 2. Source: Family Archive "Heinz Wiener — Jan Vinař".

of the state. The appellant does not mention at all the letter found on him that proves his contacts with Communist agents. His political reliability cannot be guaranteed by the fact that he is the son of a senior and probably wealthy official; the present authority has identified a number of concrete cases where it is intellectuals born to wealthy and politically impeccable families that are usually very agile and dangerous Communist activists regardless of their parents' social status. Therefore, granting the appeal cannot be recommended. The ruling of the denial was delivered to the above-mentioned person on 16 March 1934, and the appeal was filed on 23 March 1934.¹⁷

Signed Police President, signature illegible.

The final solution of the affair was that Jan Vinař was issued a passport for “all the countries of the world except the USSR”. This was the historical context in which the personality of young Jan Vinař, still calling himself Heinz Wiener, who passed the adulthood examination and started university studies, was formed.

Similarly to his secondary school, the university where Vinař studied was German. He completed nine semesters of mathematics and physics at the Faculty of Science in Prague between the years 1933 and 1936.¹⁸ He interrupted his studies and commenced compulsory military service in the Czechoslovak Army, which lasted from 1 October 1936 to 30 September 1938. He left the army as a reservist private, and his service was immediately followed by the September mobilisation, which means he returned from the army as late as 15 December 1938, when he was demobilised after almost twenty-seven months of continuous service.¹⁹

He returned to Charles University in 1938 and remained until all Czech universities were closed down on 17 November 1939. He never resumed the study of mathematics and physics again.

When Jan Vinař came back from the army, he lived at the address Dobrovského 19, Prague 7. In July 1939, he moved to Veverkova 23, which was his permanent address until he went underground and unsuccessfully attempted involvement in foreign resistance.

4.3 World War Two: A Prisoner

Jan Vinař lived an unusual life full of tragic twists and turns, which was closely related to both European and world history and brought him to the West as well as to the East. Although – but maybe because – he was born to a wealthy Prague Jewish family, he led a life very different from the lives of those who were “born with a silver spoon in their mouth”. He did not become a rentier or a procurator for Schöller sugar factory, as would be appropriate for an only son of the central director and in line with the family tradition. Similarly to his older sister Matylda when he studied at secondary school, Jan took a path leading in the opposite direction and joined those who wanted to destroy the world of capital in interwar Czechoslovakia, not to cultivate and expand it.

The Czech Jewish writer Karel Poláček said in a joke “the Jews belong in the coffeehouse”, which would imply that Matylda and Jan were “café communists” or “champagne socialists”. Such people, however, usually did not take up arms and go fight Nazism. Jan Vinař was no parlour type and thus in the spring of 1940 was determined to join those who fought with a weapon in hand.

He could not or did not want to go to the West, France and Great Britain, where many Czechoslovaks were fighting, and so he left for the East. It is not clear whether he knew that most of the people who had crossed the Soviet border with similar intentions ended up in gulags.

Jan Vinař tried to illegally enter the Soviet Union, where he wanted to join the anti-Nazi resistance in the armed services, in April 1940. The attempt failed, however, and he was arrested and imprisoned in the Nazi concentration camps in Dachau,²⁰ Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen. Unlike the above quoted Karel Poláček, Vinař survived. Archives do not provide much detail about these days, which were certainly the hardest of his life.

Jan Vinař got married before the war to Božena Procházková, who was a year older, born in 1913. A son was born from the marriage, named Jan Vinař,



Fig. 135 /

Jan Vinař at the age of 14, photo from a passport application in 1928.
Source: *Family Archive "Heinz Wiener — Jan Vinař"*.



Fig. 136 /

Jan Vinař at the age of 21, photo from a passport application in 1934.
Source: *Family Archive "Heinz Wiener — Jan Vinař"*.

on 15 March 1939, on the day when Nazi Germany breached the Munich Agreement of 30 September 1938 and annexed the last remains of Czechoslovakia.²¹ Vinař's first marriage ended in tragedy: when he was still in the concentration camp, on 14 February 1945, his family was caught in the middle of the US Air Forces bombing of Prague. The events are recalled by Vinař's second wife Emílie:²² "In 1945 his mother [meaning the mother of Jan Vinař Jr., Božena Vinařová, Vinař's wife] was killed in the air raid; the child was saved by his grandmother who put him into a folding cot and threw him out from the third story of the burning building. She herself was killed and the boy was taken care of by strangers." The grandmother was surely Vinař's mother-in-law. The child's rescue is also described by the journalist Jan Petránek, who writes in his memoirs:

An American bomb that hit the building on Vinohradská Street opposite Maceška cinema, killed his wife. It set the building on fire and demolished the staircase. Mrs. Vinařová only had time to wrap the small boy in a duvet and throw him out from the fifth story. The son Jan survived unharmed; he is a doctor in Košice at present. Unfortunately, his mother did not make it out of the building.²³

Both Jan and Matylda lived through the horrors of World War Two despite their imprisonment, but their return to their homeland was not easy; the family had suffered many losses. Matylda mourned her only son Thomas Beckmann,²⁴ Jan lost his wife and her mother. "This is also testified by Matylda's terrible experience when she had to leave her little son and get on the eighth transport marked as AE1 with another thousand people to the Jewish ghetto in Terezín on 31 January 1945. She stayed there for the rest of the war."²⁵ Separated from her son she, like Jan, did not know what happened in Prague toward the end of the war.

4.4 After World War Two: A Diplomat

Jan Vinař returned to Prague and began to look for a job and a place to live. He was a physicist who did not complete his studies, who had mastered several world languages and was trying to find a job for the first time in his life, as a thirty-one-year-old *Hefling* (from German; released prisoner). The Third (Czechoslovak) Republic was different from the first one, but was still not a country fully controlled by Communists; this happened several years later, in February 1948. The position of Communists was significantly different than in previous years, however, and party membership was considered an advantage for qualification for certain jobs.

He found his first job at the Ministry of Information in the summer. The post-war building effort was the main ethos and ideology of the new state and Jan Vinař chose the pro-Soviet side in line with his life values and experience. As of 1947, he cooperated with the magazine "*Tvorba*, until discontinued" as he put it.²⁶ His personal life was difficult; he was not able to take care of his young son very well since he was on a constant search for accommodation and often changed addresses.

It was not easy to return to Prague, which reminded him of his dead wife and mother-in-law. There were also other unfortunate developments. When Jan Vinař was asked to give his permanent address in a questionnaire, he wrote: "From June 1945 to June 1946, I slept wherever possible, in at least ten different places, which I cannot remember anymore; I was not able to find a flat."

He made a new acquaintance and married on 19 June 1946. His wife was Emílie, née Váchová, born on 24 February 1921.²⁷ They had a daughter Zdenka, born on 6 May 1947. Vinař was able to raise her from her birth, unlike the son Jan. His employer underwent significant changes as well, and he left the Ministry of Information and transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where his intellectual abilities and language skills could find a better use, not to speak of better financial remuneration. His command of German,



Fig. 137 /

Jan Vinař at the age of 20, photo from a 1934 document.
Source: *Family Archive "Heinz Wiener — Jan Vinař"*.

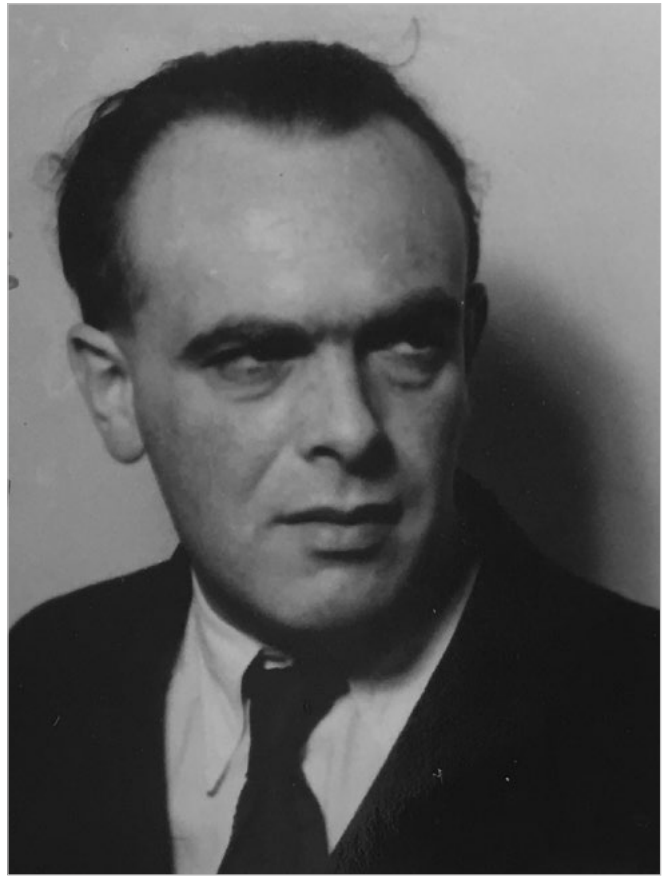


Fig. 138 /

Jan Vinař at the age of 34, photo from a citizen ID application in 1948.
Source: *Family Archive "Heinz Wiener — Jan Vinař"*.

French, English and Russian was fluent. In a questionnaire accompanying the Application to the Union of Czechoslovak Journalists, dated 22 November 1954, he also mentions “a partial command of Polish, Italian, and Chinese”.²⁸

In the period from 1 August 1945 to 6 March 1949, Vinař worked as an officer at the Ministry of Information and Public Education, which sent him to Great Britain for a week in December 1946, and to the USA for three months from September to November 1948. When the Communist takeover came on 25 February 1948, he participated in the events as the secretary of the Action Committee of the Ministry.²⁹

Vinař first worked as an officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 7 March 1949. He achieved a high diplomatic rank and left the job on 28 February 1953. He had the opportunity to spend three years in Washington, which must have been a unique experience both for him and for the four-member family.

The available archives of the security services do not mention if Jan Vinař cooperated with the Czechoslovak secret service or counter-intelligence bodies. He was repeatedly screened by these institutions like everyone who went on business trips abroad, especially to the “foreign capitalist countries”. He must have been a bearer of state secrets, but in all probability, he was not a ‘spy’ unlike his predecessors and successors who held the position of the first counsellor of the embassy.

Karel Pacner writes about the situation in the USA in the late 1940s in his four-volume book on the history of the Czechoslovak intelligence services (1914–1989): “The expansion of operations is also evidenced by an extensive list of diplomats and consuls in Europe, the Americas, Asia and Africa (...) The list of employees of the Ministry of Interior, previously assigned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is dated 12 October 1949 (...) Dr. Ervin Munk.”³⁰ Munk, who started his diplomatic mission in the USA in February 1948, held the post of the consul general in New York from January 1949, whereas Jan Vinař’s title was the deputy chief of the mission.³¹ The Czechoslovak residency (the principal intelligence body abroad, usually operating under diplomatic cover) had been established, and it is unlikely

that Vinař had anything in common with it. As Czechoslovakia had only one residency in New York and not in Washington, it is almost certain that Jan Vinař was not a secret service agent and was among the few diplomats who were just diplomats, nothing more. Karel Pacner in the cited book directly states the names of spies in the USA and Vinař’s is not among them. “Josef Rybář, Robert Žalud and Jan Porges were preparing for assignment in the United States. Munk and Lom will stay.”³² Things turned out differently in the end. Ervin Munk,³³ together with his family, was deported as a *persona non grata* after he was exposed as a spy by US intelligence agencies.

What was reported from the United States at the time is somewhat confusing. A senate hearing on the espionage affair concerning Ervin Munk was held on 5 and 7 February 1952, where testimony was given by Pavlína Svobodová (under the name Pavline Svoboda, born on 5 September 1920 in Neratovice, who worked in the USA from February 1947), the secretary of the Czechoslovak Embassy who had earlier cooperated with the FBI, and testified as an FBI informant. She accused Munk of espionage and when asked whether she knew Jan Vinař and what she could say about him, she replied: “The first I saw Mr. Vinař was in July 1949, in Washington, but I remember Mr. Munk saying that Mr. Vinař is a very talented man and a true Communist and he mentioned that [Vinař] isn’t just sent from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but that he has some other assignment in the United States than to be an official for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.” The examiner Mr. Arens asked: “Dr. Munk told Mr. Palma in the same room that you were sitting in that Mr. Vinař was being sent to the United States ostensibly, that is, for all outward appearances, as the chargé d’affaires, but that he had another assignment; is that correct?” Miss Svoboda answered: “Yes; that is what he meant by that.”³⁴

The idea that such an experienced spy, which Ervin Munk undoubtedly was, would spill the beans about his colleague in front of the secretary and the Czechoslovak consul Mr. Palma is highly improbable; moreover, this is the only reference to Jan Vinař in the entire hearing. The US administration published extensive

and detailed materials in which all the spies from the Eastern Bloc were named but most importantly, their activities are evidenced with interrogations before the Senate and other committees. Jan Vinař's name is not present in any of those materials; he was only mentioned by Pavlína Svobodová, no one else. If her testimony was true (Svobodová sought permanent residence and US citizenship; she could not and did not want to return to Czechoslovakia; her family was prosecuted after February 1948), Jan Vinař would have definitely been exposed like Munk and several other spies from the Eastern Bloc. He was undoubtedly thoroughly supervised by American security services from the time he stepped on American soil up until the last day of his mission. Jan Vinař was never pronounced a *persona non grata* in the USA, however, unlike many other Czech and Slovak 'diplomats'.

It is not clear when Pavlína Svobodová began to cooperate with the FBI. Since E. Munk was deported from the USA at the end of 1949, we can assume that it was before this expulsion and that she could have monitored Jan Vinař as a person suspicious of espionage since the very beginning of his diplomatic mission. If he was a spy, the American counter-intelligence service therefore had enough time to expose him, which it did not. Either Vinař did not work for the Czechoslovak secret service or he did and his cover was so elaborate that a single piece of evidence has not been found, although the Czech archives are entirely open. We have no other choice than to close this issue with *in dubio pro reo* in mind and conclude that Jan Vinař was only a diplomat.

Vinař's sister Matylda arrived to the USA before Jan Vinař had the opportunity to travel to the country. "The Beckmanns applied for a permit to emigrate to the United States of America. (...) They obtained the permit to leave Czechoslovakia in the spring and as early as 20 May 1948, Hannes, Matylda and little Kateřina arrived in New York."³⁵ It is not clear whether the siblings met in America. The times were definitely complicated on both sides of the Iron Curtain: Stalinism in Eastern Europe, McCarthyism on the other side... Matylda's marriage did not survive the emigration:

"Hannes and Matylda probably were not able to overcome the burden of their European past and they divorced in May 1955."³⁶

Why did Jan Vinař have to leave the post of first secretary of the Czechoslovak embassy in Washington so suddenly on 5 November 1951? We have not been able to find the answer in the archives. It may have been a consequence of personnel exchange given the historical context, where replacement of pre-war Communist Party members, especially intellectuals, Jews and people seemingly or really connected with the Foreign Affairs Minister Vlado Clementis, was a standard procedure. Whether it could be attributed to Vinař's professional failure has remained unknown.

4.5 The Cold War: A Journalist

When the forty-year-old diplomat returned to Prague, he had to switch from the career of a clerk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the job of a bricklayer and construction worker. He changed jobs again after a non-specified injury and became a gatekeeper at the same company. It was a step down, but compared to others who were accused in show trials and sentenced to death, life imprisonment or dozens of years in the harshest jail, Vinař's was quite a soft landing. The archives do not have much to offer on this stage of his life. He returned together with his family and instead of preparing for another diplomatic mission or aspiring to a higher post at the Ministry, his life was turned upside down. He was dismissed and his promising career lay in ruins.

The housing situation was also interesting; he stayed at the Hotel Flora, Prague 12, for about half a year from November 1951 to May 1952. It is not known whether he lived there with the family. His next address was Veverkova 25 – his own flat this time.

After Vinař became employed by Czechoslovak Radio, he filled out a "Personnel Questionnaire" which he signed on 29 October 1954 and which is a source of many interesting facts about his life after the return from the USA. The questionnaire was later updated

with various additional handwritten records concerning his professional and private life, but these were not autographed by Vinař; the document was filed at the personnel department of the employer, and the employee had no access to it, nor could he authorise any new record.

After his dismissal from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jan Vinař was hired by Konstruktiva 01, national enterprise, on Gorkého náměstí 27, Prague, on 22 March 1953 as a “bricklayer – guard”. When asked “What was the reason you left the last job?” in a personnel questionnaire, he stated: “Due to a hand injury, I could not continue to work in manufacturing and I did not want to stay in the company as a guard.” The salary at Konstruktiva was 1,100 crowns, which meant a significant decrease when compared with the previous engagement. It is a shame that the questionnaire did not ask about the reasons for the termination of the job in the USA... Vinař worked for ten months from 22 March to 21 November in manual labour jobs. This period was followed by the longest engagement with one employer in his life: fifteen years at Czechoslovak Radio (precisely, from 22 November 1953 to 21 December 1968).

When applying for the job at the Radio, he stated that “his professional qualification and successes in the hitherto work or office”³⁷ could be testified to by Comrade Gertruda Sekaninová-Čakrtová,³⁸ Comrade Ján Pudlák³⁹ and Comrade E. Novák, the director of the Evening School of Marxism-Leninism.

The first position held by Jan Vinař at the Radio was the lowest possible job of an “R1 editor” with a very low remuneration of 760 crowns. One and a half year passed and Vinař was promoted to the position of a “regional editor with R4 qualification” and more than a double salary of 1,810 crowns. Before he was sent to the mission in China, he stayed at the Czechoslovak State Spa in Jáchymov, namely the State Institute for Radiotherapy, from 22 March to 18 April 1957 with a diagnosis that is not specified in the documents.

He enrolled in the study of philosophy at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in the mid-1950s. Details are not known and he himself only mentions his studies

once, in the application to the Union of Czechoslovak Journalists dated 2 February 1955, where he mentions “I study philosophy in the distance mode”.⁴⁰

Jan Vinař put an end to his short life stage, or intermezzo, of manual labour by taking up a job at Czechoslovak Radio. A decade had passed since his first international engagement and Jan Vinař hit the road once again. This time he was headed for the East; he remained in Beijing together with his wife and daughter beginning in the year 1957. His nineteen-year-old son had remained in Prague, where, with certain difficulties, he was admitted to university. Vinař Sr. spent three years in diplomatic services in the USA; another three years were spent in the job of a broadcasting editor in the People’s Republic of China. How very different the experiences must have been!

He was accredited as a radio reporter in Beijing shortly upon arrival on 19 July 1957 and worked there until 31 May 1960. His new post required a new employment contract; the draft amendment to his contract of a Czechoslovak Radio standing rapporteur, signed on 15 July 1957, has been preserved.

As was typical of Vinař’s life, the relatively short period of peace and quiet was abruptly cut short by a disaster of which he was not guilty and which shattered him to the core. As in the previous case, an airplane was part of the tragedy. This time it was not an American military airplane, but a Soviet passenger jet. A crash over Bashkortostan took his second wife and his daughter from him. It was only due to coincidence, or rather sudden work obligations that he had to stay in Beijing and postpone the beginning of a family holiday, and thus did not fly with them. On 16 October 1958, Jan Vinař writes to his superior: “I hereby apply for a leave... comrade Nečásek was due to arrive in the People’s Republic of China at the time of my planned leave; I was instructed to stay in Beijing during that period...” His wife Emílie and daughter Zdenka died in the airline disaster the following day. “Comrade Nečásek” is mentioned in the unpublished travelogue of the Czechoslovak archaeologist Lumír Jisl, which also provides an explanation concerning the sudden work obligations of Jan Vinař in Beijing. Jisl described

Životopis:

Narodil jsem se 15.7.1914 v Praze, otec byl bankovní úředník, později ředitel cukrovarnické firmy Schoeller a spol. Mám sestru, která se vystěhovala do ciziny, rodiče jsou oba mrtví. Oženil jsem se v r. 1938. První žena byla zabita při náletu na Prahu 1945 - z tohoto manželství mám syna, podruhé jsem se oženil v r. 1946, z druhého manželství mám dceru, má žena je úřednicí ZR Pražského obchodu potřebami pro domácnost. Před válkou jsem studoval matematiku a fyziku, nyní studuji dálkově dialektický a historický materialismus na fil.-hist. fakultě KU. Po dobu okupace jsem byl 5 let vězněn v různých konc. táborech. Po válce jsem byl zaměstnán nejprve v min. informací, od r. 1945 v min. zahr. věcí, od r. 1953 u n.p. Konstruktiva a nyní pracuji jako redaktor v Zahraničním vysílání Čs. rozhlasu. Pokud se týká politické a publicistické činnosti, pracoval jsem od r. 1931 do r. 1935 v sekci mládeže KSČ, v té době jsem také pracoval /bezplatně jako redaktor t.zv. "zpravodajství pracující mládeže", které soustřeďovalo pro komunistický tisk zprávy o práci a boji dělnické mládeže. V r. 1945 jsem vstoupil do KSČ. Psal jsem jednotlivé články a poznámky do Tvorby a přeložil několik knih (Pritt: Stín pruhů a hvězd, Marion: Američtí komunisté před soudem Wall Streetu, ~~Maklan~~: společně se ženou "Genocidium" a Kahn: "Hra smrti" /vyjde letos v nakladatelství "Mladá fronta"./

V době svého zaměstnání u ministerstva zahraničních věcí jsem strávil přes dva roky na čs. velvyslanectví ve Washingtonu, které jsem také po nějakou dobu vedl jako chargé d'affaires. V r. 1953 jsem byl z ministerstva zahraničních věcí propuštěn na základě obvinění, jejichž nepravdivost byla mezitím prokázána šetřením ÚV KSČ. Po dobu tohoto šetření jsem pracoval jako zedník a později, když jsem pro poranění ruky zednickou práci nemohl vykonávat, u n.p. Konstruktiva. Nyní pracuji třetí měsíc jako redaktor v zahraničním vysílání Čs. rozhlasu, kde mám možnost využít svých zkušeností ze zahraničí.

Fig. 139 /

Jan Vinař's CV, attached to the application for membership in the Czechoslovak Journalist Association, is dated 2 February 1955. Source: *Family Archive "Heinz Wiener — Jan Vinař"*.



Fig. 140 /

Undated image of Jan Vinař, posing with young women of Yi nationality from southwest China's Sichuan province, taken during his stay as radio reporter in Beijing between 1957-1960 (Courtesy of Adela Stouilil Family Archive).

the visit to the digs in the Orkhon valley, where the first Czechoslovak-Mongolian archaeology expedition operated:

26 July 1958, Saturday

A group of Mongolian broadcasting staff together with the director of Prague Radio Nečásek⁴¹ and Brabe(ne)c. We learn the latest world news from them. They sleep in a newly built yurt.

27 July 1958, Sunday

Coverage of our expedition and its work is tape-recorded in the morning. Then my first news report from Ulaanbaatar. They also brought letters for the expedition members.

They leave for Karakorum and Khujirt after ten a.m. Then to China and Korea. A nice hike.⁴²

Jan Vinař had to remain in Beijing in July or the beginning of August 1958 in order to accompany director Nečásek during his entire visit, and therefore he could not take the leave. He applied for a substitute leave on 16 October 1958. However, the rest of his family had the air tickets purchased and it was apparent they would not travel together. The following day his wife Emílie and daughter Zdeňka die in the crash of the Soviet airplane Tupolev 104 in the Bashkir Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.

This very sad period of Vinař's life was interrupted by the 'most exotic' travel (he never used the word 'exotic' in his coverage). A visit to Tibet in the 1950s was something extraordinary. The lucky travellers both from the West and from the befriended "people's democracies" did not exceed one hundred, of whom fifteen to twenty percent were Czechoslovaks. In a way, this journey was the climax of Vinař's broadcasting work abroad, which resulted in a 150-page coverage, completed in 1960. It is an exceptionally long piece of his; he always published only shorter news reports.

As mentioned earlier, he finally left Beijing on 31 May 1960, when he was recalled by a decision of the director of Czechoslovak Radio Karel Hoffmann (reason unknown). He was on holiday in Moscow from 9

to 15 June 1960; he was due at the Radio on 20 June 1960. He maintained various positions there and was transferred to the journal *Rozhlasová práce* (Broadcasting Work) as of 1 January 1961, where he published several articles. After this six-month intermezzo, he returned to a post which was more fitting for him and where he could use both his language proficiency and experience from stays abroad. He was transferred to foreign broadcasting, department of international life, on 1 July 1961. He was promoted after six years and was appointed editor-in-chief of the French newsroom on 6 April 1967. The termination of employment in Czechoslovak Radio is dated 31 December 1968 and was concluded in his absence.

What was the pinnacle of Vinař's career after he returned to his home country? Definitely not the above mentioned Tibetan coverage. The relations between the Soviet bloc and China at the beginning of the 1960s were tense enough to prevent the publication of the text. It was not in line with the growing animosity between Moscow and Beijing, where Prague was of course obedient to the Soviet side. The pinnacle of Vinař's journalist work in Czechoslovakia was the night of 20–21 August 1968, when he provided live coverage of Radio Prague's international broadcasting of the first day of the Warsaw Pact invasion, which the normalization newspeak later referred to as "fraternal help of allied armies". This live coverage of the battle of the Radio, where tanks, lorries and cars were on fire, and people died like in 1945, was a critical point in his life and in his conviction.

He later wrote about it as a fresh emigrant to the director of International Broadcasting Czechoslovak Radio Karel Hrabal during Christmas 1968. Karel Hrabal was his direct superior, whether he responded to the letter in any way is not known. He probably did not reply, however, as he was a "reliable comrade" who supported the new direction of Czechoslovak politics. He was in favour of even greater cooperation with the Soviet Union and criticised those events of 1968 which were anti-Soviet. This is evidenced by his career as Director General of Czechoslovak Radio from 20 June 1969 to 30 June 1985.

4.6 After 1968: An Emigrant

Jan Vinař got married for the third time on 28 October 1960; he had met his wife at the Radio, where she worked as an editor. Again, he and his wife left abroad, this time not for a business trip, but forever. Jan Vinař had enough experience to know that if he did not leave in time, he might not leave at all. It must have been difficult to start a new life abroad at the age of fifty-four. Vinař knew, however, that there was no other way for himself and his family to escape the prosecution by the regime. The Prague Spring was slowly but inevitably turning into the greyness and timelessness of normalization at the end of 1968. Many people realised that the reform ideals that also had been embraced by Jan Vinař were disappearing in the chilling Soviet clench of the newly emerging “normalizers”, i.e. those Communists who condemned Alexander Dubček and supported the new leadership headed by Gustáv Husák. In his letter, he precisely anticipated further developments. Everything he had predicted came true, which brought him no joy in the Zurich exile. He would rather have been mistaken, but the fall of socialism with a human face was relentless. The idea was crushed under the Soviet tanks assisted by domestic collaborators; no space for compromise was left.

Jan Petránek, Jan Vinař’s radio colleague, remembers him in his biography:

When the Warsaw Pact invaded, he cursed all his fated disasters and said he would rather disappear from the country. He left for Switzerland accompanied by his third wife, the radio colleague who loved his charm and invincible will to work and live. It was Věra Chmelová. Before Jan and Věra met, they both had tough luck. So they thought they might break it together. And they managed it in Switzerland for a nice couple of years. They were in touch with old friends all the time. They thought of a present for me, for which I could not reproach them, although they gave me a subscription that was too expensive for me. Don’t waste your money, I wrote them. And

they answered it was peanuts. Thus, I received the monthly *National Geographic* for several years.⁴³

Apart from scarce mentions and memories of his friends and other Czech dissidents, we do not have much information about the life of Jan Vinař and his wife Věra in exile. Some of his friends remember that they both helped newcomers who left Czechoslovakia during the 1970s, including those who escaped after signing Charter 77. They were in contact with prominent dissidents, many of whom they met as colleagues in Czechoslovak Radio, like Jiří Dientsbier senior who served as Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs and vice premier of the Czechoslovak Federal Republic between 1989 and 1992 or the journalist and politician Jiří Ruml. Another Czech emigree to Switzerland, Leo Oskar Krause, mentions Jan Vinař briefly in his samizdat memoir entitled *Snad jsem nezabloudil* (Hopefully, I Have not Lost my Way...) as one of those who helped the exiled writer Vladimír Škutina.⁴⁴ Jan Vinař even translated one of Škutina’s book into German. As already mentioned, he published several translations, mostly from English to Czech, before his exile. His translation of Erich Fromm’s *The Art of Loving* was published in 1967⁴⁵ and is still reprinted today. In Zurich, he cooperated specifically with the publishing house Orell Füssli, for which he translated a biography of Josip Broz Tito from English to German.⁴⁶ Other English-German translations include a book about North American Indians⁴⁷ or about phobias.⁴⁸ A family friend, Sylva Amos, who emigrated to Switzerland slightly later got to know Jan and Věra as colleagues in Schweizerische Volksbank, where they were both employed in the early 1970s. Jan Vinař soon found a job as an editor and worked for the periodical *Weltwoche*.

Jan Vinař died of cancer on 23 September 1983 at the age of 69, without ever visiting his native country again. After 1989, Věra Vinařová decided to stay in Zurich but visited Czechoslovakia and then the Czech Republic regularly. She passed away in 2003.

After her husband’s death, Věra decided to prepare a small memory of him for a few close family friends. Since she knew how fondly he remembered his trip



Fig. 141 /

Jan Vinař with his wife Věra (sitting next to him on the right) in their Zurich flat in the late 1970s or early 1980s (Courtesy of Adela Stoužil Family Archive).

to Tibet back in 1959, she took a step for which we can only thank her. Fifteen numbered copies of his reportage from Tibet that he finished in 1960, but never had a chance to publish in Czechoslovakia, were printed as a samizdat, dated December 1983. We do not know why Věra Vinařová thought that this would be the right thing to do to commemorate her late husband, whether a certain role was played by conversations with friends and colleagues, a desire to maintain his recollections in the original form, or something

else. The samizdat publication is not accompanied with a preface or notes; there is nothing that could give us a clue about her motivation. Be it as it may, it was a great thing to type the story on an electric typewriter and publish it as one of the rare Czech samizdat texts published in the West during so-called normalization. Upon the consent of the family, to whom we would like to extend our sincere thanks, we can now present the readership with a critical edition of Vinař's Tibetan coverage.

Duplicate

Geneva, 26 December 1968

Comrade Karel Hrabal,
 director of International Broadcasting
 Czechoslovak Radio,
 Prague 12. Vinohradská 12

Dear Comrade,

By the time you have received this letter, it will be known to you or at least you will suspect I left abroad with the intention of not returning.

I assume I do not have to elaborate on the reasons for my decision. For a long time now, I have not hidden my view of the developments and prospects of our work and I have been very pessimistic. In spite of the outlooks, my decision was not easy; in the end I concluded there was no other way.

It is a terrible paradox that our country now has in charge the best group of people that we ever had, and yet they have lost any possibilities for independent action and our country is becoming a mere colony.

I do not doubt the sincerity of assurances issued by the party and government leaders from time to time; however, I realise that these assurances are based on the promises of those Soviet politicians who have broken all promises so far.

I was proud to be able to participate in the work in August and before, which apart from other things led to the failure of the first political plan of the occupants and the formation of a strong unit around our leaders' core. Unfortunately, plan no. 2 began to be put in action which is intended to use slow and steady pressure to achieve the goals that could not be achieved at a blow in August. The rats that crept into their holes in August have crept out and climbed to the top. A clear illustration is the development from November up until the December plenums. Comrade Dubček secretly visited Brezhnev in Warsaw before November, while before December the whole delegation officially went to Kiev to have the resolution approved. Kafka would have been proud of such a plot. Not a single Mr. K. but all the nation lives in a world that would be wonderful if there was not another world hid behind. This is a world where no ethical and logical principles apply and where brutal tyranny rules, poorly masked by trite phrases that are a mockery of Marxism-Leninism.

Our international broadcasting found itself in a situation where it could no longer keep the promise given in August. We will not be allowed to tell the whole truth, but we will not lie. The Radio describes only one of the worlds while it keeps silence about the other, hidden one. If that world is mentioned, it is only rarely and in hints. Thus, our message becomes a half-truth, which may be worse than a lie.

It is probably pointless to state that in these intermingling worlds, where the other one has the real decision-making power, all the promises of refraining from reprisals of those who

participated in the August uprising are worthless. It may be a question of a longer period, but when it comes, it would have been too late to leave.

I chose to leave in this way and not to wait for the planned trip to France — the reasons are obvious, I hope. I did not confide my plans to anyone at the Radio; I thought it better not to involve anyone else in my matters.

I want to emphasise that the reasons for my decision arise from the general situation and the position of international broadcasting in that situation. I have deep respect for the colleagues at the newsroom as well as its management. It was incredibly difficult to leave the country and the Radio where my wife and I considered ourselves as part of the inventory. I have reached the view, however, that there is no other option for me. I never thought of emigrating during the worst days of Novotný's government. Today's situation is different. The problems at that time were ours and had to be fought over by us. Today, it is no longer up to us to make decisions. Much broader transformation would be needed to change the situation and, in my view, such change would require many years. I experienced being a helpless prisoner of occupants in the past, and once was enough.

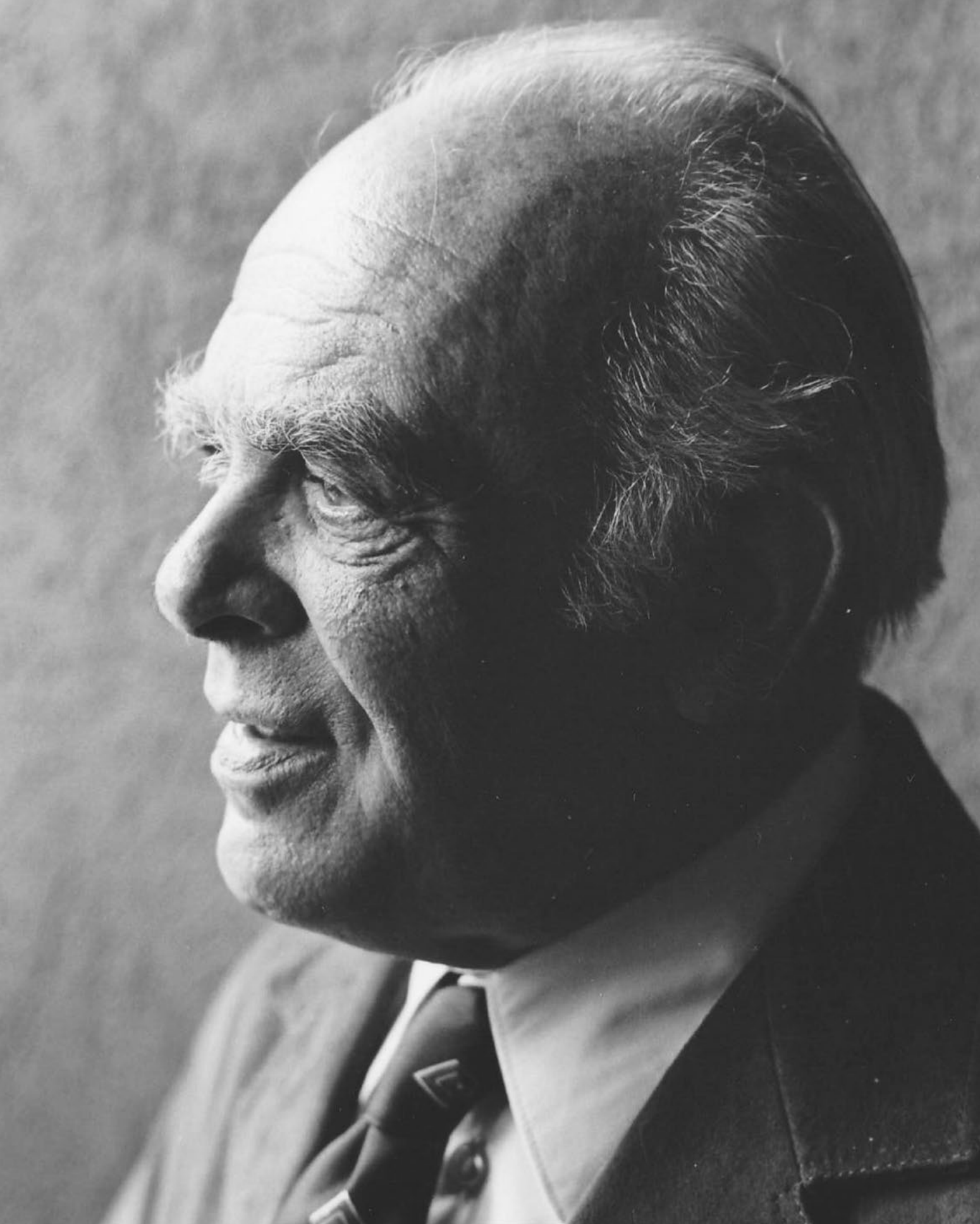
My family and I have found ourselves in circumstances that are not easy. The beginning was very difficult, but now we have an idea as how to build our new living. I will probably not stay here in Geneva and when I have a permanent address, I will send it to Prague. Until then, I can be contacted at: Jan Vinař chez Mma. L. Veselý, 7, rue du Vidollet, Geneva. The owner was incredibly kind to lend us the flat for the period of her stay in the mountains and I will ask her to forward the mail to us.

That's about it. I hope you will understand my decision. My best wishes to those who have stayed.

Jan Vinař, m.p.

► Fig. 142 /

Undated photo of Jan Vinař in the early 1980s (Courtesy of Adela Stouilil Family Archive).



Jan Vinař — biographical data

- 1914 *15 July*, date of birth
- 1920 Primary school and German public Realschule in Prague 2
- 1933 School-leaving examination
Pre-trial custody
Enrolment in the studies of mathematics and physics at the Faculty of Science of (German) Charles University
- 1935 Member of the Czechoslovak Union of Communist Youth
- 1936 Interruption of studies after nine semesters
1 October, beginning of compulsory military service, 30th infantry regiment
- 1938 *30 September*, finished his service as a reservist private following the September mobilisation
3 November, married Božena Procházková, born 1913
14 December, demobilisation, new address: Dobrovského 19, Prague 7
Resumption of studies at Charles University (Institute of Spectroscopy)
- 1939 *15 March*, birth of son Jan
August, new address: Veverkova 23, Prague 2
17 November, closure of Czech universities
- 1940 *April*, attempt of illegal crossing of the border to the Soviet Union
24 April, imprisoned. Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen concentration camps
- 1945 *14 February*, death of wife Božena, her mother, and nephew Thomas Beckmann, victims of accidental American bombing of Prague
21 April, release from concentration camp
7 June, return to homeland
1 August, employment at the Ministry of Information and Public Education as a contractual clerk
- 1946 *19 June*, second marriage with Emilie, née Váchová, born on 24 February 1921; new address: Sokolská 20, Prague
14–21 December, business trip to Great Britain
- 1947 *February*, new address: ul. A. Letenské 12, Prague
6 May, birth of daughter Zdeňka
22 September, change in name
- 1948 *1 April*, promotion to “chief ministerial commissioner”
September – November, business trip to the USA
11 October, certificate of participation issued for the struggle for national liberation
- 1949 *7 March*, employment at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a “chief ministerial commissioner”
1 June, post of First Secretary of the Czechoslovak embassy in Washington; new address: 1635 Harvard Street, Washington D.C., USA
- 1951 *5 November*, transfer to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague; new address: Hotel Flora, Prague 12

- 1952 *May*, new address: Veverkova 25, Prague (probably his own flat, since he states he “owns half of a residential building”)
- 1953 *28 February*, dismissed from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
22 March, employment at Konstruktiva 01, national enterprise, Gorkého nám. 27, Prague, as a bricklayer, later (after an injury) as a gatekeeper
22 November, employment at Czechoslovak Radio as an editor
- 1957 *22 March*, treatment at Czechoslovak State Spa in Jáchymov, State Institute for Radiotherapy
18 April, end of spa treatment
19 July, post in Beijing
- 1958 *17 October*, death of wife and daughter in a plane crash over Bashkortostan, Soviet Union
- 1959 *1 June – 1 July*, holiday in Czechoslovakia
23 July, return to Beijing
 Trip to Tibet
- 1960 *31 May*, revoked from Beijing (by a decision of Karel Hoffmann)
9–15 June, holiday in Moscow
20 June, work at Czechoslovak Radio in Prague
28 October, third marriage with Věra Chmelová, editor of Czechoslovak Radio
- 1961 *1 January*, transfer to journal *Rozhlasová práce* (several articles published)
1 July, transfer to foreign broadcasting, department of international life, Czechoslovak Radio
- 1967 *6 April*, appointed editor-in-chief of the French newsroom
- 1968 *21 August*, live coverage of the battle of Czechoslovak Radio in Prague
21 December, left Czechoslovak Radio, emigrated to Switzerland
- 1983 *23 September*, date of death

Notes:

- 1) After the war ended in 1945, Czech Jews, along with others, often changed their names from German to Czech. “Pursuant to the Resolution of the Provincial National Committee in Prague of 22 September 1947, ref. no. I-3a-13814–1947 (delivered to the Ministry of Information under ref. no. 20.032/47 pres.). This was permitted upon a request of the petitioner to use the first name and surname Jan Vinař instead of the hitherto first name and surname Heinz Wiener.” See column “16 Notes” in his Personal Service Records stored at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- 2) Quoted from the Questionnaire of University Applicant, submitted by Jan Vinař Jr. on 16 March 1958, a day after his nineteenth birthday.
- 3) Jan Vinař’s Personnel Questionnaire of 7 June 1953 (question no. 16 “Your Property Situation”).
- 4) See the Questionnaire for the Application to the Union of Czechoslovak Journalists, dated 2 February 1955, 2; day and month unknown.
- 5) See Kuzica Bronislava Rokytová, *Hannes Beckmann (1909–1977) Desava – Praha – New York* (Praha: Charles University, 2017), 121; the author does not mention the date of the parents’ death.
- 6) See the Personnel Questionnaire of 7 June 1953; date of her birth also in: Rokytová, *Hannes Beckmann (1909–1977) Desava – Praha – New York*, 144 (facsimile of a Ministry of the Interior document).
- 7) See Rokytová, *Hannes Beckmann (1909–1977) Desava – Praha – New York*, 65–66.
- 8) Jan Vinař’s Personnel Questionnaire of 7 June 1953 (question no. 12 “Full Siblings”). When asked about his current political activity as well as occupation, he wrote question marks – he did not know the answers.
- 9) Jan Vinař’s Personnel Questionnaire of 7 June 1953.
- 10) A letter written by Josef Šťastný, head of personnel records of Czechoslovak Radio, sent to the personnel department of the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics (a personnel report of Jan Vinař Jr.’s father, requested as part of the admissions procedure to the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University).
- 11) Kafka wrote to his friend Oskar Pollak in a letter of 1902: “Prague doesn’t let go. Of either of us. This old crone has claws. One has to yield, or else. We would have to set fire to it on two sides, at the Vyšehrad and at the Hradčany; then it would be possible for us to get away.” (orig. Prag lässt nicht los. Uns beide nicht. Dieses Mütterchen hat Krallen. Da muss man sich fügen oder -. An zwei Seiten müssten wir es anzünden, am Vyšehrad und am Hradschin, dann wäre es möglich, dass wir loskommen.)
- 12) See the questionnaire accompanying the application to the Union of Czechoslovak Journalists, dated 2 February 1955, p. 3. “Kostufra” was an acronym of the Student Communist Faction, established in 1922 and dissolved in 1938.
- 13) Jan Vinař’s Personnel Questionnaire of 7 June 1953 (question no. 27 “Translating and Journalism (workers’ correspondent”). See Pritt Denis Nowell, *Stín pruhů a hvězd* [Star-Spangled Shadow], trans. Jan Vinař (Praha: Svoboda, 1948); Marion George, *Američtí komunisté před soudem Wall Streetu* [American Communists Standing Trial in Wall Street], trans. Jan Vinař (Praha: Orbis, 1950); Kahn Albert Eugene, *Hra smrti: účinek studené války na americké děti* [The Game of Death: Effects of the Cold War on our Children], trans. Jan Vinař (Praha: Mladá fronta, 1955).
- 14) See the questionnaire accompanying the application to the Union of Czechoslovak Journalists, dated 2 February 1955, 1.
- 15) A letter sent by the Prague Police Directorate to the Regional Court in Uherské Hradiště on 13 July 1934.
- 16) Of interest is the fact that that the pre-printed abbreviation c.k. (meaning imperial and royal) was crossed out with a pen on the form. This indicates that sixteen years after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, its stock of official forms was still in use in the town of Uherské Hradiště.
- 17) A letter of the Prague Police Directorate to the Provincial Authority of 29 March 1934, ref. no. 106.803.
- 18) It is odd that Vinař cannot be found in the digital archive of Charles University in the section “Students of Prague universities 1882–1945”; see “Students of Prague Universities 1882–1945,” *Institute of History of CU and the Archive of CU*, accessed March 8, 2024, <https://is.cuni.cz/webapps/archiv/public/?lang=en>. This does not mean, however, that he did not study at Charles University.
- 19) The source of the data is Jan Vinař’s (Heinz Wiener’s) Personal Service Records maintained at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- 20) In Dachau, the first concentration camp for political prisoners, Jan Vinař was registered under the name Heinz Israel Wiener and the prisoner number 16690; he was included in the category “Jude; Schutzhaftling”. He was brought to the camp on

- 30 August 1940 and stayed until 5 July 1941, when he was transported to Buchenwald. See “Heinz Israel Wiener,” *Terežín Memorial: National Cultural Monument*, accessed March 8, 2024, <https://www.pamatnik-terezin.cz/prisoner/da-wiener-heinz>.
- 21) The decree establishing the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was issued by Adolf Hitler in Prague only a day later; the first Slovak Republic originated two days earlier, on 14 March 1939.
 - 22) A letter by Emílie Vinařová addressed to the admissions committee of the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University, dated 11 July 1958 and sent from Beijing. The stepmother of Jan Vinař Jr. explained to the committee certain circumstances of the applicant’s life and hoped her two-page letter would meet with a positive response. It did not. Jan Vinař Jr. was not admitted to the university in 1958 and had to commence military service. He then started his studies in 1960. The author of the letter died together with his stepsister in a plane crash three months later and it is difficult to tell whether she learned if her intercession had affected the admission or not.
 - 23) Petránek Jan, *Na co jsem si ještě vzpomněl. Privátní encefalogram našeho tak málo lidského XX. století* [What I Still remember. A Private Encephalogram of Our so Little Human Twentieth Century] (Praha: Radioservis 2014), 244. It does not really matter whether it was the third or fifth story. Vinař did not become a physician, he was a scientist with the degree of RNDr. (*rerum naturalium doctor* or doctor of science) before the name and CSc. (“candidate of science”, an older equivalent of Ph.D.) after the name.
 - 24) “The Beckmanns’ son Thomas died during an air raid of Prague on 14 February 1945.” See Rokytová, *Hannes Beckmann (1909–1977) Desava – Praha – New York*, 121.
 - 25) Rokytová, *Hannes Beckmann (1909–1977) Desava – Praha – New York*, 120–121.
 - 26) See the Questionnaire for the Application to the Union of Czechoslovak Journalists, dated 2 February 1955, 1. This “magazine of working youth” was published in Prague in the years 1930–1936.
 - 27) Her father Václav Vácha, born on 28 September 1891, worked as a nurse in Kosmonosy (probably at the well-known mental asylum), her mother Anežka, née Holasová (date of birth not known) was a housewife. Both parents were members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia before and after February 1948, see Jan Vinař’s Personnel Questionnaire of 7 June 1953, question no. 13. From the perspective of Communist officials, however, the family was not completely spotless. As he mentions in the same questionnaire (question no. 44 “Against which family members was the measure of the Action Committee of the National Front adopted?”): “My sister-in-law was dismissed from the post of a switchboard operator on the radio. I think it was a blanket measure that affected all members of reactionary parties; she never opposed the people’s democracy and now she actively works for the National Front.”
 - 28) See the record card of the Union of Czechoslovak Journalists, filled out on 22 November 1954, 1. The bottom of the card, right under the item “Travel abroad: England, USA, P.R.C., France” bears an inscription in large red letters: “Expelled on 29 June 1970”.
 - 29) Jan Vinař’s Personnel Questionnaire of 7 June 1953 (question no. 43. “Participation in the February events of 1948”.
 - 30) Karel Pacner, *Československo ve zvláštních službách. Pohledy do historie československých výzvědných služeb 1914–1989, volume III*. [Czechoslovakia in special services: Views into the history of the Czechoslovak intelligence service 1914–1989] (Praha: Themis, 2002), 71. Jan Vinař’s name is not on the previously mentioned list.
 - 31) The ambassador was Vladimír Outrata (1909–1997), a pre-war diplomat, who spent the war in London and Moscow; he was accredited in Washington in 1949. After the return to his home country, he was a professor of international law of the School of Political and Social Studies, later renamed to the Faculty of Law, Charles University.
 - 32) Pacner, *Československo ve zvláštních službách. Pohledy do historie československých výzvědných služeb 1914–1989, volume III*, 71. Jan Vinař’s name is not on the above-mentioned list.
 - 33) JUDr. Ervin Munk (11 September 1906–13 September 1986) also loyally served the Communist regime after he returned to his homeland; for instance, he was the public prosecutor in a show trial where ing. Alfréd Plocek and two of his ‘accomplices’ were sentenced to death in the spring 1951. By virtue of his office, he participated in the execution on 10 November of the same year.
 - 34) United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary. Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws (1952). Espionage activities of personnel attached to embassies and consulates under Soviet domination in the United States: hearings before the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and other Internal Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary, U. S. Senate, Eighty-second Congress, first and second sessions ... July 9, 1951; February 5 and 7, 1952 (Washington: US Govt. Printing Office, 1952), 19.
 - 35) Rokytová, *Hannes Beckmann (1909–1977) Desava – Praha – New York*, 132.
 - 36) *Ibid.*, 140.
 - 37) Jan Vinař’s Personnel Questionnaire of 7 June 1953, question no. 35.

- 38) Gertruda Sekaninová-Čákrťová was born as Truda Stiassná to the rich Jewish family of Richard and Alžběta Stiassny in Budapest on 21 May 1908. She was a member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia before World War Two. She graduated from the Faculty of Law, Charles University in 1932. From 1942 until the end of the war, she was imprisoned in concentration camps and survived Auschwitz. She worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from mid-July 1945 and from 1949 to 1957 as the First Deputy of the Minister. She was elected to the parliament in 1964 and was known for voting against the treaty on the temporary stay of Soviet troops in the territory of Czechoslovakia on 18 October 1968 together with three other deputies. During the “period of normalization”, she was deprived of all offices, expelled from the Communist Party, and was one of the first signatories of Charter 77. She died on 29 December 1986.
- 39) Ján Pudlák was born on 14 August 1924 in Papín u Humenného and died on 14 September 2011, Třebotov, district Prague-West. He actively participated in the Slovak National Uprising in August 1944. After the war, he joined the Ministry of Information, like Jan Vinař, in June 1945, where he worked in the Department of Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. He moved to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with Jan Vinař in March 1949; he held various posts there, including head of the department responsible for relations with English-speaking countries, including the USA. He was later appointed ambassador to Italy and France, and Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister. He retired in December 1988.
- 40) See the Application to the Union of Czechoslovak Journalists, dated 2 February 1955, 1.
- 41) František Nečásek was the central director of Czechoslovak Radio and Czechoslovak Television (from 1 April 1954 to 31 December 1957).
- 42) A not yet published travelogue of Lumír Jisl from his stay in the Mongolian People’s Republic in the summer of 1958.
- 43) Petránek, *Na co jsem si ještě vzpomněl. Privátní encefalogram našeho tak málo lidského XX. století*, 244–245.
- 44) “Oskar Leo Krause: Poslední žijící humorista” [Oskar Leo Krause: The Last Living Humorist], *Pozitivní noviny*, February 19, 2008, accessed March 8, 2024, <https://www.pozitivni-noviny.cz/cz/clanek-2008020038>.
- 45) Erich Fromm, *Umění milovat [The Art of Loving]*, trans. Jan Vinař (Praha: Orbis, 1967).
- 46) Fitzroy Maclean, *Josip Broz Tito: ein Kampfgesährte berichtet*, trans. Jan Vinař (Zürich: Orell Füssli Verlag, 1980).
- 47) Richard Erdoes, *Büffeljagd und Sonnetanz: die Prärie-Indianen gestern un heute*, trans. Jan Vinař (Zürich: Rüschtikon, 1980).
- 48) Tony Whitehead, *Angst ist heilbar: Phobien, was sie sind, und wie man damit vertigo wird*, trans. Jan Vinař (Zürich: Rüschtikon, 1981).

Czechoslovakia in Tibet in the 1950s

Luboš Bělka

(transl. Martin Špírk)

Tibet has always been a problematic destination for foreigners, with strict entry rules keeping the number of visitors, especially Westerners, to a minimum. After the military invasion of Tibet by the People's Liberation Army, which began in September 1950 and ended in October 1951, the possibility of visiting this 'snow-land'¹ became even more difficult. At the end of 1950, the last Western visitors, Heinrich Harrer and Peter Aufschnaiter (two Austrian mountaineers who, as refugees from British captivity in India, were granted special permission to stay in Lhasa) left Lhasa – several years passed without a single visitor from Europe or the USA. The last Englishman Reginald Fox, a radiotelegraphist who worked for the government in Lhasa for many years, married a local woman, and had four children with her, left Tibet together with them. There was also a second radiotelegraphist who had worked for the Lhasa government since 1948 (he was in the service of the Tibetan army, to be precise), Robert Ford. The Chinese invasion caught him in Chamdo, the capital of Kham, where he was captured by the Chinese in the autumn of 1950, accused of murdering the pro-Beijing lama Getak and imprisoned for five years.²

Harrer departed before the arrival of the PLA in the late 1950, a few days before the fourteenth Dalai Lama also left Lhasa and went to the vicinity of the Tibetan-Indian border in the Chumbi Valley, to a place called Dromo (Chin. Yadong), a short distance from the capital some three hundred and twenty kilometres away. The Dalai Lama's trip lasted two weeks and was

physically demanding due to the time of year. He departed Lhasa in secret, and his court prior to this took care of the financial and material security:

With remarkable foresight, he (the Dalai Lama) took with him gold dust, gold bars and silver from his personal treasury. This wealth was then transported on yaks south into Sikkim for secret safekeeping. There it rested for eight years, until the escape of the Dalai Lama to India in 1959. Sold in Calcutta, it proved crucial for the survival of Tibetans-in-exile and their governance.³

The Dungkar Monastery, where the Dalai Lama set up a temporary residence and eventually stayed for more than half a year, was situated not far from Dromo. He felt safer near the Sikkim border than in Lhasa and remained there from January to August 1951. Rinchen Sadutshang, the Dalai Lama's interpreter and a fourth-grade official who was part of the Dalai Lama's entourage, describes the circumstances of the trip in his memoirs as follows:

On 19 December 1950, His Holiness left Lhasa under complete secrecy accompanied by his family members, high lamas, and a large entourage of officials. About two hundred and fifty soldiers of the Drapchi regiment, along with their two commanders who were both fourth-rank officials, escorted His Holiness and his entourage to the Chumbi Valley.⁴

On 16 July 1951, the newly appointed Chinese Commissioner and Administrator of Civil and Military Affairs of Tibet, General Zhang Jingwu, visited the Dalai Lama in Dungkar and urged him to return to Lhasa. It was his first personal meeting with a representative of the Chinese armed forces, but not his last. Many similar sessions followed, both in Lhasa, Beijing and elsewhere. The Dalai Lama last met with Chinese generals before going into exile in March 1959. At that first meeting, he made up his mind to come to Lhasa alone with his entourage, not accompanied by Chinese soldiers and arrived in the Tibetan capital on 17 August 1951. The fourteenth Dalai Lama describes the circumstances of his return to his residence as follows:

General Zhang [Jingwu] then asked me when I intended to return to Lhasa. ‘Soon,’ I replied, not very helpfully, and continued to act as aloof as possible. It was obvious from his question that he wanted to travel back to Lhasa with me so that we could enter the city together, symbolically. In the end, my officials managed to avoid this and he set off a day or two after me.⁵

Three years later, in the summer of 1954, the fourteenth Dalai Lama left for a nearly year-long trip to Beijing and other places in the PRC. This time, General Zhang Jingwu accompanied him all the way from Lhasa to the capital, and there was no further discussion on the matter. The situation had obviously changed.

Regarding Czechoslovak-Tibetan relations, they were established relatively soon after the Chinese troops occupied Lhasa. The Czechoslovaks Vladimír Sís and Josef Vaniš were the first foreign visitors to visit the capital of Tibet, entering on 29 November 1954.

In the 1950s, Czechoslovakia carried out a total of four trips to Tibet, two separate, i.e. only Czechoslovak, and two within the framework of the international cooperation of journalists in Beijing. Each of these expeditions had a different character; each had its specifics and was unique. They also had several common points. Their primary shared characteristic was the fact that they were always official friendly enterprises, with

the Chinese side playing a major role, who handled all the travel arrangements – from logistics, provisions, and content of the trip to communications with the Tibetans. The Czechoslovak side, for example, could not directly arrange audiences with the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama, nor could it negotiate with the Tibetan government (*Kashag*) for permission to enter important temple complexes such as Jokhang, Potala, Norbulingka, monasteries around Lhasa, namely Drepung, or the outlying Panchen Lama Monastery Tashilhünpo. Everything was mediated and the Chinese administration had a perfect view of literally every step of every foreign visitor, including Czechoslovak citizens on Tibetan territory.

During these four stays by the Czechoslovak visitors, there were many meetings between them and the locals, from simple villagers to high religious as well as political leaders. None of these meetings took place without a Chinese presence. They were guests in Chinese Tibet, and none of them had published a single text anywhere that in any way thematised or problematised this fact. The Chinese narrative about Chinese Tibet was taken up without the slightest hesitation. It is also symptomatic that none of the eighteen visitors spoke Tibetan, and none of them – except Augustin Palát – had a background in Chinese or Asian studies.

There were dozens (certainly not hundreds) of visitors to Tibet in the 1950s, with whom the Tibetan government and the Dalai Lama had no previous experience. They did not know how to handle the new situation with these foreigners. This recurring presence of outsiders from Central and Eastern Europe was nothing significant, however, in contrast to these turbulent times. The young Dalai Lama was still discovering who the Chinese were in Tibet and, together with the divided *Kashag*,⁶ was wondering how to cope with it. There was still a government office in Lhasa in charge of foreign relations, but it was not designated for foreigners from Europe. Palát described this situation in a 1956 confidential report as follows:

On 18 September, the leadership of the expedition was received by the deputy director of the Foreign

Office, which was now part of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was actually a separate Tibetan Foreign Ministry until the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet. The head of this office is now a Chinese, while the deputy head, effectively interpreting the views and opinions of all local Tibetan authorities, is a Tibetan, lama Liushar.⁷

Although at the time of writing this cited report, the author had already been a cultural attaché at the Czechoslovak Embassy in Beijing for two years (he was a relatively experienced diplomat and a trained sinologist), Palát does not mention the name of the Chinese head of the office – unlike the name of his Tibetan deputy Lama Liushar. Even more remarkable is the observation that Lhasa actually had a separate Ministry of Foreign Affairs until its takeover on 9 September 1951. The name of the Chinese head of the foreign office in Lhasa, for example, can be found in the memoirs of Rinchen Sadutshang, who describes the details of the establishment of the new foreign relations office, where he himself served as an official and interpreter, as follows:

One of the early and most significant demands that the Chinese made was to merge our foreign ministry with the Chinese foreign department, which they had established about a year after their arrival in Lhasa. As a consequence, on 6 September 1952, our entire office and staff moved to Sunghpu House, where the Chinese had set up their foreign department. Thus, our foreign ministers became colleagues of Yang Gongsu, who was the Chinese official in charge of their foreign department. There were seven Chinese staff, including a Tibetan from Ba in eastern Tibet who acted as translator and six of us Tibetans. Among us was Phuntsok Tashi Taklha, brother-in-law of His Holiness, on whom we relied to translate for us, despite the Chinese always trying to insist on the use of their own translator. Yang Gongsu did not seem to be an experienced diplomat. He knew some English but was not fluent, whereas his wife, who was also on the staff, could express herself quite well in English.⁸

This direct participant who served in the original Tibetan Foreign Ministry in Lhasa for several years described in this way the conditions for creating the new Foreign Department in 1952. What did the situation look like, however, in 1956 through the lens of a Czechoslovak diplomat? Based on the visit of Palát and the leadership of the Czechoslovak automobile expedition in the already four years existing foreign department in Lhasa, the following passages were written:

A similar procedure for filling the posts of individual administrative bodies, i.e. the appointment of the director and his deputy alternately by Chinese and Tibetans, is standard even in other cases. From the Chinese side, this reception was attended only by the head of protocol and the Chinese-Tibetan interpreter. This being the first time in contact with a Tibetan administrative official, the expedition leaders exchanged white *khatags*, symbols of mutual respect and friendship. This formality is still of great importance in Tibet today, and only after its completion does the Tibetan side feel obliged to maintain friendly relations with the one with whom it has exchanged the *khatag*. By organising this reception, the representatives of the Communist Party Work Committee of China made it clear that the official meeting with a Tibetan dignitary is necessary for further contact with Tibetan representatives. Lama Liushar is highly educated, insightful, quick-witted, and indeed perfectly informed about the current situation and its developments everywhere in the world. According to Chinese officials, he is also a beneficial source for them in any dealings with the local aristocracy, as he is well aware of the importance of Tibet's current position in the People's Republic of China and the significance of Chinese assistance for the further development of Tibet. In agreement with Lama Liushar, a plan of tours of the most essential sights in Lhasa and an official visit to the Dalai Lama was also prepared.

It is clear from the above-quoted report that the new Chinese administration in Lhasa tried to follow some

of the Tibetan traditional courtesies, for example, the Tibetan government, the *Kashag*, was in place up until the March 1959 uprising (albeit adapted to the new conditions). The original Tibetan and the new Chinese administrations had been looking for a way to adjust their coexistence under new conditions. Prior to the uprising, there was an apparent effort on the Chinese side to maintain old rituals such as the passing of *khatags*, which may have been a tough morsel to digest for certain revolutionary cadres accustomed to radical practices, as they saw this policy as a concession to outmoded customs.

5.1 First visit — 1954: Vladimír Sís and Josef Vaniš

Who were the very first visitors to Tibet under Chinese rule? It may surprise many, but it was two Czechoslovaks, the film director Vladimír Sís and a cameraman and photographer Josef Vaniš. Both working as employees of Czechoslovak Army Film, they documented the completion of the construction of the China-Tibet Highway from Ya'an to Lhasa. They were the only foreign visitors to Tibet in 1953–1954 and gave public testimony about their trip on film and in text.

With Beijing's consent, there were certainly more foreigners in Tibet at that time. These people were Soviet, mainly military advisers, but also, for example, geologists. Sís and Vaniš mention the name of one of them in their diaries — Koncharov (or Goncharov); they met with him on 21 and 22 June 1954 in the Kham town of Chamdo. Karel Beba also wrote about Soviet specialists (but without mentioning their names) as follows:

Soviet experts, knowledgeable about the Pamir Mountains and other high peaks, helped design the construction's technical procedure, choose the most suitable route and personally advised on the most difficult segments. Well — and the roads have been in service since December 1954.⁹

Augustin Palát, in his confidential report also mentions a reception in Lhasa where they met with Soviet

geologists: “On 17 September 1956, a reception was held by the Work Committee in honour of the expedition, which was also attended by four Soviet geologists who were just completing their several-week stay in Tibet.”¹⁰ The names of the Soviet geologists, but no other details are mentioned here.

After the first Czech visitors to Lhasa, sixteen more Czechoslovaks arrived in the capital of Tibet, over the course of four expeditions organised between 1954 and 1959. An extended absence consequently followed until the first half of the 1980s, when Tibet was partially opened to the world, including visitors with Czechoslovak passports.¹¹ Vladimír Sís and Josef Vaniš worked in the area with the Tibetan population for about nine months in 1954–1955, mainly to document the construction of the first southern military strategic road from China to Lhasa. They published a series of reports about it, accompanied by original photographs. Upon their return, Vaniš and Sís issued several photographic books in Czech and even in foreign languages (Artia publisher), intended for export to the West. At the turn of the 1960s, there was a rift between Beijing and Moscow. Czechoslovakia sided with the Soviet Union in this quarrel, and China (and Tibet in particular) suddenly either ceased to be written about altogether, or just in a negative way. It is therefore not surprising that the latest book on Tibet by the author duo Sís and Vaniš from this period is dated 1960.

The silence lasted for thirty years, and only after the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe were both authors able to return to the subject, this time in unrestrained conditions. Their texts were therefore different from the socialist-enthusiastic tone. The first opportunity presented itself in February 1990. At the invitation of the President of the still Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (which officially ended on 29 March of the same year), Václav Havel, the fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, paid a historic state visit. It was the second time he met the first Czechoslovak visitors to Tibet. The first time was on 18 August 1954 in the East Tibetan town of Chamdo,¹² and now both Vaniš and Sís had the opportunity to reunite with the Dalai Lama after thirty-six years. Although Czechoslovakia

had already become free, their one-hour colour film documentary completed in 1956 under the title *Cesta vede do Tibetu* (The Road Leads to Tibet),¹³ which also features the eighteen-year-old Dalai Lama, did not make it to the cinema or television even in the 1990s; the problem being the vintage socialist-enthusiastic conception of this Czechoslovak-Chinese film. The film only appeared in limited distribution, primarily in art theatres, by the spring of 2019.

It is a great pity that, in the already free times after 1990, neither Vladimír Sís nor Josef Vaniš provided a more comprehensive and detailed testimony about their remarkable journey. They both devoted themselves to exhibitions of photographs and, in 1997, published in cooperation with the then director of the Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague Josef Kolmaš and the Norwegian scholar Per Kvaerne, a large colour photographic publication *Vzpomínky na Tibet* (also available in English as *Recalling Tibet*), where the best images were selected. In reality, however, it was probably only a fifth to a quarter of Vaniš's entire photo archive, and most of the images remain unknown to the public today. The above-mentioned book is undoubtedly unique, and also included some previously unpublished photographs. Unfortunately, it does not contain a more detailed narrative of Sís and Vaniš about their wanderings, which, in the new political and social conditions of a free society, could have been published without censorship (or self-censorship). It was also the last of their joint publishing ventures.

They could openly portray, for example, the significant limitations from the Chinese side in their travel and filming or the difficult conditions regarding food and drink (they were accompanied the whole time by Chinese soldiers and ate with them, experiencing the harsh reality – and because of ideological reasons they could not write about it). This went so far that, at one point in the middle of their journey through Tibet, they were told by the Chinese escort (during their entire stay, they had only managed one encounter with Tibetans without Chinese supervision) that the expedition would not be able to reach Lhasa after all and that

that entry had been denied, despite the fact that this was the goal and highlight of the entire venture. Eventually, even this unfortunate decision was reversed. In December 1954, they began their roughly month-long stay in the “place of the gods”, this being the literal translation of this Tibetan toponym. All this previously unknown and unpublished information can be found in their detailed travel journals, preserved in the family archives.

5.2 Second Visit – 1955: Karel Beba

The second Czech visitor to the ‘snow land’ was the journalist Karel Beba, accredited as a correspondent of Czechoslovak Press Agency (Československá tisková kancelář or ČTK) in Beijing. He was the only person from Czechoslovakia to participate in the first expedition of foreign journalists to Lhasa, which Beijing organised in September and October 1955. This journey and promotional trip was arranged for a dozen leftist and pro-Chinese journalists from eight countries (both from the Soviet Bloc and the major Western countries) and was carried out in off-road vehicles along the recently opened Ya’an-Lhasa Highway, the only road accessing Central Tibet from the east. This was the same road whose construction was documented by Vladimír Sís and Josef Vaniš in the film mentioned above, books and reports, as well as in unpublished extensive travel diaries. Apart from Lhasa (where the fourteenth Dalai Lama received the expedition), the journalists also visited southwestern Tibet. They were welcomed at the Tashilhünpo monastery by the tenth Panchen Lama, the second highest-ranking lama in the hierarchy of the Tibetan monastic order of the so-called Yellow Hats, or Gelug.

As with almost all the participants in the expedition, Beba wrote a book after his return, which was published in 1958 with the somewhat ironic title *Tajemný Tibet* (‘Mysterious’ Tibet), he used quotation marks to indicate that there was nothing mysterious or mystical in a country building socialism; everything was public, evident and apparent – Tibet had lost its mystery).

This book belongs to the travelogue genre for a wider readership and contains many of the authors' black and white photographs. It is fair to say that the publication is extremely readable, sometimes even amusing,¹⁴ and provides a wealth of varied insights not only from Lhasa but also from other places which Karel Beba had visited, such as the second-largest Tibetan city, Zhikatsé. Such a slightly relaxed and sometimes sarcastic text could only have been published in Czechoslovakia before the outbreak and suppression of the uprising in March 1959 in and around Lhasa. There was no longer room for light or ironic distance in the local media, both in print and radio or television. The times were already grave, so the form of reporting on Tibet had to correspond.

Karel Beba was also the only Czech who visited Tibet twice in the 1950s. In addition to the book mentioned above and several travel reports in both the Czech and Chinese press, he was also engaged in the Tibetan issue in 1959, when he was (together with another journalist, Alois Svoboda, who visited Lhasa in 1956) an expert advisor in a twelve-minute propaganda film *Zrada v Tibetu* (Betrayal in Tibet, which depicted the March uprising in Lhasa from a strongly pro-Chinese perspective.

5.3 Third visit — 1956: Czechoslovak lorries

Beba's second journey was also by land, but this time from another possible direction along the road leading from China to Lhasa — from the north, out of a town called Gormo,¹⁵ along the so-called Qinghai Northern Highway leading from Xining to Lhasa. In 1956, the Czechoslovak company of foreign trade called Motokov, in cooperation with the Embassy in Beijing, organised an expedition, which was also attended by three journalists — in addition to Karel Beba, they were Alois Svoboda and Jiří Ployhar. In total, there were fourteen participants, in addition to the journalists mentioned above, consisting of drivers and technicians. The diplomat Augustin Palát, who

acted as an interpreter in Chinese and English, also played an important role.

The main objective of this bold venture was to burden test the lorries: three brands of Tatra 111 manufactured in Kopřivnice, two Praga V3S (military three-ton special) produced between 1953 and 1990 in Prague and Bratislava and one Jawa 350 motorcycle. The expedition was led by Stanislav Černý, Motokov's permanent representative in Beijing, and was a great success, including several records. In the third and most challenging section from Gormo to Lhasa, measuring 1,218 kilometres with an altitude difference of 2,480 metres and the highest point over 5,200 metres above sea level, the Czechoslovak lorries drove for only four days, while the average driving time was twice as long. As the expedition leader Stanislav Černý reports:

Also, passing the stage in four days is mainly an achievement of the drivers who, to accomplish the task at hand with superhuman effort, sat behind the steering wheel every day for many more hours than our laws allow, which no Chinese driver could endure.¹⁶

It was a major test of people and technology, and both passed with flying colours. In addition to Beba's already mentioned book, about twenty reports were published by the three journalists, often with the original photographs in a wide variety of Czechoslovak and foreign newspapers and magazines. The leader of the expedition, who was not a journalist himself, also published several articles about the journey. Jiří Ployhar also made two short colour films as an original film documentary. He called it *Velká zkouška* (The Great Test) and *Zápisník z Tibetu* (Notebook from Tibet). Thus, in 1956, there were three original colour documentaries with Tibetan themes made in Czechoslovakia. These are unique worldwide because no other country — except for the PRC — had made a single documentary film in Tibet between 1951 and 1959.

5.4 Fourth visit — 1959: Zbyněk Málek and Jan Vinař

The main objective of the latest international journalistic expedition was to show the world that the “anti-people uprising of the feudal lords and enslavers” of March 1959 had been entirely suppressed, the culprits were punished, and Tibetan society was once again moving in the right direction towards building Maoist socialism. In total, eighteen foreign journalists participated in the expedition from ten countries, which lasted from September to October 1959, and two Czechoslovak journalists were part of it. The mission of this journey was in a way anticipated by Zbyněk Málek, one of the participants, when in his article for *Rudé právo*, he quoted the words of the high Tibetan politician Ngaphö Ngawang Jigme from an interview in Beijing:

The facts of the rebellion are becoming clearer and clearer. Reactionaries started it with outside help. Moreover, as often happens to reactionaries, in this case, they have misjudged the situation. Instead of so-called independence and strengthening their exploitative regime, they achieved the opposite through their revolt. The rebellion exposed the falsity of the nationalist-religious slogans of the rebels. It also showed how little support they had in Tibet itself and how little response the nationalist appeals of the reactionaries had. Some people abroad might have wondered how the Chinese People’s Liberation Army, despite its numerical weakness, crushed the rebellion in Lhasa in just two days. However, it was not surprising to us. It only confirmed the facts I have just stated. Tibet was and is part of China, and for us Tibetans, there is only one possible way: forward, never backwards.¹⁷

This quoted text was written before the visit to Tibet based on Ngaphö’s talk on the occasion of a press screening of the film *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*, which took place in May 1959. Concerning the film, Z. Málek wrote the following:

A documentary about the background to the Tibetan feudal rebellion and its suppression is running in Beijing cinemas these days. There are images on the screen of the armed provocation of the former Tibetan army units, their preparations for the attack and the first devastating forays against the Chinese authorities and patriotic Tibetans. Only when it was no longer possible to stand idly by, when, at the behest of the reactionary feudal lords, the rebels attacked in full and open force, did the Chinese People’s Liberation Army take up arms in defence of the motherland, in defence of the interests of the Tibetan people.¹⁸

A film is one thing, of course, while a personal experience is something else entirely. Thus, the *People’s Daily* decided that it would be appropriate to organise a journalistic visit on the spot, in Lhasa and its surroundings, to show and prove to foreign journalists what the situation was like there and to confirm the Chinese interpretation of the uprising and the events that preceded it. Two journalists from Czechoslovakia side participated: Zbyněk Málek from *Rudé právo*, who published several articles in this newspaper in the autumn of 1959, and Jan Vinař, a radio reporter accredited in Beijing. Vinař sent several radio reports to Prague, and the main result of his trip was the long reportage *Tibet – země, kde lidé dohánějí celé tisíciletí jedním skokem* (*Tibet – A Country Where People Have Leapt a Thousand Years Forward*).

Zbyněk Málek was born in Pilsen to a middle-class family on 16 February 1922. His father, Ludvík Málek, was a tax official; his mother was originally a teacher. In 1928, he started attending the municipal primary school, and in 1932, his father died after a second stomach operation. The family misfortune continued two years later when his mother also died, having caught scarlet fever from him. Thus, a boy not yet ten years old became a complete orphan. He had a six-year-old sister, Anna, and their mother’s two older aunts took in both. The elder of the two great-aunts died in 1936, so the younger one, Albína Sequensová (the retired headmistress of the town school), took care

of the two orphans until adulthood. Málek graduated in 1942 from the T. G. Masaryk Real Gymnasium in Pilsen, called the Czech State Real Gymnasium during the Second World War because the name of the first Czechoslovak president was tabooed during the German occupation. It was not much better, however, after the war, as this educational institution was renamed in 1951 to Real Gymnasium on Lenin Avenue. The school could only finally return to the original name from the 1930s in 1990.

After the war, Málek worked as a publishing editor and aspired to a career as a journalist. On 1 April 1949, he applied to join the Union of Czechoslovak Journalists. From the application form, we learn that he was married at the time, without children, and lived in Prague 2, Řeznická Street 17, which was the address of the hall of residence where he and his wife probably lived. The admissions committee recommended his application on 4 May, and he received membership on 1 October 1949. He states here:

After a short job of a few months as an administrative clerk, which I took up after graduation, I was posted to Germany, to Breslau. I was there from December 1942 until January 1945, when I managed to get across the Protectorate border at night with others. I was then deployed once again as an auxiliary worker at the Rudolf company in Pilsen, where I stayed until May 1945. I started my undergraduate studies in June at the Faculty of Arts in Prague, from which I graduated this year, where I am preparing for my doctorate. Politically: from 1945, I was a member of the Social Democratic Party, which I left after its Brno congress and applied to join the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, of which I have been a member since December 1947.¹⁹

Interestingly, Málek does not specify a particular field of study at the university in any of his CVs. Immediately after his graduation in 1949, he joined the military basic service but mentioned, that his health was poor. As of 1 November 1948, Málek was

a full-time editor of the magazine *Svět sovětů* (World of Soviets), the press organ of the Union of Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship). In the questionnaire of the Union of Czechoslovak Journalists (dated 4 May 1951), one remarkable fact is recorded. In response to question no. 47, “Who is one of your relatives abroad?” Málek stated: “Olga Stará, cousin, New York, wife of the Czechoslovak attaché to the United Nations”. It can, therefore, be assumed that Mr. and Mrs. Jiří and Olga Stará met with Jan Vinař and his family in the course of their work duties, as well as at social events of Czechoslovak diplomats at the foreign mission in the USA. Málek’s wife Věra, neé Krapková, worked as a radio broadcaster, so it can be expected that she must have known her radio colleague Jan Vinař.

Málek joined the foreign section of *Rudé právo* on 15 September 1955, and, like Jan Vinař, travelled to Tibet in August and September 1959 as a foreign correspondent. Whether he operated in China long-term (like Vinař) is not clear, but his stay lasted at least half a year, and his primary purpose was certainly not to visit Lhasa. He published at least eight reports in his homeland media (*Rudé právo*), which was the press organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and, therefore, the most crucial Czechoslovak newspaper that expressed the official position and opinions of the party leadership. From a research point of view, it is certainly interesting to find out what he wrote about Tibet. What were his themes, and how were they different from the others? Do his reports provide anything new from Jan Vinař’s reporting? An essential difference between the two journalists, of course, or rather the picture they provide of Tibet, is the genre and timing. Vinař’s coverage is a continuous text, divided into fourteen chapters of varying length, which was written in 1960, therefore with a certain time gap. In terms of content and overall interpretation of the situation in Tibet in 1959, their texts concur and advocate a Chinese understanding and explanation of the historical events of the last years.

Málek's Tibetan reports, compared to Vinař's text, are, concise and up to date. The first was published on 1 October 1959, on the tenth anniversary of the PRC's national holiday, and was preceded by two more of his texts with Tibetan themes, which were published before the expedition to Lhasa. The first appeared on 29 May 1959 in *Rudé právo*. It was an interview with the highest-ranking Tibetan, "one of the leading figures of the leftist section of the Tibetan feudal lords and once commander of the Tibetan troops in the Chamdo region, Vice-Chairman and General Secretary of the Preparatory Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region", Ngaphö Ngawang Jigme. The interview was given just before he departed for Lhasa, and among other things, expresses Beijing's official position at the time towards the fourteenth Dalai Lama:

Asked about the Dalai Lama's fate, Ngapo said: 'The fate of the Dalai Lama, the conditions in which he lives today and his future are a cause for concern. Based on my conversations with him, I know that he was an advocate of progress. The fact that he left Tibet is itself evidence that he has been snatched away. Some people say that the Dalai Lama is entirely free. However, we believe that he is not free; otherwise, he would undoubtedly have found his way back to his homeland. If he could break free from his present surroundings, he would indeed return, as before, to stand with the Tibetan people and participate in the realisation of reforms. However, we must not forget that it is surrounded. If the Dalai Lama returns, the future is with him; if he does not return to his homeland, then in my opinion, there is no future for him.'²⁰

Notes:

- 1) Tibetans themselves often refer to their homeland as the "land of snows", Tib. "Khawachän" (*kha ba can* ཁ་བ་ཅན་), or "Gangjong" (*gangs ljongs* གངས་རྫོང་ས་).
- 2) For more details, see Robert Ford, *Wind Between the Worlds: A Westerner's Life in Tibet* (New York: David McKay Company Inc., 1957) or Robert Ford, *Captured in Tibet* (Hong Kong: University of Oxford, 1990).
- 3) John Heath. *Tibet and China in the Twenty-first Century: Non-violence versus State Power* (London: SAQI, 2005), 97-98.
- 4) Rinchen Sadutshang, *A Life of Unforeseen: A Memoir of Service to Tibet* (Somerville: Wisdom, 2016), 154.
- 5) Gyatso, *Freedom in Exile: The Autobiography of the Dalai Lama*, 67.
- 6) From the very beginning of the occupation of Tibet by the PLA, a section of the Tibetan government was in favour of direct or covert cooperation with the Beijing administration.
- 7) In the original "Liu Xia"; in English the name is transliterated as Liushar, it is the Chinese version of the Tibetan name Neushar (*sne'u shar* སྡེ་ཤར་ཤར་).
- 8) Sadutshang, *A Life of Unforeseen*, 152-153.
- 9) Beba, "Tajemný" *Tibet*, 103.
- 10) See "Důvěrná zpráva pro Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí v Praze o cestě československé automobilové expedice do Tibetu" [Confidential Report for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague about the Czechoslovak Automobile Expedition to Tibet], reference number 5786/56 – Dr. Pa/Pa., 21 pages of typescript, dated 23 November 1956. The document is part of the personal file of Augustin Palát, card no. 16, located in the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. It is published with the permission of this institution.
- 11) The first known Czech visitor to Lhasa during this period, who gave her testimony, was the sinologist Hana Tříšková. She published her reports under her maiden name, see Hana Kešnerová, "Na střeše světa," [On the Roof of the World] *Svět v obrazech* 18 (1986): 6-9; "Kumbum," *Lidé a země* 6 (1986): 269-273; "Cesta do Lhasy," [The Road to Lhasa] *Nový Orient* 41, no. 8 (1986): 231-233; "Nebeský pohřeb," [The Sky Burial] *Magazín 100 + 1* (1987): 40-41.
- 12) As Alexander Norman states in his biography of the Dalai Lama: "On his arrival in Chamdo, on 19 August, the Dalai Lama was welcomed by a large crowd of local Tibetans and two Czech nationals, one a photographer, the other a journalist." In a footnote he added: "These were Josef Kolmas and Jan Vanis. The story is from Vanis, via his nephew, also Jan, who kindly shared with

me the transcript of his uncle's recollections.”, see Alexander Norman, *The Dalai Lama: An Extraordinary Life* (Boston – New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2022), 140–141. It is important to clarify here the only reference in Western literature about this encounter. The meeting was not actually attended by Josef Kolmaš (this Czech, recently deceased father of Tibetan studies, never made it to Tibet in the 1950s due to unfavourable circumstances) but by Vladimír Sís. The name of the second attendee does not fit either – it is not Jan, but Josef Vaniš. The name of his nephew Jan Vaniš, also a cameraman and a photographer is correct, however, he would not disclose to Norman the wrong information about Josef Kolmaš.

- 13) There was also a Chinese version of the film with a different edit of scenes and commentary, titled “Happy Road to Lhasa” (*Tongxiang Lasa de xingfu daolu* 通向拉萨的幸福道路).
- 14) This fact can be illustrated by the following story with a denouement after almost seventy years: “There was a swift invitation to dance the following evening, and from that point on, there was no travel stop where local officials only immediately invited us to dance along with the welcome. There was a time that we had an American colleague we cursed sincerely [it was Israel Epstein, who was a “passionate dancer” and provoked these dance parties on the way from Ya’an to Lhasa in September 1955], especially after hours of particularly arduous travelling, when every vein in our body was crying out for a sleeping bag, and the call to dance came instead. He and the ceremonialist Döring were dancing powerhouses who danced to various music: Chinese, Tibetan and – Czech. Yes, even Czech music – if the music in question can be called music. To my unimaginable horror, at one such party, an ambitious brass band played – *Čtyři páry bílých koní* (Four Pairs of White Horses)! They performed it with gusto and an oriental tone. I did not dare to ask how this abomination got into an innocent little town in the lap of the Tibetan forests. I feared, knowing the kind willingness of our hosts, that the interest thus manifested would result in the *Čtyři páry bílých koní* never leaving us for the whole of Tibet. Luckily, it passed; it turned out that the Russians in our group thought it was a Polish piece, the Poles thought it was German, the Germans thought it was American (like *Vyvalte study!* [Roll Out the Barrels!]), the Anglo-Americans thought it was Viennese, and the Chinese thought it was Tibetan.” See Beba, “*Tajemný*”*Tibet*, 99. K. Beba must have known the answer to the question, however, about the origin of the musical abomination because he knew he was only the third Czechoslovak visitor to Tibet. Thus the ones who left that deep musical scar in East Tibetan Chamdo, where the dance took place, were Vladimír Sís and Josef Vaniš, who were in the area in 1954. In their very detailed unpublished travel diaries, both often describe these much-loved dance parties attended by the local population and Chinese servicemen and servicewomen. They do not, however, mention that they taught the local brass band the song *Čtyři páry bílých koní*; the diaries are not that detailed.
- 15) Tib. *sgor mo* སྐར་མོ་; Chin. *Ge'ermu* 格尔木; better known by its Mongolian name as Golmud.
- 16) Stanislav Černý, *Československá automobilová výprava do Tibetu. Závěrečná důvěrná zpráva* [The Czechoslovak Automobile Expedition to Tibet. Final Confidential Report] (Motokov Delegation Beijing, November 9, 1956), 10.
- 17) Zbyněk Málek, “Rozhovor s Ngapo Ngawang – Jigme ‘Pro nás Tibeťany je možná jen cesta vpřed’”, 3.
- 18) Ibid.
- 19) See the brief biography of Zdeněk Málek, subsequently attached on 15 November 1949 to his application to the Union of Czechoslovak Journalists, which he submitted on 1 April 1949.
- 20) Málek, “Rozhovor s Ngapo Ngawang – Jigme,” 3.

First and second international journalistic expeditions: 1955 and 1959

Luboš Bělka

(transl. Martin Špirk)

The differences between the first and second journalistic expeditions to Tibet in 1955 and 1959 were due to historical circumstances as well as the logistical possibilities of China at that time. The first expedition took place in the sixth year of the existence of the People's Republic of China. It was permeated by an atmosphere of strengthening cooperation between the Chinese and Tibetan sides when the disputes were still more or less latent, and neither side was particularly interested in drawing attention to them. Perhaps the most significant controversy leading up to the Lhasa uprising in March 1959 was the Dalai Lama's concession to the Beijing government when, on 27 April 1952, he accepted the forced resignation of the two ministerial co-chairs of the Kashag, the lay Lukhangwa and the monk Lozang Tashi. Both were behind a six-point petition expressing opposition to China's policies in Tibet and demanding the withdrawal of the Chinese People's Liberation Army. The reaction of the Chinese authorities was overwhelming, with both named as agents of imperialism and conspirators against the people's government.¹

The autobiography of the fourteenth Dalai Lama offers an interesting account of the situation. Tenzin Gyatso, who was not yet seventeen years old at the time, recalls the spring of 1952 as follows:

However, despite new laws prohibiting opposition to China, notices began to appear in the streets denouncing the presence of the Chinese forces. A popular resistance movement was formed. Finally, a six-

point memorandum was drawn up and sent directly to General Chiang [Zhang Jingwu] listing the people's grievances and demanding the removal of the garrison. This infuriated him. He suggested that the document was the work of imperialists and accused the two Prime Ministers of leading a conspiracy. Tension mounted. Thinking that they could bypass Lozang Tashi and Lukhangwa, the Chinese began to approach me directly. At first, I refused to receive them without the two men being present. But when on one occasion Lozang Tashi said something that particularly inflamed him, Chiang actually moved as if to strike my Prime Minister. Without thinking, I ran between the two men, yelling at them to stop at once. I was terrified. I had never seen adults behave like that. Thereafter, I agreed to see the two factions separately.²

Both the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama spent almost a year touring China shortly before the first journalistic visit in 1954–1955 (the two met for the first time in Potala on 28 April 1952, the Panchen Lama having turned fourteen two months earlier). Mao Zedong personally invited both high religious and political leaders. The primary purpose of this long journey was to acquaint the two hierarchs with how socialism was being built, win them over to the ideas of the new modern world of industrialisation, and show them the way to a bright communist future. Beijing hoped the visit would further attach the two monks to its social progress path and implement

socialist transformations in Tibet. There was a plan to build, over a short period of time, a society towards a classless organisation, where there would be no masters or slaves, and where individual nations and nationalities would live together (as Zbyněk Málek wrote) in peace and harmony:

In these weeks and months, Tibet is bidding farewell to the past forever, its people bidding a tearless goodbye to the terrible, unbelievable oppression that has been a heavy burden on them for ages. The scent of newfound freedom and the joy of today and all tomorrows were present everywhere throughout the month we spent among the Tibetan people.³

And this great future, paradoxically, is still envisioned as a common project of the working people, the Tibetan nobility, and high religious hierarchs. The paradox was that in other countries that followed the path of Stalinist socialism, led by the Soviet Union, religion and the aristocracy were quickly eliminated by the new system once the communist party established its power.

In 1955, the first sporadic local revolts against the Chinese presence in Kham had already begun to appear, but they did not yet have the intensity they would have a few years later. Proof for this statement is that a convoy of off-road vehicles with journalists and their escorts travelled smoothly along the route that had been taken before them only by Vladimír Sís and Josef Vaniš in 1954. The cause of the local outbursts of discontent, that turned into armed action by the Khampas, was the introduction of so-called democratic reforms. Under this name, social changes were implemented at the lowest level (i.e., villages or individuals) towards collectivisation, communisation, and expropriation. It was therefore about building a new society according to the Chinese model, which would contradict points 10 and 11 of the Seventeen-Point Agreement.⁴ This treaty did not apply, however, to the Tibetan areas under the administration of the Chinese provinces of Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan, so it was not a breach of the agreement *sensu stricto*.

How the reforms (introduced in Tibet immediately after the suppression of the uprising in the spring of 1959) were endorsed by the Tibetan leadership cooperating with Beijing can be found in the following sentences published by Zbyněk Málek at the end of May 1959, just before he visited Tibet. These are quotations from the aforementioned interview given by Ngaphö Ngawang Jigme:

Ngaphö discussed the first reforms the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region would undertake. This year, for example, for the first time in Tibet's history, the crops will be given to the peasants who grew them. It will be the land that belonged to the former local government and where the local rulers sided with the rebels. It concerns about ten percent of the former serfs. The procedure in other parts of Tibet has not yet been negotiated in all its details, but it is already certain that the policy to be followed by the reforms will be essentially the same as that towards the national bourgeoisie in other parts of China. All of this means that it will be a policy of buying off those feudal lords who have not betrayed, not joined the rebellion, and thus imperialism. The working people of Tibet are receiving manifold help these weeks, chiefly in the form of loans and the fact that the soldiers of the Chinese People's Liberation Army have put their hands to work in the fields to complete in time the agricultural work which the revolt has delayed by a fortnight. Over the last few days (as Ngaphö told us), there have been reports from Tibet that the first peasant mutual aid groups and cooperatives have begun to be formed there.⁵

The second and last journalistic expedition, which took place in 1959, the tenth anniversary year of the new Chinese People's Republic, was transported to Lhasa by air from Xining. Cars were used only for travelling in and around Lhasa and multi-day trips to Zhikatsé and the Lhoka area,⁶ south of the capital. Whether the reason for the choice of air travel was fear of possible attacks by the remnants of the rebel troops against foreigners or, in contrast, the desire to boast of

the growing possibilities of air travel to Tibet cannot be ascertained today. The journalists themselves did not think about it, or at least did not write about it in this fashion. In Tibet, they were always accompanied by Chinese military personnel and only on routes where it was assured that they would not encounter any of the last scattered rebel groups.

An exciting and not fully explored element of both journalistic tours were the meetings with the highest representatives of religious and political life in the 1950s, namely the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. In the summer of 1955, the fourteenth Dalai Lama and the tenth Panchen Lama were back at their residences in Lhasa and Tashilhünpo after returning from almost a year in China. In September and October, they hosted foreign journalists to formal but unconventional audiences, who then reported about them and the entire atmosphere in Tibet in their articles and books with optimism and without any hint of criticism. There was no reason for it, and in the late summer and autumn of 1955, it seemed that the path to socialism in Tibet was slowly and cautiously being paved from the Chinese side. Even some of the reforms contained in the Seventeen-Point Agreement were postponed to a later date so that the Tibetan population could better prepare for them. The situation was far more critical, however, than the journalists portrayed it.

How were these audiences different from the past, before the PRC's annexation of Tibet? The political and historical conditions under which the Dalai Lamas' meetings with foreigners played a significant role. The thirteenth Dalai Lama Tupten Gyatso (*thub bstan rgya mtsho*, འཇམ་དབྱེར་འཇམ་ལོ་མོ་) died in 1933 at the age of fifty-eight and met during his lifetime with foreigners repeatedly and under various circumstances. During his first exile in 1904–1906, when he left the country before Lhasa was occupied in the summer of 1904 by British expeditionary troops led by Colonel Francis Younghusband, he met in Mongolia, for example, the famous Russian – and later Soviet – traveller and explorer Pyotr Kozlov. In 1908, when the thirteenth Dalai Lama was staying at Kumbum Monastery in Qinghai, he also met the American diplomat in China, William Woodville Rockhill,⁷ for

the first time. The meeting took place on June 19 at an important Chinese Buddhist site called Five Terraces Mountain (Chin. *Wutai shan*) in Shanxi province and the second meeting was a few days later. Thus, Tibet opened up to a Western power of its own accord for the first time in its history, while the contacts with the British during and after the aforementioned military expedition, which was only short-lived, were forced. Rockhill reported the negotiations enthusiastically to his President, Theodore Roosevelt, but no political consequences or international diplomatic action arose.

During his second exile, the thirteenth Dalai Lama escaped from Lhasa due to the Qing military invasion to Tibet in February 1910 and went to British India via Dromo to Kalimpong. He continued here to meet with foreigners to an even greater extent, and eventually, even after his return to Lhasa, he received important British diplomats and officials up until his death. In the first year of exile in 1910 in Darjeeling, he met Sir Charles Alfred Bell,⁸ a British political official who, like Rockhill, spoke fluent Tibetan. The two men remained friends with the thirteenth Dalai Lama up until the end. Rockhill died in 1914, and in Bell's case, the Dalai Lama's death on 17 November 1933, ended the friendship.

All these personal contacts were of a different nature from those of his successor, the fourteenth Dalai Lama, who was enthroned eight years later, coincidentally on the exact anniversary of his predecessor's departure on 17 November 1950. The audience during which the Dalai Lama received the British delegation at Norbulingka on 13 February 1940 (on the occasion of his first enthronement) is described in detail by Sir Basil John Gould,⁹ the British representative in Sikkim. Gould describes the interior to the smallest detail, mentions all the people present, especially the government and clergy representatives, and pays attention to the refreshments and the presentation of gifts; making special mention of the pedal car and the tricycle.¹⁰ The Dalai Lama was not yet five years old, so it is to be expected that he was more interested in children's wheeled vehicles than in a golden clock with a singing nightingale. He is known to have had,

however, a fondness for various machines and mechanical toys since childhood. Sitting on an elevated throne, he had to endure a period of time before he could personally try out such valuable gifts for himself. In any case, this was different from the kind of audience that first took place fifteen years later, when the formal part given by protocol after a while turned into a part less formal.

The key difference from the past was the status of the guests in 1955, these being leftist journalists brought to Lhasa under military protection by the Chinese administration. The formal rules and the audience protocol had changed radically from the past: there remained a ceremonial greeting with bows and the handing over of *khatags*, the exchange of gifts, and formal welcoming speeches. The Dalai Lama no longer sat, however, on a high throne at the highest point in the room but, together with the guests at the table, all on the same level. After the welcoming part, there was a lively discussion with journalists, who behaved as their craft dictates – asking questions, writing down the Dalai Lama’s answers in their notebooks, and taking photographs. Interpreters were present from both the Tibetan and Chinese sides.

Ceremonial *khatag* shawls are used to express courtesy not only to men but also to the gods. We appointed Martin Döring, Beijing correspondent for ADN and Neues Deutschland, as the master of ceremonies for our journalistic expedition. Due to his impressive grey-haired appearance, he also became our doyen. When visiting temples and sacred places, his task was to present *khatags* to the statues of the most important deities. It was not easy and required a certain sportsmanship. The *khatag* had to be rolled into a ball, thrown to unfurl in flight and descend like a cloud to the god’s hand or on a perch designed for that purpose. The difficulty was that some of the statues reached heights of ten, twenty or even thirty feet, and great skill and a good eye were required to throw the *khatag* correctly; if it fell short or nearby, it was a disgrace and an insult.¹¹

At some events, however, only Tibetans interpreted, this being the case, for example, during the audience given to journalists by the 96th Ganden Tripa Tupten Künga.¹² Karel Beba noticed the interpreter, his dress and his behaviour more than the monk himself:

Sadu Rinchen, our translator, who still wore the ‘civilian’ Tibetan dress, i.e. a khalat and hat, as previously described, wore his official dress for this visit: a red flowing ceremonial robe and a ridiculous felt yellow bowl on his head, which was fastened to two little pegs on the top of his head. Attire like that was prescribed for an official of his rank, as introduced in Tibet during the Manchu Qing dynasty. This young Tibetan, entering the room, bowed his forehead sharply to the ground in a movement of the most profound reverence before the Ganden Tripa, who sat on a low throne. At first, he translated everything that was said in an uncomfortable bending forward motion and answering Ganden Tripa with *la-re* (yes). He strangely sucked in the air, as is prescribed, so that the breath of an ordinary man would not touch a higher being. [...] Only after a long while, did our friend Rinchen relax, especially given Ganden Tripa’s kind demeanour. However, although translating technical religious terms was certainly highly laborious, and Rinchen is a hefty smoker, he did not dare to even think about a cigarette. When outside, therefore, he smoked two in one go.¹³

Karel Beba, who met with the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama in Lhasa and Tashilhünpo in 1955 and 1956, provides a vivid account of what audiences with the highest hierarchs of Tibetan Buddhism were like. He experienced four such ceremonial receptions at the highest level. This is how he described the Dalai Lama’s first audience on 28 September 1955,¹⁴ which was attended by a dozen foreign journalists accredited in Beijing:

In Lhasa, our audience was spoken of as a bit of a sensation. It was the first time in the history of Tibet that the Dalai Lama had ever given a hearing to a group

of foreign journalists, or if you like, a high priest of the Lamaist Church held a press conference. [...] The questions were not easy – they were asked by journalists writing for the progressive press published in this and that world camp, each from the point of view of his own paper. The Dalai Lama answered calmly and carefully in an unusually deep voice; the sonority of the bass is characteristic of the Lamaist priesthood, and the choral prayers of the monks in the dimly lit temples are truly captivating. With a short haircut and modern glasses, the young high priest in a red monk's toga clasped his slender fingers and opened them again with calm, thoughtful movements. He answered our questions in the soft, raspy cadences that Sadu Rinchen,¹⁵ a product of Indian schools, deftly translated into English.¹⁶

The aforementioned “Sadu Rinchen” was Rinchen Sadutshang.¹⁷ He was one of the few Tibetans who (thanks to his education in Kalimpong, India, at St. Joseph's Convent and in Darjeeling at St. Joseph's College at North Point, both leading educational institutions belonging to the Catholic Church) had a perfect understanding of English and Hindi and had visited India in the service of the Tibetan government before the time in question. He was also present as an interpreter at the signing of the Seventeen-Point Agreement between the PRC and Tibet on 23 May 1951 in Peking. Unfortunately, he does not mention this meeting with ten foreign journalists anywhere in his memoirs. He did, however, publish a photograph showing both the fourteenth Dalai Lama and himself and seven of the ten journalists who participated in the famous first audience. None of the other participants made mention of it, nor did the Dalai Lama himself devote a single line in his autobiography *Freedom in Exile* to this “first ever press conference”. The same is true of his first autobiography, *My Land and My People: Memoirs of the Dalai Lama of Tibet* (New York: Potala Corporation, 1962). The photograph depicting Rinchen Sadutshang was published by the Soviet journalist Vsevolod Vladimirovich Ovchinnikov, who visited Tibet in 1955 and returned there in 1990.

It shows Rinchen Sadutshang talking to a man in a Tibetan officer's uniform, and the caption states, “Our guide, Sadu Rinchen, talks to the commander of the Dalai Lama's personal guard”. It does not, however, mention the location or the name of the commander – it was Norbulingka, and the unnamed person is the Dalai Lama's brother-in-law, the husband of his eldest sister Tsering Dolma, named Püntsock Tashi Taklha (*phun tshogs bkra shis stag lha* ཡུན་ཚོགས་བཀྲ་ཤིས་སྐྱེ་བ་ལྷ་མོ་; 12 October 1922 – 9 June 1999).

At the end of the audience on 28 September 1955, photographs were taken together and only four have been published. The first was released in 1955 in an Italian communist newspaper; the second was published by Ovchinnikov two years later; the third was published by Rinchen Sadutshang in 2016; and the fourth by the Italian historian Chiara Cione a year later.

The first picture mentioned above was published in 1955 in the Italian communist newspaper *l'Unità*.¹⁸ It shows, from left to right, Ovchinnikov (a Soviet citizen), Martin Döring (an East German citizen), the Italian Franco Calamandrei, the fourteenth Dalai Lama, the Englishman Alan Winnington, Vadim Borisovich Kassis (a Soviet citizen), Israel Epstein¹⁹ and the Italian woman Maria Teresa Regard. It is only by comparing it with another published group photograph that it can be seen that the first image is a cut-out from a larger photograph, which also shows two journalists on the left – the Czechoslovak Karel Beba and the Pole Marian Leon Bielicki. It is not clear why they were removed from the picture, but given the layout of the newspaper *l'Unità*, where the text and the picture appeared on the front page, one might assume that the reason was purely technical; the photograph was simply too large and had to be reduced in width. Ovchinnikov published the complete picture;²⁰ the only one missing is the Frenchman Marius Magnien. He might not have been there because he took the picture himself and dedicated it to at least Calamandrei and Ovchinnikov.

In his book about his visit to Tibet, however, Magnien also published a photograph of the audience, not from the exterior, but from the interior. It shows the Dalai Lama, with the author of the book sitting next

to him, and two Tibetans and one European (probably Marian Leon Bielicki), but Magnien does not mention their names. All five participants are seated at a small round table with a white tablecloth, several refreshments, and flowers. Description: “Author during a conversation with the Dalai Lama (September 1955)”.²¹

The aforementioned Rinchen Sadutshang published the third known photograph.²² The caption reads: “A group of journalists from Eastern Europe with the Dalai Lama at the Norbulingka Palace, 1952.” This entry needs to be corrected on two counts – first, it was not in 1952, and second, it was not (exclusively) journalists from Eastern Europe. Pictured are, from left to right: Regard, Beba, Kassis and Ovchinnikov, Döring, Calamandrei and Bielicki. The remaining three journalists (Epstein, Winnington and Magnien) missed this photoshoot for an unknown reason.

The fourth known published photograph differs from the previous ones in that it does not show the fourteenth Dalai Lama, and the picture could have been taken on a different occasion than the audience day. It is the only picture, however, where all ten journalists are together; otherwise, someone is always missing. The only known photo of them all, but without the Dalai Lama, was published by the historian mentioned above, Chiara Cione, in 2017.²³

In 1956, the fourteenth Dalai Lama once again held an audience for foreign visitors to Tibet, this time three times. In all cases, these were automobile expeditions – Hungarian, East German and finally Czechoslovak. All three expeditions took place at the same time interval – the reason was the wish of the Chinese organisers that the Central and Eastern European visitors from the “Camp of Peace and Socialism” could participate in the largest modern celebration, namely the seventh anniversary of the founding of the PRC, which was held 1 October 1956. That was the only thing they formally had in common. The expeditions were prepared independently, and although these countries were friendly, they involved a rivalry. All three states were genuine competitors, for these expeditions were supposed to demonstrate that Hungarian, East German and Czechoslovak lorries could cope with the particularly harsh

conditions of the Tibetan plateau throughout the year. As an outcome, contracts were to be concluded for large deliveries of these vehicles for civilian and military purposes in the following years. None of this came to pass, however, with all three European states siding with Moscow in the Sino-Soviet quarrel.

Regarding the Hungarian expedition, one published photograph has survived, showing a group of eleven Hungarian drivers and other expedition members, and in the middle – as in all similar photos – is the fourteenth Dalai Lama.²⁴

Apparently, no such picture was published from the East German expedition. The photographer Eva Siao Sandberg and her co-author Harald Hauser were the only foreign visitors to Tibet before 1959 to obtain a foreword from the fourteenth Dalai Lama for their book, symbolically dated 1 October 1956.²⁵ Siao Sandberg was one of the few visitors, along with Karel Beba, Israel Epstein (who was not on the 1959 tour) and Alan Winnington, who visited Lhasa twice, first in 1956 and again in 1959. Whether Hauser also participated in the 1959 press trip is still being determined.

Several shorter and longer published texts, mainly memoirs written by Tibetans, cover the time of the foreign expeditions in Lhasa in the 1950s,²⁶ but there is no mention of them in any of those (except for the publication of one photograph). In contrast, participants of the expeditions themselves wrote more than a dozen books (not to mention articles and reports), and an audience with the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama (before 1959) was always mentioned. There is consequently an apparent discrepancy in the content of the two narratives.

Why did the Tibetan memoirs not mention these six visits? Moreover, why does the fourteenth Dalai Lama not mention his meeting with the first foreigners from Europe after a four-year gap, namely with Vladimír Sís and Josef Vaniš, anywhere in the texts published in English before 1990?²⁷ The reason is in all probability that Tibetans in the 1950s clearly understood the difference between Western visitors to Lhasa in the past, i.e., when the PLA had not yet occupied Tibet, and visitors from the days of occupation. They were not

the sort of guests that the Tibetans invited themselves or who were approved to enter the country. On the contrary, they were friends of the Chinese who had come with them and were outside the immediate Tibetan control. For many of the Tibetans, they were a painful reminder of the new order, which consisted of, among other things, the fact that it is not the Potala or Norbulingka (Dalai Lama) or Jokhang (*Kashag*) who grants entry permits to foreigners. On the first entry visas to Lhasa, valid until 30 January 1955, with numbers one and two in the Czechoslovak passports of Sís and Vaniš, there is no single Tibetan letter; everything is in Chinese characters.²⁸ Moreover, not one of those Czechoslovaks who were in Tibet in the 1950s even made an effort to learn Tibetan, not to mention master it. The only Czech Tibetanist then, Pavel Poucha, came closest to Lhasa in 1957 when he stayed briefly at Labrang Monastery.²⁹ He never received permission from the Chinese administration to enter Central Tibet despite repeated requests.

They were guests of those who came to Tibet between 1950 and 1951 as uninvited guests; the journalists were Communists or at least communist sympathizers. Furthermore, this, despite the young fourteenth Dalai Lama's certain understanding and interest in socialism and Communism,³⁰ was not something of any interest or attraction to Tibetan Buddhists. They understood the situation; the new masters had invited their friends to their country and wanted the Tibetans to welcome and be friendly to them. Welcoming a foreign visitor arriving in peace is a natural part of Tibetan cultural traditions, and Tibetans had no previous experience with this new type of guest. By the end of the 1950s, a variety of people had come to Lhasa or Tibet, but they were undoubtedly not representatives of the "Camp of Peace and Socialism". There were some efforts, as the Soviet Union was interested in establishing relations with Lhasa before 1950, but in the end, all Bolshevik attempts to infiltrate Lhasa in order to forge new relations failed.³¹

Up until the 1950s, the tradition of Russian-Tibetan relations was symbolised by the person of the Buryat high lama Agvan Dorzhiev, the teacher of the thir-

teenth Dalai Lama, who was a Russian subordinate.³² The Soviet visitors to Tibet did not subscribe, however, to these traditions; their mission was to build cooperation on new ideological foundations, being representatives of the "Camp of Peace and Socialism".

The first visit in 1955 was meant to show how the new was being built on the ruins of the old, how a unique social experiment (a term no journalist has ever used) was being carried out, namely the leap from feudalism to socialism on the roof of the world with Chinese help. It was all based on the idea that there was a specific Tibetan model that would involve representatives of the secular nobility, on the one hand, and the high clergy, on the other, in building socialism. Both the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama and the Pakpalha³³ were supposed to be part of building socialism in Tibet under the leadership of the Communist Party of China.

The purpose of the second visit was to confirm the objective of the first and add to it the fact that the recent uprising of the nobles and the manipulated Tibetan army had been successfully suppressed and eliminated. The Chinese saw the uprising as anti-people, reactionary and without the majority support of ordinary Tibetans. Even a portion (about a third) of the nobility and the religious hierarchy, led by the tenth Panchen Lama, opposed it. According to the official interpretation, the people of Tibet welcomed the suppression of the uprising by the Chinese People's Liberation Army and were successfully continuing on their path, which could not be threatened by the episode of spring 1959. This had, on the contrary, made it possible to see who was in the right and who was in the wrong about Tibet. The Dalai Lama's role was still open at this time; he was in exile in India, but the Chinese authorities were still hoping for some reversal, and thus his escape was still interpreted as a kidnapping by reactionary nobles and mainly anti-people clergy.

An essential part of the Chinese narrative was the interpretation from a class perspective, where the uprising was seen within the context of a class struggle. Zbyněk Málek accentuates this concept, for example, in a text he published before he visited Lhasa as follows:

Fate was in the hands of the reactionaries – not the fate of Tibet, but of themselves. They ordered their twenty thousand armed men to shed their own blood and that of their own compatriots for the sake of their predatory aims and their foreign helpers and thus sealed their fate. [...] Attempts to pass off the rebellion as a struggle for Tibetan autonomy are also futile. After all, the rebels broke the treaty and violated it. The same is true of the slogan of *independence* for Tibet, this millennium-old and inseparable part of China. The reactionary feudal lords and nobles wanted to defend their privileges by rebelling, keeping the people in servitude, and preserving the worst form of exploitation. The motto of independence is a false flag waved to attract anti-communist supporters to their side overseas.³⁴

The title of Vinař's reportage *Tibet – země, kde lidé dohánějí celé tisíciletí jediným skokem* (Tibet – A Country Where People Have Leapt a Thousand Years Forward), in a way paraphrases the title of a popular book at that time, *V zemi, kde zítra již znamená včera* (In a Land, Where Tomorrow is Already Yesterday), by the Czech communist journalist Julius Fučík. The report was written before World War Two based on Fučík's repeated visits to the Soviet Union. He was not alone, however, in reporting 'first-hand' on the "first country of socialism in the world", for in the 1920s and 1930s, more travellers of diverse backgrounds provided different, often wholly opposite, accounts.

There was, on the one hand, enthusiastic writing about the joyous building of a new socialist society, and, on the other hand, reports of terror and famine, political purges and the elimination of actual and potential critics after Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin ultimately usurped power in 1929. Problems, mistakes and shortcomings were seen in the Soviet Union by advocates of both camps of media image makers. Admirers of the Stalinist way interpreted them as childhood diseases, the by-product of an otherwise pure and honest endeavour, all according to the slogan "When the forest is cut down, splinters fly." Mistakes are fixable and part of the building ethos, and "who does not make

mistakes?" The other side, however, saw it differently, as a systemic error, as crimes that could not be justified by anything, not even lofty ideals. It is thus not a correctable condition, but a pathological change in society.

In the spring of 1956, the Soviet leader Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev exposed Stalin as a mass murderer and criminal in a so-called secret speech at the 20th Party Congress in Moscow. Unlike some dissidents and Western critics of the Soviet path to socialism, however, he believed that the Stalinist period could be overcome, the victims rehabilitated, and that amends could be made. Mao Zedong rejected Khrushchev's criticism of the cult of personality and saw it as a threat to the unity of the working people with the Party leadership and a dangerous playing with fire; he himself was at that time co-creating his own cult very intensively and thoughtfully, and any criticism in this direction was for him unacceptable. Khrushchev even went so far in his optimism as to theorise that his generation would be able to reach the ideal state of building Communism. History, however, proved the critics right, and the Soviet Union finally collapsed at the beginning of the last decade of the last century. These were the tendencies in making the media images of the countries that embarked on the path of socialism. The fundamental difference between the early periods in the USSR and the PRC lay in who was and who was not allowed to report on these countries at that time.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Western journalists and writers who were open critics flowed into the Soviet Union quite freely, and the only restriction that applied to them was that their books and articles were not allowed to be published in the first country of socialism. In the West, however, there was no such restriction, and both media images were freely available to the reader; all they had to do was choose. None of this applied to the USSR, where freedom of speech was restricted from the start and where it was viewed as one of the building blocks of the "dictatorship of the proletariat." The situation was different in China in the 1950s, where, perhaps learning from the Soviet experience, the party and state authorities strictly regulated

foreign journalists and other visitors to the country. In addition, the Soviet Union led no war in the 1920s and 1930s. In the 1950s, the situation changed, and in the first significant confrontation after World War Two, ‘Chinese volunteers’ clashed with US-led troops under the aegis of the United Nations on the Korean peninsula. Relations between the PRC and the U.S. had been strained since the founding of the PRC itself on 1 October 1949, and it took a full thirty years before the U.S. officially recognised the PRC on 1 January 1979, by severing diplomatic relations with the Republic of China (i.e., Taiwan).

The absence of mutual diplomatic relations did not amount, however, to the absence of journalists from capitalist countries in Beijing. The British journalist David Alan Chipp opened the Beijing bureau of the Reuters news agency in 1956, for example, and remained in that position until 1958.³⁵ Due to the length of his stay, he could not participate in either journalistic expedition. The French Agence France-Presse was the second world agency to establish itself in the PRC. The circumstances of its establishment in Beijing were somewhat more dramatic:

Agence France-Presse’s early representation was less stable. The first AFP correspondent, Jacques Locquin, was expelled in November 1957 for ‘having contempt for China’s laws and meddling in the country’s internal affairs’, notably for providing sanctuary to a Chinese woman, the sister-in-law of a French friend, who had been denounced during the Anti-Rightist Movement.³⁶ AFP’s Director of Information Fernand Moullet, considered a ‘safer pair of hands’, filled in for a few months before the arrival of Jacques Jacquet-Francillon in October 1958.³⁷

In addition to the major news agencies, some Western non-communist newspapers also attempted to gain accreditation. Canada’s national newspaper, the Toronto-based *Globe and Mail*, was the first to succeed in 1959. Even in this case, however, it was not an easy matter:

“Following two years of negotiations, the Peking bureau was opened by Frederick Nossal, a 33-year-old

Australian who had worked for the newspaper in Canada some years earlier but at the time of his appointment was with the *Melbourne Herald*. Nossal’s Peking sojourn lasted only eight months before his de facto expulsion and it was not until 1964 that the *Globe and Mail* reopened its Peking bureau.”³⁸

Most of the accredited Western journalists were strongly left-leaning. Every journalist, like every foreign visitor, was subtly checked (sometimes quite conspicuously and openly) by the relevant secret service authorities. Beverley Hooper describes the situation as follows:

Despite their ‘foreign comrade’ status, the communist correspondents were still foreigners and subject to bureaucratic controls like other Western correspondents.³⁹

As concerns Tibet, the control there was absolute, and Beijing did not allow anyone who was a critic of Maoism, however potential or hidden, to visit the ‘snow-land’. Only the most loyal, the most ardent, and above all, the most reliable comrades (and literally a few comrade women) were allowed to go there – accompanied by armed forces members – in an organised and unobtrusive manner. By rigorously selecting left-leaning foreign journalists, not to mention Chinese ones, Beijing ensured that Tibet would be written about in the relevant foreign media in an uncritical and admiring spirit; titles like *Tibet – A Country Where People Have Leapt a Thousand Years Forward* surprised no one. *The Land of Stopped Time*,⁴⁰ the contradictory title that Vladimír Sís and Josef Vaniš gave to their book only a few years earlier, was, from the point of view of the Chinese media image, also acceptable. It refers to the *old* Tibet, a land sinking into the past. Time in Tibet had raced unstopably forward, taking a great leap towards a happy future that was inextricably linked to a return to the arms of Mother China. And why was this transformation taking place in a historic leap? It is directly related to the ‘fashion’ of the time, to the campaigns in the PRC led by the respected Great Helmsman Chairman Mao.⁴¹

The media image of Tibet in the 1950s,⁴² created by journalists and writers who had visited the country (intended to give the portrayal a touch of authenticity), was successful externally, as the example from Italy shows. The Italian ethnographer, anthropologist and photographer Fosco Maraini (who in 1937 and 1948 took part in expeditions led by the famous Italian Tibetologist Giuseppe Tucci) wrote of his compatriots who reached Tibet seven years later the following:

Franco Calamandrei and Teresa Regard, who visited Tibet late in 1955, came upon calm, serenity, and the flexible integration of the past with the present. 'Situated in the general framework of the development of China towards socialism, the Tibetan headache becomes a model of how revolutionary tactics and strategy may in the name of progress invoke the very objects that are destined to vanish in the name of progress.' The many photographs they took on their visit show us a Tibet still almost unchanged, in which the juxtaposition of lamas and aristocrats with experimental stations for agronomy and animal husbandry, of religious festivals and schools and analytical laboratories, attest to the steps taken towards a well-judged reform.⁴³

Maraini did not personally experience Tibet after 1951; his visits took place before the occupation of the PLA, and it could give the impression that he readily accepted the image of the 'new' Tibet offered them by two communist journalists who had actually served in the Italian anti-fascist resistance during World War Two. They had fought against the regime of which the leaders of the expeditions in which Maraini participated were a part – Giuseppe Tucci was an active supporter of Mussolini's Asia policy.⁴⁴ It should also be added that Fosco Maraini, who published his book for the first time in 1951, sincerely tried to portray the country and its people factually and realistically without idealising or negatively evaluating the society, culture and religion he encountered in old Tibet.

On closer reading, however, one finds that Maraini does not so willingly accept the picture of Tibet por-

trayed by Calamandrei and Regard. This fact is evidenced, for example, by the passages where he repeatedly writes that almost everything he and Tucci explored on their journey was later destroyed. In the 1998 preface, he openly criticises the Cultural Revolution as follows:

In fact it was a 'barbarian revolution', a savage regression into a past at its most ferociously destructive of human kind; vandalism, mindless desecration, mob-rule, violence, cruelty were the daily fruits of a blind and stupid fanaticism.⁴⁵

The fact that few published texts⁴⁶ deal with the two journalistic expeditions to Tibet in a scholarly manner is evidenced by the absence of complete lists of participants in any of the sources or secondary literature. The present state of knowledge is that of the thirty or so participants in 1955, the names of all ten foreign journalists have been traced; the rest were Chinese. For the second expedition in 1959, sixteen to seventeen of the eighteen foreign journalists have been identified. There is a relative abundance of primary material for both expeditions, i.e., their reports, books, etc. No scholarly study has been published that deals, however, with individual expeditions or their comparisons, nor have the media images produced due to these missions been analysed. This text attempts to fill this gap, at least in part.

The fact that none of the journalists who attended the tours ever and anywhere provided a complete list of the names of the colleagues present is only seemingly surprising. When the texts were written in the 1950s, espionage was at its peak on both sides of the Iron Curtain, so what could be kept secret was kept secret. Lumír Jisl's published travel diary⁴⁷ gives one example that is *pars pro toto*. In the late 1950s, he travelled in the PRC, where the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences sent him to reconnoitre potential sites, especially excavations, where Czech archaeologists would collaborate with Chinese colleagues. Jisl kept a private diary, which was undoubtedly not intended to be published – given its content, it was not even possible before 1989. He

recorded essential facts and events every day, but also his feelings, often full of frustration, sometimes of joy and satisfaction. His pocket notebooks were an external memory where he could also relieve himself of the relatively frequent and, for him, surprising communication problems with the Chinese. He travelled alone, with no compatriot with him. This does not mean, of course, that he was truly alone on his travels (and he made six altogether from 6 September 1957 to 10 February 1958, always setting out from Beijing and returning there). Whenever he left the room where he was staying, he was joined by his entourage, consisting of an interpreter and at least one 'bodyguard', i.e. a security officer in civilian clothes; sometimes there was more than one.

On his last journey, at the turn of the year 1958, which took about two weeks and led to Shanghai and Guangzhou, he described and evaluated the situation regarding the photography of a bridge. He speaks not of espionage but of bureaucracy; it is difficult to say today whether the former or the latter was true, but perhaps it was a combination of both. In any case, this meant that he could not do his work as he wanted and should have done since his task was to document the existing state of archaeological sites, architecture, and monumental art, both in the open air and in the temples visually. He recorded the whole event as follows:

December 26, 1957, Thursday, Hangzhou

Afternoon Pagoda of six harmonies on a slight hill on the bank of a wide river.⁴⁸ It is 60 metres high. In front of it is a long iron bridge over the river. I wanted a shot of the pagoda roof looking over the river and part of the bridge. However, the representative of the cultural department did not allow it because it was forbidden. How come, I ask, if you can buy photographs of the pagoda and the bridge in the shop below? Answer: because these are photos from before the liberation, but now it is not allowed. Top of it all: I come home, open the English guidebook, and there is the same photo. I told the interpreter that this was a prime example of Chinese bureaucracy. But it is more than that. It's an example of enormous

stupidity. How else to put it, when asked if the new bridge over the Yangtze⁴⁹ could be photographed, the interpreter nodded in the affirmative and further warned me to reserve [camera] films for it, as one is not enough!⁵⁰

It is astonishing that Jan Vinař does not mention anywhere in his text even a word or a hint of the fact that another Czechoslovak journalist had travelled to Tibet in 1959. Only his Polish colleague Jerzy Lobman mentions that the editor of *Rudé Právo*, Zbyněk Málek, was part of the expedition.⁵¹ The same applies, however, vice versa: Málek does not mention his colleague's name anywhere in his reports. He does not refer to other colleagues representing the so-called seventh power or the press and mass media in general.

Málek and Vinař, like almost everyone else (with the few exceptions of those who wrote about their fellow travellers and even mentioned them by name), evoke an atmosphere of exclusivity in their texts as if they were in Tibet alone. In fact, by comparing the texts issued by the tour participants immediately after their return or even during their stay in Lhasa, it can be seen that the texts are extremely alike. This phenomenon is relatively easy to explain – they all experienced the same situation and, more importantly, reflected on it similarly. These travellers were so close to each other in terms of world-view that they were interchangeable in this respect.

A noteworthy circumstance was that foreign journalists received all information about current events, the overall situation in Lhasa, and its surroundings from a single source – Chinese guides. None of them had the opportunity to obtain information other than the Chinese interpretation of the uprising, its causes, its course and its suppression by the Chinese army. Sometimes, the consistency in the published texts of the various journalists gives the impression that they were directly dictated to them by the Chinese side in their notebooks. Often the only thing distinguishing these texts from the other is the writer's feelings, a subjective assessment of what Lhasa and its surroundings

offered them, and an opinion of what they saw and experienced.

This evaluation is not negative or critical, however, in either case. All the above-mentioned journalists agreed that a new society was now flourishing in Tibet, successfully overcoming the excesses of the past, throwing off the yoke of the exploiters and giving the working people a chance to emancipate themselves for the first time in the country's history. All this was in friendly cooperation with great China, which was selflessly helping its younger and more backward sibling on its way forward on the road to progress.

The case of Augustin Palát, who in his published memoirs of Tibet does not even mention the German writer Eva Siao Sandberg and her fellow traveller Harald Hauser, is similar in terms of the atmosphere of exclusivity. He also does not refer to the rival car tour from East Germany that both journalists accompanied, nor does he say a word about the Hungarian expedition – yet all three car expeditions met in Lhasa. As can be seen in Palát's photo archive, in the picture from the celebration of the sixth anniversary of the founding of the PRC in front of the Potala on 1 October 1956, there is only one woman, a European, on the rostrum (where, apart from Czechoslovaks and East Germans, representatives of India and Nepal were probably the only foreign guests). They could not have missed meeting her, and although she was a left-wing journalist, i.e. a fellow socialist from a friendly country, none of the Czech journalists mentioned her. One way of dealing with competition, of course, is by ignoring it and pretending it does not exist.

The messages sent by the participants of the expedition to the homeland with the classification 'confi-

dential' (which was the second lowest level after "for official use only") are, however, something else. The first such document is *Důvěrná zpráva pro Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí v Praze o cestě československé automobilové expedice do Tibetu* (Confidential Report for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague about the Czechoslovak Automobile Expedition to Tibet),⁵² which was prepared for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and delivered by courier from Beijing to Prague by the then Czechoslovak ambassador Dr Antonín Gregor (in fact, the report was written by a participant of the expedition, Dr Augustin Palát, and therefore its heuristic value is high).

The second equally exciting, open, and critical document of this type is *Československá automobilová výprava do Tibetu. Závěrečná důvěrná zpráva* (The Czechoslovak Automobile Expedition to Tibet. Final Confidential Report),⁵³ authored by Stanislav Černý, the leader of the same expedition in which Palat participated. It is dated 9 November 1956 and is a thirty-page typescript with appendices.

In both of these classified and never-published documents, there are references to Hungarian and even two German expeditions (the first was unsuccessful, and the second was intended to repair the damaged reputation). Not a word about them can be found, however, in the Czechoslovak press of the time – and these were comrades from friendly countries of the Soviet bloc of peace and socialism. Perhaps the uprising against the Communist Party and the Soviet army in Budapest, which broke out on 23 October and was suppressed on 10 November 1956 (precisely when the expedition was being widely written about in Czechoslovakia), had something to do with it.

Notes:

- 1) See also Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 305–306.
- 2) Gyatso, *Freedom in Exile: The Autobiography of the Dalai Lama*, 74.
- 3) Zbyněk Málek, “Svítání svobody a štěstí nad Tibetem [The Dawn of Freedom and Happiness over Tibet],” *Rudé právo* (October 27, 1959): 3.
- 4) “Point 10. Tibetan agriculture, livestock raising, industry, and commerce shall be developed step by step, and the people’s livelihood shall be improved step by step in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet (...); Point 11. In matters related to various reforms in Tibet, there will be no compulsion on the part of the central government. The local government of Tibet should carry out reforms of its own accord, and when the people request reforms, they shall be settled by means of consultation with the leaders of Tibet.” For the full text and commentary to this document, see Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Volume 2, The Calm before the Storm: 1951–1955*, 99–107.
- 5) Zbyněk Málek, “Rozhovor s Ngapo Ngawang – Jigme ‘Pro nás Tibetany je možná jen cesta vpřed’”, 3.
- 6) For a more detailed report on a visit to this location, see Zbyněk Málek, “Znovuzrozená Loka [Lhoka Reborn],” *Rudé právo* (December 8, 1959): 3.
- 7) He was the first American to speak fluent Tibetan (he learned the language at the École spéciale militaire de Saint-Cyr, the French military academy), and also knew Sanskrit and Chinese; he was born on 1 May 1854, and died on 8 December 1914.
- 8) Charles Bell wrote the first book about the thirteenth Dalai Lama (published posthumously), named *Portrait of a Dalai Lama: The Life and Times of the Great Thirteenth* (London: Collins, 1946). He was born on 31 October 1870, and died on 8 March 1945.
- 9) Sir Basil John Gould was a British Political Officer in Sikkim (1935–1945), and the successor to Bell.
- 10) See Basil John Gould, “Discovery, Recognition and Installation of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama,” in Sonam Wangdu Khemey, Basil J. Gould and Hugh E. Richardson, *Recognition and Enthronement of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works & Archives Discovery, 2000), 79–80.
- 11) Beba, “*Tajemný*” *Tibet*, 51.
- 12) Karel Beba writes “Gándan Tseba”, but nowhere mentions his name; it should be the 96th Ganden Tripa Tupten Künga (*dga’ ldan khri pa thub bstan kun dga* དགའ་ལྷན་ཁྲི་པ་ཐུབ་བསྐྱེད་ཀུན་དགའ་). He was the 96th head of Ganden Monastery and the highest spiritual representative of the Gelug school. His title is also *The Holder of the Ganden Throne*. Tupten Kunga, who lived from 1886 to 1964, was Chairman of the Tibetan Branch of the Buddhist Association of China since 1956 and Vice-Chairman of the entire association since 1962. Interestingly, the Ganden Tripa is not the abbot of a monastery; he is not recognised as a *trülku* (as is the case with Dalai Lamas or Panchen Lamas, for example); monks select his position for seven-year terms. The first Ganden Tripa was the founder of the Gelug Tsongkhapa (1357–1419).
- 13) Beba, “*Tajemný*” *Tibet*, 80–81.
- 14) Although Karel Beba does not give the exact date, it can be found in a book from Marius Magnien, see Marius Magnien, *Le Tibet sans mystère* (Paris: Éditions Sociales Paris, 1959), 168. Beba also published a full-page photograph of the audience in his book, but it only shows the face of the fourteenth Dalai Lama; no other details are apparent. The description is also the briefest possible: ‘Dalai Lama’. A similar photograph is published in the publication of other expedition participants, the husband-and-wife duo Maria Teresa Regard and Franco Calamandrei; see Franco Calamandrei and Maria Teresa Regard, *Rompicapo tibetano* (Firenze: Parenti, 1959), Fig. 38. The same is true of the photograph in Vsevolod Vladimirovich Ovchinnikov’s book, *Puteshestviye v Tibet* [Trip to Tibet] (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoye izdatelstvo detskoy literatury, 1957), Fig. 82. The picture is taken from a slightly different angle, but is otherwise identical in composition to the previous one. It shows the Dalai Lama himself sitting in a comfortable chair with armrests topped with volutes. A very similar photograph, again of the Dalai Lama himself, here with a spoon in a sugar bowl and a cup of tea in front of him, as the caption says, “The Dalai Lama takes tea; the British style”, was printed in Alan Winnington’s book, *Tibet – Record of a Journey* (London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd., 1957). The same is true of the Russian translation, *Tibet: Rasskaz o puteshestviyi* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo innostrannoy literatury, 1958), where a similar but not identical photograph is printed.

- 15) Döndrup Rinchen Sadutshang was the official Tibetan translator and English interpreter. In this capacity, he participated in many foreign meetings of the Tibetan administration before and after the Chinese occupation of Tibet. In 1959, he went into exile, later serving as the Dalai Lama's secretary. In 1978, he became a *kalön*, a member of the Tibetan Government-In-Exile; he died on 14 July 2015.
- 16) Beba, "*Tajemný*" *Tibet*, 157; 159.
- 17) For more about him, see Tenzin Dickie, "Rinchen Sadutshang," *Treasury of Lives*, April 2016, accessed March 8, 2024, <http://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Rinchen-Sadutshang/13545>.
- 18) Franco Calamandrei, "Incontro con il Dalai Lama tra i fiori del Parco dei gioielli," *l'Unita* (December 16, 1955): 3.
- 19) Determining Epstein's nationality at the time was not easy: he was born in Warsaw into a Jewish family but spent his childhood in China, where his parents fled from Poland to escape pogroms and the First World War. During the Second World War, he stayed for five years in the USA with his second wife, Elsie Fairfax-Cholmeley. He finally returned to the PRC in 1951 but did not obtain PRC citizenship until 1957. Throughout his life in the PRC, he worked as editor-in-chief of the English-language monthly *China Reconstructs* (from 1952), renamed *China Today* in 1990. Karel Beba, who, like him, was a participant in the first journalistic expedition, refers to him as an "American colleague"; see Beba, "*Tajemný*" *Tibet*, 99.
- 20) Ovchinnikov, *Puteshestvie v Tibet*, Fig. 87.
- 21) See Marius Magnien, *Le Tibet sans mystère* (Paris: Éditions Sociales Paris, 1959), the photo is after page 32.
- 22) Rinchen Sadutshang, *A Life of Unforeseen: A Memoir of Service to Tibet* (Somerville: Wisdom, 2016), 154.
- 23) See Chiara Cione, "Un viaggio nel viaggio: il Tibet dei Calamandrei," *MemoriaWeb – Trimestrale dell'Archivio storico del Senato della Repubblica*, no. 20 (December 2017): 6. The caption partly mistakenly states, "Delegation from 1955 with members of the *Kashag*." – the year is valid, but there is no Tibetan in traditional dress or monk's clothing (this is how members of the *Kashag* were dressed at the time) in the photograph which shows ten journalists alongside fifteen other Chinese.
- 24) Imre Patkó and Miklos Rev, *Tibet* (Budapest: Kepezóművészeti Alap Kiadóvállalata, 1957), Fig. 65. There is one more photograph of the Dalai Lama in the book; it is a portrait of him indoors and shows him alone.
- 25) See Eva Siao and Harald Hauser, *Tibet* (Leipzig: VEB F. A. Brockhaus, 1957). In their second book together, see Eva Siao and Harald Hauser, *Sterne über Tibet* (Leipzig: VEB F. A. Brockhaus, 1961), there is no preface by the Dalai Lama, for obvious reasons; in fact, he is not mentioned in the book at all, as he was already in exile at the time and the East German attitude towards him was still more or less identical to the official Beijing one.
- 26) See for example: Taring Rinchen Dolma, *Daughter of Tibet* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1978); Dzemay Rinpoche, Michael Richards and the Dalai Lama, "A Short Biography of Trijang Rinpoche," *The Tibet Journal* 7, no. 1–2 (1982): 3–46; Tsonawa Losang Norbu, "The Autobiography Kyabje Ling Rinpoche," *The Tibet Journal* 8, no. 3 (1983): 45–61; Thondup Khedroop, *Tibet in Turmoil: a Pictorial Account: 1950–1959* (Tokyo: The Nihon Kogyo Shimbun, 1983); Gyatso, *Freedom in Exile: The Autobiography of the Dalai Lama*; Tsarong Dundul Namgyal, *In the Service of his Country. The Biography of Dasang Damdul Tsarong. Commander General of Tibet* (Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 2000); Khetsun Tupten, *Memories of Life in Lhasa under Chinese Rule* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Shakabpa Tsepon Wangchuk Deden, *One Hundred Thousand Moons. An Advanced Political History of Tibet* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010); Diki Tsering, *Dalai Lama, My Son: A Mother's Story* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2000); Sadutshang, *A Life of Unforeseen: A Memoir of Service to Tibet*; Tethong, *His Holiness Fourteenth Dalai Lama: An Illustrated Biography*.
- 27) For example, in his first autobiography, published in 1962, there is no mention of meetings with foreign visitors from the so-called Eastern Bloc countries, see Dalai Lama, *My Land and My People: Memoirs of the Dalai Lama of Tibet*.
- 28) In the book Vladimír Sís and Josef Vaniš, *Země zastaveného času*, there is a reproduction of this visa from Sís's Czechoslovak foreign passport in the unnumbered photographs after p. 132.
- 29) Pavel Poucha, *Do nitra Asie* [Into the Heart of Asia] (Praha: Orbis, 1962), 179–192.
- 30) "The more I looked at Marxism, the more I liked it. Here was a system based on equality and justice for everyone, which claimed to be a panacea for all the world's ills. From a theoretical standpoint, its only drawback as far as I could see was its insistence on a purely materialistic view of human existence. This I could not agree with. I was also concerned at the methods used by the Chinese in pursuit of their ideals. I received a strong impression of rigidity. But I expressed a wish to become a Party member all the same. I felt sure, as I still do, that it would be possible to work out a synthesis of Buddhist and pure Marxist doctrines that really would prove to be an effective way of conducting politics. (...) When the First Assembly of the Communist Party took place at around this time [1954], I was made a Vice-President of the Steering Committee of the People's Republic of China." See Gyatso, *Freedom in Exile: The Autobiography of the Dalai Lama*, 90.

- 31) The most detailed overview of Soviet expeditions to Tibet is provided by the monograph from Alexandre Ivanovich Andreyev, *Soviet Russia and Tibet: The Debacle of Soviet Diplomacy 1918–1930s* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).
- 32) See for example Samten Jampa and Nikolai Tsyrempilov, *From Tibet Confidentially: Secret Correspondence of Agvan Dorzhief, 1911–1925* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 2012).
- 33) Pakpalha Geleg Namgyel (*phags pa lha dge legs rnam rgyal འཕགས་པ་ལྷ་དཀོའ་གསལ་རྒྱལ་པོ་*; Chin. *Pabala hufo* 帕巴拉活佛, born in February 1940 in Lithang, Kham) is the eleventh rebirth of the Chamdo khutagt lineage and is still in high political office in the PRC despite his advanced age. He has a fascinating political biography testifying to the steep career of this, as the Chinese call him, “living Buddha”. In 1950, at the age of eleven, he was already selected as the Vice-Chairman of the Chamdo Liberation Committee, the organisation set up by the PLA to defeat the Tibetan army led by kalön Ngaphö Ngawang Jigme in the great battle of Chamdo on 19 October 1950. From 1956–1965, he was a member of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region, and after the uprising in 1959, he was its Vice-Chairman. He was also the Chairman of the Religious Affairs Committee and one of the vice-chairmen of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference. Like the tenth Panchen Lama, he was groomed by the Chinese administration to continue to perform his religious and political functions under instructions from Beijing, which he visited repeatedly. He was regarded by the Chinese regime as the third highest of Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs, the youngest of them all. Thus, one can speak of Mao’s policy concerning Tibetan Buddhism in the early years of the PRC as “children-oriented”. As a result, after the founding of TAR in 1965, Pakpalha held several top positions – he was the Vice-Chairman of the TAR’s People’s Congress and later of its people’s government, the Vice-Chairman of both the Tibetan and National People’s Political Consultative Conference, and in the 1990s even became the Vice-Chairman of the TAR People’s Congress Standing Committee. During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), he was deprived of his posts and forced into manual labour. After his rehabilitation, he returned to top politics and, among other things, held the post of the Vice-Chairman of the Buddhist Association of China from 1993 to 2003, of which he is still honorary Chairman.
- 34) Zbyněk Málek, „Vzpouřa, která nevyšla a nevyjde [A Rebellion that Didn’t and Won’t Work],“ *Rudé právo* (April 18, 1959): 3.
- 35) See David Chipp, *Mao’s Toe: Memoirs of the Life of David Chipp, a Serious Correspondent* (Cambridge, UK: Privately Printed, 2009).
- 36) It was initially a campaign loftily entitled *Baihua qifang, baijia zhengming* (百花齐放, 百家争鸣, Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom, Let a Hundred Schools Compete), the purpose of which was to open up a plurality of opinions. Both partisans and non-partisans were encouraged to express their views and were promised impunity. After the thousand flowers bloomed, the Communist Party quickly forgot its promise. Everything returned to the old way, with some particularly courageous and active ones being duly punished. See for example Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York, London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1990), 563–573.
- 37) Beverley Hooper, *Foreigners under Mao. Western Lives in China 1949–1976* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016), 126.
- 38) Ibid.
- 39) Ibid., 136.
- 40) Vladimír Sís and Josef Vaniš, *Země zastaveného času*; see also the Slovak translation Vladimír Sís and Josef Vaniš, *Tajomný Tibet* [Mysterious Tibet] (Bratislava: Mladá letá, 1960). This edition includes a new preface to reflect the fourteenth Dalai Lama’s departure into exile.
- 41) In the PRC, the 1958–1962 campaign known as the *Great Leap Forward* (Chin. *da yue jin*, 大跃进), Mao’s project to help China increase its agricultural and industrial output so that the country could “catch up and overtake” the capitalist West, was underway. The Great Leap ended in economic disaster and was one of the largest man-made famines ever. See Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 574–582. Under Chinese leadership, Tibet was to catch up with China itself with this ‘great leap’, skipping the phase of capitalism and from feudalism ‘jumping’ straight into Communism.
- 42) Martin Slobodník intensively analysed the image of the PRC in the incriminated period – however, none of the visitors he studied was in Tibet; see, for example, Slobodník, “Socialist Anti-Orientalism: Perceptions of China in Czechoslovak Travelogues from 1950s”, 229–314.
- 43) Fosco Maraini, *Secret Tibet* (London: The Harvill Press, 2000), 384.
- 44) For more details, see e.g. Enrica Garzilli, *Mussolini’s Explorer: The Adventures of Giuseppe Tucci and Italian Policy in the Orient from Mussolini to Andreotti. With the Correspondence of Giulio Andreotti*, volume 1–10, (Milan: Asiatica Association, 2015) or David Templeman and Angelo Andrea Di Castro, eds., *Asian Horizons: Giuseppe Tucci’s Buddhist, Indian, Himalayan and Central Asian Studies* (Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2015).
- 45) Maraini, *Secret Tibet*, XXII.

- 46) See e.g. Luboš Bělka, “Czechoslovak Filmmakers, Journalists and Traders: Six Years in Tibet,” in *Experiencing Tibet from the Heart of Europe: Missionaries, Scholars, Filmmakers and Motorbikes*, eds. Luboš Bělka, Daniel Berounský, Petr Jandáček and Jarmila Ptáčková (Potsdam: Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences and edition-tethys, 2020), 107–127.
- 47) Several diaries of Czech and Slovak visitors to the PRC in the 1950s and 1960s have been preserved, but Jisl’s is the most detailed and is accompanied by a wealth of coloured and black and white photographs. The Slovak writer and journalist Milan Ferko left a very remarkable diary from a time when a visit to the PRC was rarely feasible, see Martin Slobodník, “Pro Domo Versus Pro Foro Externo: The People’s Republic of China in the 1950s as Perceived by Czechoslovak Visitors,” *Studia Orientalia Slovaca* 16, no. 1 (2017): 69–110. An equally remarkable diary from the previous decade has survived, but its author is unknown, see Martin Franc, “Český inženýr na Dálném Východě (Čína),” *Acta Historica Universitatis Silesianae Opaviensis* 7 (2014): 257–286.
- 48) Six Harmonies Pagoda (*liu he ta* 六和塔) from 970 lies on the banks of the Qiantang River (*Qiantang jiang* 钱塘江). It was rebuilt into its present form in 1165.
- 49) It probably refers to the then-largest and easternmost bridge over the Yangtze River, which opened on 15 October 1957. Jisl visited ten days later and immortalised it in two almost identical photographs. For a closer look, see Martin Slobodník, “Hřadač minulosti Ríše středu v epoche apologétov ‘novej Číny’ [Seeking the Past of the Middle Kingdom in the Era of ‘New China’]” in Lumír Jisl, *Čínský deník* [The China Diary], ed. Luboš Bělka and Pavel Šindelář (Brno: Masaryk University, 2017), 242–253.
- 50) Ibid.
- 51) Jerzy Lobman, *Tybet* [Tibet] (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1960).
- 52) See “Důvěrná zpráva pro Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí v Praze o cestě československé automobilové expedice do Tibetu” [Confidential Report for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague about the Czechoslovak Automobile Expedition to Tibet], reference number 5786/56 – Dr. Pa/Pa., 21 pages of typescript, dated 23 November 1956. The document is part of the personal file of Augustin Palát, card no. 16, located in the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. It is published with the permission of this institution.
- 53) This document is also part of Augustin Palát’s personal file, card no. 16, located in the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. It is published with the permission of this institution.

Struggle Session or *Tamdzing*

Luboš Bělka

(transl. Kamila Hladíková)

By 1959, so-called struggle sessions,¹ imported from inland China and in Tibetan known as *tamdzing*, had become an important means of dealing with class enemies and other counter-revolutionary elements, including members of the aristocracy and high clergy who took part in the March 1959 uprising in Lhasa. These organised public gatherings in general targeted people who fell into disgrace with the Communist Party. They were supposed to look like spontaneous actions of the people's masses, but in fact were planned and staged according to a prepared 'script' based on accusations and blaming of those under attack. As it was a non-judicial conviction, alleged wrongdoings of targeted people were typically reported under the supervision of organising cadres and PLA soldiers, by people from among the crowd who often claimed to be direct victims of the accused individual. Taking part in these meetings was obligatory as early as the 1950s and during the Cultural Revolution they became part of the everyday programme for the majority of the urban population in Lhasa and counties throughout the TAR.

Warren Smith, an American historian of Tibet, has explained how these practices were used not only when dealing with the class enemies, but also for mass indoctrination of the lowest strata of Tibetan society:

Class divisions and land and property redistribution were accompanied by the 'struggle' of upper class 'exploiters' and uncooperative traditional leaders. Struggle (*tamdzing* in Tibetan) was the Chinese Communist Party's primary tool for social transformation.

By mean of this violent method, the Chinese Communist Party hoped to induce 'democratic' participation and class awareness, as well as an atmosphere of fear and conformity in order to ensure that further social transformations would proceed without resistance. The Chinese might have expected that Tibetans, once convinced of the truth of their exploitation by the upper classes and the lamas, would engage in a voluntary process of public and violent denunciation of the members of that class, as had occurred within China.²

The attacks were both verbal and physical. The CCP interpreted the institution of *tamdzing* as a spontaneous expression of the peoples' will to denounce and punish the culprits who were mostly representatives of the old feudal structures, clergy and nobility, or those who participated in the revolt. In reality, as can be seen in the footage of one of such *tamdzings* observed by foreign journalists in August 1959 and led against Lhalu Tsewang Dorje, armed Chinese soldiers were supervising the event.³ Obviously, these particular struggle sessions were intentionally staged for the foreign visitors to show the 'authentic' anger of Tibetan people after the uprising. There are at least seven reports about Lhalu's *tamdzing* as well as visual evidence in photography and film, which makes this event arguably the best-documented case.

In the Czechoslovak context, there is a report entitled *Hořkost se vylila* (Bitterness Spilled Out) published by Zbyněk Málek in *Rudé právo*, the state propaganda

newspaper, where he stated that it made “the deepest impression” on him during his visit in Tibet. The title refers to the practice in Chinese known as *su ku* (诉苦), that is “telling the bitterness” of the masses, which was an important part of all struggle sessions led against the exploiting upper class. Málek described in detail two such *tamdzings*, but he did not use the Tibetan term because all the information was translated to foreign journalists by their Chinese interpreters.⁴

The two *tamdzings* documented by foreign journalists in Tibet were organised in Lhasa, the first one in Lhalulingka and the second in the Drepung monastery. Málek’s reportage includes three photographs: the first one from the Drepung with a caption “At a gathering of lamas against liar-Buddha and former monastery police”. It pictures three monks standing on a stage in a deep bow with their accusers threatening them with furious gestures. The photograph was taken from among an audience consisting of ordinary monks showing their support for the denunciation of the three ‘culprits’ with shouting and raised fists. Another two photographs document the event in Lhalulingka: “Hundreds of old debt records turning to black smoke” and “The stone-slabbed courtyard is packed with sitting men and women raising their clenched fists.” During this *tamdzing*, old debt records were burned as described by Málek:

We attended a meeting where former serfs met face to face with their feudal lord, Lhalu Tsewang Dorje, to settle old debts for good and to spill out the bitterness that filled their hearts for many generations. (...) The black past turns into black smoke. And there is more to add into the fire: they brought a couple of torture instruments from the house: clubs, whips, finger grinders, leather slap sticks.⁵

The reportage opens the scene with describing the ‘stage’:

The leaders of the meeting, respected elders and Lhasa neighbourhood committee members, were seated at the front wall on soft pillows brought out from the

lord’s manor. In front of them, on one side, stands Lhalu himself in a deep bow with his hat in one hand. He is bowing in front of the serfs who had been fully dependent on his grace not a long time ago.⁶

Alongside this kind of evidence, provided by foreign journalists who visited Tibet at that time and who admired and approved the struggle sessions, there are testimonies from another perspective. They are provided by Tibetans who later left for Indian exile. One example is the memories of an anonymous Tibetan woman from among the audience, recorded by Michael Dunham who interviewed her several decades later in Dharamsala:

We saw so many people and friends and family members being beaten up on public platforms. But when I saw Lhalu being paraded down the streets, it was really awful. Lhalu wasn’t like many of the aristocrats and government officials. The people respected Lhalu and that’s why the Communists made a special example of him. They hung a heavy stone around his neck with wire, so that he would keep his head down in a shameful position. He had been badly beaten. Both eyes were very swollen. And they put him up on a platform, and the cadres screamed insults at him, spat on him, and shoved him so that he would fall over, and then they would kick him so that he would get back up on his knees. They said he was guilty of many murders, which no one believed. Then they would drag him away like an animal, only to bring him back the next day. That was the worst of it – seeing him brought back many times, wondering how long he could survive, and of course, we were not able to do anything about it.⁷

She mentioned that these sessions were held repeatedly for several days, as is also confirmed by Jan Vinař’s reportage, which adds more details:

Two weeks before our arrival in Lhasa, a public meeting, attended by 10,000 people, was held in the People’s Square in Lhasa. Lhalu stood there as well,

bowing to the masses. He had to listen to one accusation after another. His crimes against all the people of Tibet were heard. After the thirteenth Dalai Lama died, he, as one of the young and active members of the Young Tibet movement, together with Tsarong, murdered the regent, the ‘living Buddha’ Radreng. He is also responsible for murdering the ‘living Buddha’ Getak, whom he and the English agent Ford poisoned because he stood in the way of their plans to drive Tibet into a war against the people’s China and separate it from the People’s Republic of China. Lhalu also eliminated the present Dalai Lama’s father, who opposed the reactionary group of which Lhalu was a leader.

In this scene, a triple murderer stands trial in front of the people. Although Jan Vinař assumed that the culprit would be later brought to court and formally sentenced to death, this denunciation in fact substituted for a regular judicial procedure:

Many other speakers presented their cases, but we were leaving. Only now did I notice a closed-body vehicle in front of the gate – the Lhasa prison van. It was supposed to escort Lhalu after the meeting ends. He was going to prison, where he was supposed to await his trial. Will he be sentenced to death? Probably. Even if his political activities are disregarded, he is a sadistic mass murderer. If it happens, the Western press will have another opportunity to shed crocodile tears over the ‘bloody terror’ in Tibet.

In reality, Lhalu’s fate was different. Who was Lhalu Tsewang Dorje, the man who served as *kalön* in the Tibetan *Kashag*, in one of the highest positions of *tsipön*, the “minister of finance”? The life (Tibetans would perhaps rather talk about *karma*) of this man represents one of the most dramatic chapters of twentieth century Tibet and reflects changes within Tibetan society and its elites during turbulent times.

He was born in 1915 and an important circumstance that strongly influenced his life was that his father was *tsipön* Lungshar Dorje Tsogyel (1880–1938) whom

another *tsipön*, Shakabpa, called “head of political bandits”⁸ – that is a head of the organisation “Happy Union” (*skyid phyogs kun ‘dus* རྒྱུད་ཕྱོགས་ཀུན་འདུས་). This organisation was supposed to carry out radical reform of the state administration in Tibet and overthrow the government. This conspiracy was, according to Shakabpa, quickly uncovered and the traitors were punished. Elsewhere he wrote about Lungshar in relation to his stay in England between 1913–1914:

The boys had been accompanied to England by Tsepa Lungshar, a brilliant but volatile, ambitious man who learned a great deal in England. On his return to Tibet, he became Finance Secretary and Head of the Military Department. After the death of the thirteenth Dalai Lama in 1933, he attempted to bring about a revolution in Tibet, but failed in the attempt.⁹

Tsipön Lungshar Dorje Tsogyel led an incredibly intricate life that was closely connected to Tibetan high politics, and the same can be said about his son.

In November 1912, the thirteenth Dalai Lama Tupten Gyamtso entrusted Lungshar with a task, which had no precedent in Tibetan history. He was made responsible to accompany a group of four selected Tibetan boys to pursue studies in Great Britain with the aim of obtaining knowledge and skills that they would later use for the benefit of Tibet. In cooperation with the leading British Tibetanist Sir Charles Bell, the group arrived in England on 24 April 1913. Lungshar used this opportunity to travel more extensively in Europe. He was accompanied by his wife Tendzin Dolkar and they conceived a child during their stay. This child was not born abroad in the end, because Lungshar, although he was an educated man, listened to his wife’s worries that in Europe, their son or daughter would be born a European with “sandy hair, blue eyes and a long nose.”¹⁰ Therefore they quickly travelled back to Tibet and she gave birth to their son Tsewang Dorje. Later, after his father was repudiated by the Tibetan government, he was adopted into another noble family which did not have a male heir and acquired the surname Lhalu.

Such adoptions of adult sons, to continue the family line, were quite common in Tibet before 1950.

The circumstances of Lungshar's life were exceptional, sometimes even absurd. Shakabpa, a member of *Kashag* who himself was part of the above-mentioned committee, writes about Lungshar's fate:

The committee, after making a thorough study of the evidence, passed a sentence on Lungshar depriving him of his eyesight and sending him to prison for life. This rare penalty was reserved for acts of high treason.¹¹

After the cruel punishment was carried out, Lungshar was released in poor physical and psychical shape. He died in 1938 and the punishment, as was usual in Tibet, was extended to Lungshar's son Tsewang Dorje. After his father's imprisonment, he was forbidden to serve in any kind of official function. This was difficult for him because he had served as a government official since 1927 when he was just twelve years old. The situation was solved later through the adoption into the Lhalu family. This was only possible after he officially repudiated his father and paid a large sum, however, the step enabled Tsewang Dorje, now under the surname Lhalu, to assume new power. One year after he got married, in 1941, he became *tsipön* like his denounced father and served as one of the *kalön's* between 1946–1952. His return to high politics was successful and, paradoxically, permanent, except for the six years that he spent in prison after the uprising. Lhalu was able to navigate through all the turbulences. Every political change had a serious impact on his life, but he was always able to reverse his fate and secure a position in Tibetan elite circles, first as a member of the high aristocracy and later as a prominent collaborator with the new Communist regime within the United Front.

Lhalu Tsewang Dorje personally participated in the arrest of the first regent Radreng Rinpoche and continued to serve under his successor Takdrak until the Dalai Lama's enthronement. He was sent to Chamdo as a governor of Kham region in 1949. His task was to defend eastern Tibet against the Chinese invasion. Pri-

or to the battle of Chamdo, however, he was replaced by a new governor, Ngaphö Ngawang Jigme. In June 1951, he returned to Lhasa and was put out of service the next year. The *Kashag* was not satisfied with his administration of Kham, but he was allowed to keep his official titles so that he could, with some more prudence, carry on with his career. In 1955, he was appointed to lead the Tibetan delegation to Beijing and met with Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai.¹² According to Strong, he “was governor of grain supply in 1957,”¹³ which must have been a highly sensitive role, because of the rising pressure to feed large numbers of Chinese army and civilian personnel moving into Tibet since 1951.¹⁴ The Tibetan economy was largely self-sufficient, but the equilibrium was fragile, and lack of food contributed to the dissatisfaction of Tibetan populations on the eve of the uprising.

In 1959, Lhalu stood up as one of the leaders of the anti-Chinese rebellion. He was captured and was fortunate enough to survive all the *tamdzings*. One of the shots, in the 1959 Chinese propagandist documentary *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet*, shows him as a defeated prisoner, explicitly named as one of the rebel leaders. It would have been absurd to believe at that time that he could have somehow made it to the other side and join the winners. Nevertheless, he made it, confirming what Jan Vinař wrote in his reportage, that the Chinese were rather benevolent to those who participated in the uprising, but were willing to cooperate after its pacification. Lhalu did just that. One year before the Cultural Revolution, he was released from prison thanks to special amnesty and lived with his wife as a farmer until his political rehabilitation during Deng Xiaoping's reform era. As a member of former elites, he was coopted by the United Front and was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Tibetan Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in 1983.¹⁵

Lhalu stayed active until his last days and passed away at the age of ninety-eight on 15 September 2011 in Lhasa. The Tibetan researcher Tsering Yangdzom (Ciren Yangzong), from the Institute of Social Economy of the Chinese Tibetology Research centre, who

published a book about Tibetan aristocratic families between 1900–1951 expressed her gratefulness to Lhalu for interviews providing information on his life and family lineage. One of the chapters includes a detailed exploration of the custom of adult son adoption in aristocratic families without a male heir, where she describes Lhalu's case.¹⁶ The work does not go beyond 1951, avoiding 'the turbulent years' around the uprising and the Cultural Revolution, and it does not mention the *tamdzing* against him. According to one of her articles, Lhalu had five sons and one daughter, all born before 1959. As was the custom in wealthy Tibetan families for securing political as well as religious power – three of his four sons were recognised as *trülkus* during the 1950s and have continued to hold official functions up until the present.¹⁷

The British historian Patrick French briefly met with Lhalu in Lhasa's People's Hospital in autumn 1999 but failed to interview him as he had originally planned. He wrote about Lhalu's complicated relations with the Communists:

In the late 1970s, Lhalu made a deal with the Communists. Its exact terms are unknown, but in essence he made the same Faustian pact as several other members of the 'patriotic upper strata'. In exchange for backing Chinese rule, he was rehabilitated and given a sinecure on the Tibet Regional Committee of the CPPCC. Perks came with the post: a salary, good accommodation, travel opportunities, access to power and a chance to reunite with his family. Despite this turnaround, Lhalu avoided giving his support to China's rewriting of Tibetan history. In his autobiography, published in 1993 under the auspices of the CPPCC, he boldly contradicted several aspects of the authorised version of events, denying, for example, that the enthronement of the fourteenth Dalai Lama in 1940 took place under the authority of China's central government.¹⁸

All kinds of reportage published by the participants of the 1959 journalist expedition to Tibet are similar in terms of their content, wording and terminology and

readers might tend to think that they were copied from one source. And it is not far from reality. Not only were the journalists taken together to the same places and made to meet the same people, but all the information they obtained were through their Chinese 'interpreters' who strictly stuck to the official narratives and interpretations of events. The interpreters who translated the meetings and interviews into several European languages, including English, French and Russian (and Jan Vinař knew all these languages), were thus interpreting more than just the language spoken by the people whom the guests met – they were transmitting the official ideology of the CCP and its socio-historical theories. As all the journalists either came from communist countries or were inclined to Marxism and Communism, they were familiar with the basics of this ideology and felt sympathetic about the progress brought to 'backward' Tibetan society by the Chinese 'liberators' for the sake of 'the Tibetan people'. It is evident from Jan Vinař's text that individual interviews or even unaccompanied walks were unthinkable. When he describes how the group of foreigners tried to take a walk on the first day in Lhasa, he explains that "for the sake of our health and safety" they were immediately stopped and asked to "hop on a lorry." In his reportage, which was originally intended for publication in Czechoslovakia before the split between China and the Soviet Union, he did not say it explicitly, but a subtle undertone in the Czech-language original hints to what they knew: they were not allowed to walk in the streets freely.

Everything that the foreign journalists saw and heard was carefully planned and all the interviewees had without any doubt clear instructions about what they were expected to say or which role they were intended to play. Even when the journalists published in their respective periodicals with an air of exclusivity, it was in fact a collective experience. It was the Chinese side who organised everything, arranging the situations and scenes that they wanted the foreigners to see and even telling them how to interpret them. The journalists knew what they were supposed to write, only the question *how* was left up to their personal considerations

(and their editors). Because of their political preferences, it was guaranteed that they stay within the lines drawn up by the start of the Cold War which by that time had reached even to Tibet.

The oldest participant in the expedition, the pro-communist American writer Anne Louise Strong devoted a separate chapter to Lhalu's *tamdzing* in her book entitled "Lhalu's serfs accuse." She wrote from the same perspective as Málek and others, using the same information. All of them mentioned, for example, that Lhalu had reportedly "bribed the *Kashag* in 1945 with two hundred and fifty thousand taels of silver for the post [of *kalön*]."19 The Soviet journalist Mikhail Domogatskikh in his chapter "Do you remember, Laru?"20 included an almost identical sentence, only talks about *liang*21 (in Russian transcription as "lian") instead of tael, explaining in a footnote that one *liang* is equivalent to 32 g of silver. This would be more than eight tons of silver, however, tael or liang here in fact refers to Tibetan currency used up until 1959, *srang*, which was already not bound to the original silver weight equivalent. Interestingly, Jan Vinař did not mention this bribe.

Another journalist who witnessed Lhalu's *tamdzing* was Bronislaw Tronski from Poland. He published a photograph of Lhalu, obediently bowing with a hat in his hand, with another Tibetan sitting behind him. The caption reads: "Lharu zbiera dziś grona gniewu tybetańskiego ludu" ("Today, Lhalu harvests the accumulated anger of the Tibetan people").22 His chapter called "Accumulated anger" covers Lhalu's *tamdzing* over six pages, calling it a "public accusation" (publiczne oskarzenie). Not surprisingly, Tronski's text does not provide any information different from what Vinař or Strong wrote, apart from his personal impressions. Communist journalists in general understood the *accumulated anger of Tibetan people* and sympathised with it at that time. None of them realised that what they witnessed was a kind of lynching, something they would without doubt condemn under other circumstances, for example in case of American slaves or anti-slavery activists. They considered it revolutionary justice here, justice based on class struggle, which many of them

knew from their home countries. This was particularly the case with East European journalists, who were coming out of their horrific World War Two experience (Jan Vinař spent several years in German concentration camp as a Jew and communist) and 1950s murderous trials against the enemies of their new regimes. In accordance with the CCP, they believed that class justice is justice of the oppressed majority against their oppressors and of the exploited against their exploiters. They would similarly support spontaneous or even organised lynchings against Germans, which happened in both Czechoslovakia and Poland when the war was over. Many of them were personally active in anti-fascist resistance or were themselves persecuted during the war. Bronislaw Tronski, for example, participated in the Warsaw uprising.

His fellow countryman Jerzy Lobman has a chapter "Account for Injustice," which describes Lhalu's *tamdzing* in similar terms with similar photographs. He only added one more photograph of the angry crowd in Lhalulingka.23

In contrast, the contemporary Russian historian Serguei L. Kuzmin wrote in 2010 about *tamdzing*:

In order to find the cause of 'serfdom' misery, people were forced to open up and 'display old wounds', that is, to weep and complain, and to describe all instances of 'suppression under the evil serfdom system'. This was particularly important when foreign journalists visited, for example, those from the left newspapers like *Pravda*, *L'Humanite*, *Daily Worker*, etc. The authorities planned these visits well in advance, carefully preparing political performances, ensuring the foreigners were accompanied by Chinese cadres, and that Tibetans gave the required interviews under their supervision. Of course, no one was tortured and killed during a *tamdzing* during these visits.24

Another tragic figure of modern Tibet, whom Jan Vinař and other foreign journalists had the chance to meet in 1959, was Gyatsoling Tupten Kelzang Rinpoche, superior of a monastery in Pelbar near Chamdo. Other sources only talk about the 'living Buddha'

(from Chinese *huofo*), Vinař is the only one who mentions his name. Zbyněk Málek was probably also present at the meeting in Norbulingka, but he did not write about him. Gyatsoling was one of the tutors of the fourteenth Dalai Lama, *tsenzhap* (*mtshan zhabs* མཚན་མཉམས་མཉམས་), who taught him debating, a specific ritualised art of disputation of monks in Tibetan Buddhism. Melvyn C. Goldstein wrote about the Dalai Lama's tutors as members of his 'court':

The Dalai Lama's main source of information and advice came from what we can think of as the Dalai Lama's 'court'. There was no single term for this, but a former Kashag minister referred to it as the 'simjung thagor' or 'those who were around the Dalai Lama's living quarters.' In the 1950s, this 'court' consisted of a small number of monks, lamas, and monk officials. These included his three chief personal monk attendants, his senior and junior tutors who were incarnate lamas (Tib. *yongdzin*), his debating tutors (Tib. *tsenshab*), and government monk officials who served the Dalai Lama in his Secretariat office (Tib. *Tse ga*), which met in his Summer or Winter Palace, wherever the Dalai Lama was residing.²⁵

The Dalai Lama himself does not mention Gyatsoling in his autobiography *Freedom in Exile*. The reason is self-evident: Gyatsoling was a controversial figure with a problematic relationship to the Dalai Lama after his exile. Scarce information about him is provided by Goldstein, Israel Epstein, and Li Jianglin.²⁶ The oldest known photograph of him appeared in a recent biography of the Dalai Lama by Tetong Tendzin Geje;²⁷ it is a group photo taken on New Year's of 1955, at the time of the Dalai Lama's stay in Beijing. The Dalai Lama is sitting surrounded by the accompanying members of the *Kashag*, his two teachers, Ling Rinpoche and Trijang Rinpoche, who both followed him into exile, and with Gyatsoling Rinpoche (the fifth figure on his left side). His name is listed in the caption to this photograph, but it is the only mention of him in this book. Other people in the photograph include the Dalai Lama's mother, Gyalyum Chenmo,²⁸ his sister Tsering

Dolma and his younger brother Ngari Rinpoche, as well as several high officials and other members of the Dalai Lama's suite.

Other images of Gyatsoling appeared in the documentary *Putting Down the Rebellion in Tibet* and in Tsering Woesser's book *Forbidden Memory* about the Cultural Revolution in Tibet. In a caption to an image of Gyatsoling's struggle session she wrote:

The one who appears to be in trouble here is Gyatsoling Rinpoche Thupten Kalsang, the head of Gyatsoling Monastery in Palbar County, near Chamdo. He had been one of the tutors of the fourteenth Dalai Lama, but he had not followed the Dalai Lama into exile in 1959 and had been a rather active participant in the campaign against the 'Traitorous Dalai Clique.' It was he who was said to have been among the most ardent attackers in the struggle sessions against the Panchen Lama in 1964, along with Sengchen Rinpoche from Tashilhünpo Monastery and Lhamön Sonam Lhündrup, the former member of the Panchen Lama's council of advisers; their new master had been very pleased with them. By 1965, Gyatsoling Thupten Kalsang had been given the positions of vice chair of the regional Political Consultative Conference, deputy director of the Tibet Buddhist Association, and standing committee member of the Chinese Buddhist Association at the national level. Who could have foreseen what would happen to him within a year?²⁹

One year later, there was a radical turnaround in China and Tibet. Mao Zedong mobilised Red Guards in a campaign of state terror, known as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, in Tibetan known as *Rikne sarje* (*rig gnas gсар brje* རིག་གནས་གསར་བཞེ་). Several years of fanatic rampage, by mostly young people, was carefully supervised in Tibet by the PLA and fractions within the CCP, which ultimately turned against each other in bloody fights. During this period, Tibet, similarly to other parts of the PRC, witnessed enormous suffering and ruthless vandalism in the name of struggle against the 'four olds'. Social, cultural, and above all religious

institutions were primary targets. Tibetan temples and monasteries, including the Jokhang, were damaged or destroyed. Individuals and whole social groups were targeted with unprecedented state-supported violence, again, in the form of *tamdzing*. According to Tsering Woesser, Gyatsoling Rinpoche was accused in 1966 as a ‘counter-revolutionary element’ and later a ‘traitor’ who “provid[ed] material support to the rebels in the Pelbar County Incident” in 1969. Mentally and physically broken, he died in 1974, before the end of the Cultural Revolution. He was rehabilitated posthumously in 1978, nevertheless, it was “too late for him to enjoy whatever mundane comfort that decision might have offered.”³⁰

Israel Epstein who was a member of the first journalist expedition to Tibet in 1955, briefly mentioned Gyatsoling in his book published in 1983, confirming his role as a propaganda-mouth for the CCP:

The Living Buddha Jaltsolin [Gyatsoling], who was former scripture reader to the Dalai but did not join the rebels, recalled how Sera lamasery was burned down four times, and the Jokhang and Drepung lamasery, among other sites, were repeatedly damaged by fire and looting during the course of past internal strife among ruling-class cliques.³¹

The American communist journalist actually returned to Tibet two more times, shortly before the Cultural Revolution in 1965 and again after its end in 1976. Although his book was published in 1983, he must have met Gyatsoling as early as 1965, before his denunciation during the Cultural Revolution. Epstein quoted his words as a “Tibetan testimony”, blaming Tibetan rebels for destroying the monasteries and temples in 1959. This was a difficult position to defend, however, by the time his book was pub-

lished in 1983. Warren W. Smith pointed out some of the contradictions in his book based on outdated propaganda. Epstein insisted that there was “freedom of belief” in 1965, “when most of Tibet’s monasteries had already been looted and many destroyed. The rest were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, which Epstein surely must have been aware of by 1976, or at least by 1982 when his book went to press.”³²

In 2005, the year of his death, Epstein’s memoir *My China Eye: Memoirs of a Jew and a Journalist* was published. The author’s memories include a chapter on his imprisonment during the Cultural Revolution, which he joined as a leader of a Red Guard unit consisting of foreigners living in China. As remarked by Smith:

Epstein was greatly surprised when, in 1968, foreigners began to become victims of Chinese xenophobia. Epstein was, like many others, accused of being a spy for some unspecified foreign government. His many years of work at *China Reconstructs* were characterized as a foreign plot to dominate China’s voice to the outside world.³³

His fate reflects the same absurdity as the turbulences so many Chinese and Tibetan people, not only members of the aristocracy and clergy, but also intellectuals and communist cadres and officials, went through from the 1950s to the 1970s. It is not unlike the rich and tragic life experiences of Jan Vinař, a Jew and a (communist) journalist, just like Epstein. While Epstein regained his faith in Communism and the socialist system after his rehabilitation in China, Vinař did not see any future in Czechoslovakia after the Soviet invasion of 1968 and to avoid further persecution in his life, he escaped to Swiss exile without any option to return within his lifetime.

Notes:

- 1) Chin. *pidou hui* (批斗会).
- 2) Warren W. Smith, Jr., *Tibetan Nation: History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 402.
- 3) Their presence was recorded by Anna Louise Strong, who mentioned about a “half-dozen soldiers” in her book (*When Serfs Stood up in Tibet*, 174).
- 4) This is the reason why none of the members of the journalist expedition to Tibet in 1959 uses the term. They mostly described it as a ‘meeting’ or ‘accusation meeting’ (e.g. Anna Louise Strong or Mikhail Domogatskikh in *Utro Tibeta*, 57). Jan Vinař in his reportage also used either ‘accusation meeting’ or ‘struggle session’.
- 5) Málek, “Hořkost se vylila”: 3.
- 6) Ibid.
- 7) Dunham, *Buddha’s Warriors*, 326.
- 8) Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 276.
- 9) Ibid., 250.
- 10) This anecdote is mentioned in Patrick French’s book *Tibet, Tibet: A Personal History of a Lost Land* (New York: Knopf, 2003), 163.
- 11) Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 276.
- 12) French, *Tibet, Tibet*, 171.
- 13) Strong, *When Serfs Stood Up in Tibet*, 169.
- 14) For example, Emily T. Yeh in her book *Taming Tibet: Landscape Transformation and the Gift of Chinese Development* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2013) wrote: “The first problem faced by the People’s Liberation Army after it marched into Lhasa in October 1951 was how to accommodate and feed its more than eight thousand troops. [...] The sudden introduction of this large number of soldiers into Lhasa badly shook the local economy...” (60).
- 15) Lalu Ciwang Duoji: Fu jin zhui xiyi dangnian 拉鲁·次旺多吉：抚今追昔忆当年 [Lhalu Tsewang Dorje: Finding Consolation in the present, remembering times past], *Chinese Tibetology* 1 (1999).
- 16) Tsering Yangdzom, *The Aristocratic Families in Tibetan History, 1900-1951* (Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, 2006), 18-24.
- 17) Ciren Yangzong 次仁央宗, “Lalu jia zuihou de guizu” 拉鲁家最后的贵族 [The last aristocrat of the Lhalu family], *sohu.com*, March 30, 2009, accessed March 11, 2024, <http://news.sohu.com/20090330/n263099233.shtml>.
- 18) French, *Tibet, Tibet*, 171.
- 19) Strong, *When Serfs Stood Up in Tibet*, 168.
- 20) Domogatskikh, *Utro Tibeta*, 54-64. From his transcription of Lhalu’s name as ‘Laru’ it is evident that he used the phonetic transcription based on Chinese (Lalu 拉鲁) instead of Tibetan, which allows to ‘reconstruct’ the non-Chinese name either as Lalu or Laru.
- 21) Tael is a colonial equivalent of liang (两).
- 22) Bronislaw Tronski, *Na dachu swiata [On the Roof of the World]* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1960), 50.
- 23) Jerzy Lobman, *Tybet* (Warszawa: Ksiazka i Wiedza, 1960), 81-82.
- 24) Sergius L. Kuzmin, *Hidden Tibet: History of Independence and Occupation* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 2011), 265-266. The book was originally published in Russian in 2010 with support from the International Campaign for Tibet.
- 25) Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, Volume 4: In the Eye of the Storm, 1957-1959*, 13.
- 26) See Li Jianglin, *Tibet in Agony: Lhasa 1959* (Cambridge – London: Harvard University Press, 2016), 129-131, 135.
- 27) Tethong, Tenzin Geyche (*bkras mtong bstan ‘dzin dge byed བཀའ་མཛོད་བསྟན་འཛིན་དགེ་བྱེད་*), *His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama: An Illustrated Biography* (Northampton: Interlink Books, 2020).
- 28) The “Great Mother” who accompanied her son not only to China, but also later to India. Her memoirs were published in 2000; Diki Tsering, *Dalai Lama, My Son: A Mother’s Autobiography* (New York: Viking Press, 2000).
- 29) Woesser and Barnett (eds.), *Forbidden Memory*, 108.
- 30) Ibid.
- 31) Israel Epstein, *Tibet Transformed* (Beijing: New World Press, 1983), 421.
- 32) Warren W. Smith, “Book Review of *Tibet Transformed* by Israel Epstein,” *Radio Free Asia*, accessed March 11, 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/warrensmithbooks/Transformation.pdf>.
- 33) Ibid.

Epilogue

Kamila Hladíková / Luboš Bělka

(transl. Kamila Hladíková)

What made Vinař's text so exceptional that it deserved to be published, this time not just in samizdat, but in a more official way? The answer is obvious from a comparison of the text with other similar publications from the same period. More or less, all of his expedition colleagues published their testimonies about the situation in Tibet six months after the March 1959 uprising in the form of articles, reportage, notes, commentaries, etc. Some of them published entire books.

A brief comparison shows that this material is in many regards similar, which is not surprising considering the circumstances of an organised propagandist trip and the political and ideological inclinations of the authors. The Chinese organisers also closely monitored what kind of image these journalists created both in the Eastern Bloc and in the West. Naturally, they adjusted it to Beijing's wishes in accordance with the Chinese propaganda. When visiting Tibet, the group was together all the time and they were provided with the same information, translated from Chinese to Russian, English, or French and any individual activities were unthinkable. In fact, they were put together as quite a homogenous group as concerns their world views and political orientation. This was despite the fact that they represented various media, including press, radio and foreign news agencies. They were connected by their leftist and progressive thinking and support for the People's Republic of China which had been established ten years earlier. For the same reason, many of them previously actively participated in anti-fascist resistance during World War Two and many were mem-

bers of communist parties in their respective countries. They therefore shared and supported Beijing's interpretation of the Lhasa uprising.

Despite all this, Vinař's text provides some novel aspects that were not obvious from other known publications. He agrees with them, of course, on the basic political interpretation according to which he described the uprising as an "anti-people rebellion of feudal lords and slave owners" with the still uncertain role of the fourteenth Dalai Lama who was at that time supposed to be pushed into exile or even kidnapped by rebels. Compared with others, Vinař puts more effort into explaining the ideological background provided by the CCP, namely the relevance to the class struggle theory, and adds more detailed statistical data, the numbers of soldiers on both sides, the number of killed, the injured and captured rebels, etc. Although these are the official data coming from the Chinese side, they still have a certain informative value, at least in the sense of the image painted by contemporary Chinese propaganda. All the journalists, including Vinař, mostly focused on the individual stories that were introduced to them by the organisers. Interestingly, Vinař also reveals many details indicating the conscious formation of a coherent ideological narrative by the Chinese side. He offers detailed information, for example, about several clearly staged performances, documenting how the Chinese propaganda machine worked at that time. One example is the satirical theatre performance in the Drepung Monastery. In Vinař's understanding, it was organised by the monks themselves, but it is hard

to imagine that they would do this spontaneously and without the Chinese lead. While there are numerous descriptions by other journalists of the Drepung struggle session, which was mentioned by Vinař, the monks' theatre performance is only recorded by him.

If we want to understand better what these propagandist expeditions to Tibet, organised by the Chinese for foreign journalists, looked like, Vinař's samizdat is an important source filling in many gaps. It provides new information and sheds more light on the context of the origin or previously published sources. His reportage is not only a document of its time, but also an important piece in the complex mosaic of the events in Tibet in 1959 as experienced by a group of journalists who were the last foreigners to visit Tibet before the Cultural Revolution that changed its face irretrievably.

When Vinař completed his optimistic account of socialism-building in Tibet in the autumn of 1959, he provided it with a title that seemed to express the spirit of the times: *Tibet – a Country Where People Have Leapt a Thousand Years Forward*. We currently already know that Tibet, not even with the brotherly help of Chinese people's masses, the CCP, and the PLA, has indeed not leapt a thousand years forward within a few years after the proclaimed 'liberation'. Only seventy years later, the Chinese government finally announced the long-awaited success of its poverty alleviation (*fu pin* 扶贫) campaign after several decades of effort under the heading of the Great West Development Strategy (*xi bu da kai fa* 西部大开发). It enabled extensive infrastructure building, helped to resettle most of the remaining nomadic pastoralist population, sped up urbanisation, and provided tools to secure a stable increase in literacy rates. It is also currently known that the "great leap forward", carried out in the entire PRC under Mao Zedong's leadership between 1958–1960, ended with a huge disaster as a result of which millions of people died of famine. Another of Mao's campaigns, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (*wuchan jieji wenhua da geming* 无产阶级文化大革命) which started several years later in the summer of 1966, caused irretrievable damage to the cultural heritage and people's psyche both in inland China and all Tibetan areas.

Up until the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, due to the impossibility of direct communication, the CCP in Tibet had relied not on the broad masses of Tibetan people, the 'proletariat', the majority of which in fact even in inland China were comprised of peasants and in Tibet were mostly serfs and nomadic pastoralists, but mainly on the "patriotic elites" (*aiguo shangceng* 爱国上层). They were formed by members of the aristocracy and clergy, including (up until 1959) the fourteenth Dalai Lama and (until 1962) the tenth Panchen Lama, and were incorporated into the Chinese communist political system as a part of the so-called "united front" (*tongyi zhanxian* 统一战线). The relationship between the elites and the CCP was severely harmed by the 1959 uprising and the Dalai Lama's escape to India, nevertheless, the "patriotic elites", who did not join the revolt and continued to support the regime, were still handled with kid gloves.

This ended, however, with the start of the Cultural Revolution when Mao Zedong successfully mobilised the lowest strata of society. The movement completely denied the commitments guaranteed in the so-called "Seventeen-Point Agreement" concerning the "Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" in 1951 and declared again after pacification of the uprising in 1959, that they would "respect local customs and religious beliefs" and "protect monasteries, cultural institutions, and heritage".¹ Whereas in inland China the driving force of the Cultural Revolution was the fanatical masses of heavily indoctrinated students, the campaigns in Tibet were organised predominantly by Communist cadres and so-called "neighbourhood committees" (*ju wei hui* 居委会), each of them overseeing only a few dozen families whose members knew one other well. It was therefore almost impossible not to take part in political movements like the "destroy the four olds" (*pohuai si jiu* 破坏四旧) campaign, which led to the ransacking of many monasteries and temples including the Jokhang, or numerous struggle sessions against the "three big Lords" (*san da lingzhu* 三大领主) and "ox-head demons and snake spirits" (*niu gui she shen* 牛鬼蛇神), labels given to members of the old elites, namely to members of the aristocracy, *trülkus* and lamas.

The Cultural Revolution left Tibet in chaos manifested in disruption of the cultural tradition and damage to the cultural heritage. It also had a tragic impact on the mental state of its inhabitants who had to bear multiple traumas of endured suffering and humiliation, but also guilt, as the majority of ordinary Tibetans had been pushed to participate in the destruction and persecutions.² The identity crisis, paradoxically, even deepened after Mao's death in 1976 and the repudiation of the so-called "Gang of Four" who were blamed for the "leftist deviation" that caused the tragedies of the Cultural Revolution. After Deng Xiaoping came to power in 1978, many of those persecuted during the "decade of chaos" (*shi nian dongluan* 十年动乱) were rehabilitated and two years later the then Prime Minister Hu Yaobang (胡耀邦) visited Tibet for the first time. After his well-known speech,³ delivered in front of Tibetan cadres in Lhasa, he apologized for the failures of the previous Chinese policy in Tibet that caused a great deal of suffering. While he called for restoration of the united front to re-coopt former Tibetan elites, the announcement of a new era convinced many that the previous decades were little more than a terrible mistake.

The new era started with the reconstruction of destroyed religious objects and traditions, important Buddhist ceremonies, such as *mönlam chenmo*, were restored and monasteries welcomed thousands of new monks.⁴ A delegation sent by the Tibetan government in exile and led by the fourteenth Dalai Lama's elder brother Gyalo Döndrup (*rgyal lo don 'grub རྒྱལ་ལོ་དོན་འགྲུབ་*) met such an enthusiastic welcome by Tibetan masses that the visit had to be interrupted. The greater the fervour with which Tibetan masses participated in destruction of the "four olds" during the Cultural Revolution, the greater became the devotion with which they returned to their Buddhist faith and lent their hands in its restoration in order to diminish the bad *karma* accumulated over the last twenty years. The revision of the CCP's ethnic and religious policy along with economic

development and gradual improvement of social conditions in Tibet during the 1980s did not lead, however, to long-lasting stability as expected. When the class struggle ended, the past suffering and renewed contacts with the exile incited Tibetan nationalist aspirations and, once again, they stood up in protest against the Chinese hegemony. First, demonstrations started in the spring of 1987 and were organised by monks from three large Gelug monasteries around Lhasa, Drepung, Sera, and Ganden. In March 1989, new protests began in commemoration of the 1959 uprising and the Dalai Lama's escape to exile, which had to be pacified with the use of the army and the implementation of martial law in Lhasa and its surroundings.

As of the 1990s, the central government fully focused on heavily subsidised economic development in Tibetan areas with the aim of building a "harmonious society" (*hexie shehui* 和谐社会), where everyone could reach a sustainable level of "moderate wealth" (*xiaokang* 小康). Due to complex socio-cultural reasons,⁵ the development-oriented policy over the long term failed to motivate and benefit the indigenous population and increased inter-ethnic tensions in the region. After a longer period of relative prosperity, a new wave of unrest began in the spring of 2008, when Beijing was preparing for the organisation of the XXIX Summer Olympic Games under the critical sight of the international community. Violent events in Tibet and Xinjiang between 2008 and 2014 led the Beijing government to change the relatively liberal ethnic policy and implement strict security measures to "maintain stability" (*weiwen* 维稳) in ethnic areas. These included heavy securitisation and high-tech surveillance with omnipresent military and police posts, cameras, and various social control mechanisms with increased pressure on fast economic development, systematic patriotic education and improvement of the socio-economic situation. "The One thousand years' gap" has been finally eliminated, but the question of Tibetans' gratefulness for the "Chinese state's benevolent gift of development"⁶ remains open.

Notes:

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- 1) *Concerning the Question of Tibet*, 9.
 - 2) It was thoroughly described by the Tibetan dissident writer Tsering Woeser; Woeser and Barnett (eds.), *Forbidden Memory*.
 - 3) Hu Yaobang's speech was delivered at a conference of the TAR cadres on 29 May 1980 (*Hu Yaobang 1980 nian 5 yue 29 ri zai Xizang zizhiqu ganbu dahui shand de jianghua* 胡耀邦 1980年5月29日在西藏自治区干部大会上的讲话.; see *Zhonggong Xizang zizhiqu weiyuanhui zhengce yangjiushi* 中共西藏自治区委员会政策研究室 [TAO Committee's Policy Planning Institute], *Xizang zizhiqu zhongyao wenjian xuanbian: 1980 nian 4 yue – 1982 nian* 西藏自治区重要文件选编: 1980年4月-1982年 [TAR-related Important Documents: April 1980–1982]. The main points of the speech were summed up by Wang Lixiong (王力雄) in his “Reflections on Tibet,” *New Left Review* 14 (March-April 2002), translated from the Chinese original by Liu Xiaohong and Tom Grunfeld: “Tibet should enjoy autonomous rule, and Tibetan cadres should have the courage to protect their own national interests; Tibetan farmers and herdsmen should be exempt from taxation and purchase quotas; Ideologically oriented economic policies should be changed to practical ones, geared to local circumstances; Central government's financial allocations to Tibet should be greatly increased; Tibetan culture should be strengthened; Han cadres should step aside in favour of Tibetan ones.”
 - 4) The restoration of religious institutions was described in detail by Martin Slobodník in his Slovak language book. See Martin Slobodník, *Mao a Buddha: náboženská politika voči tibetskému buddhizmu v Číne* [Mao and Buddha: Religious Policy Towards Tibetan Buddhism in China] (Bratislava: Chronos, 2007).
 - 5) For an analysis of the reasons see e.g. Yeh, *Taming Tibet*.
 - 6) *Ibid.*, 3.



Summary

The core of the book is a critical edition of an unpublished reportage of Jan Vinař from his 1959 trip to Tibet called *Tibet, a Country Where People Have Leapt a Thousand Years Forward*. Vinař's text, which forms the second and main part of this book, was never published officially (there are only fifteen copies of a samizdat edition printed in 1983 in Zurich) and today it can be considered an important documentary material of the given historical period. The reportage was written in 1960, however, due to the political split between Moscow and Beijing it was not possible to get the text published at that time. Indeed, the Czechoslovak journalist's documented experience in Tibet echoes the official Chinese narrative of Tibetan history and social development and his views reflect the Chinese interpretation of the March 1959 uprising. Nevertheless, his text provides information not published by other visitors of Tibet after what the Chinese side calls "pacification of the rebellion" (*pingpan* 平叛). Moreover, the book includes never revealed photographic material from the 1959 journalist expedition to Tibet and other images documenting the Chinese post-uprising policies and their implementation in Lhasa, Zhikatse and Lhokha.

The editors of this book have provided scholarly commentary to the original text in the form of footnotes, accompanied by a preface, editorial notes, as

well as concluding remarks. Moreover, each of the two editors has written a study clarifying certain aspects of the topic and the historical and political context. In chapter 3, Kamila Hladíková describes the clash of Chinese and Tibetan narratives explaining recent Tibetan history, mainly regarding the occupation of Tibetan-inhabited territories by the Peoples' Liberation Army in 1950–1951 and the legitimization of the regime after 1959. Because Jan Vinař is a largely unknown figure even for the Czech public, chapter 4 of this book provides his detailed biography and introduction of his work by Luboš Bělka. Chapters 5 to 7, all written by the same author, explain the historical background of the decade between 1950 and 1959 in Tibet, analyze the texts published by other visitors to Tibet in that time and introduce the phenomenon known in Tibetan language as *tamdzing*, or struggle sessions.

The presented publication should serve to the broader circles of educated readers, not exclusively to academics and scholars. Even though the book is an academic publication, the original text by Jan Vinař was meant as an actual piece of journalism from Tibet in 1959 written for everyone interested in China and/or Tibet from both political and historical point of view. Thanks to its content, the book is a unique publication providing new information, not just textual, but visual as well.



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List of Abbreviations

ADN	Der Allgemeine Deutsche Nachrichtendienst
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
ČTK	Czechoslovak Press Agency (Československá tisková kancelář)
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GDR	German Democratic Republic
KMT	Kuomintang
PCTAR	Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
TAR	Tibet Autonomous Region
UN	United Nations
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
USA	United States of America



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- Fig. 142: Undated photo of Jan Vinař in the early 1980s (Courtesy of Adela Stoulil Family Archive).



Attachments

Attachment no. 1

List of participants in the first journalist expedition to Lhasa, Zhikatse and Gyantse in 1955¹

- Karel Beba (October 7, 1922–?) (Prague, Czechoslovak Press Agency, ČTK)
- Marian Leon Bielicki² (alias Stefan Lemar; June 5, 1920, Vilnius, Lithuania – April 8, 1972, Warsaw, *Trybuna Ludu*, Poland)
- Franco Calamandrei³ (September 21, 1917 – September 26, 1982, Rome, *l'Unità*, Italy)⁴
- Martin Döring⁵ (August 22, 1896 – September 28, 1957, East Berlin, *Neues Deutschland*, ADN, Der Allgemeine Deutsche Nachrichtendienst, German Democratic Republic)⁶
- Israel Epstein⁷ (April 20, 1915 – May 26, 2005, *National Guardian*, USA)
- Vadim Borisovich Kassis⁸ (1925–?, Moscow, *Komsomolskaja Pravda*, Soviet Union)⁹
- Marius Magnien¹⁰ (June 13, 1903 – February 21, 1962, Paris, *L'Humanité*, France)
- Vsevolod Vladimirovich Ovchinnikov¹¹ (November 17, 1926 – August 30, 2021, Moscow, *Pravda*, Soviet Union)
- Maria Teresa Regard¹² (married Calamandrei, January 16, 1924 – February 21, 2000, Italy)
- Alan Winnington¹³ (March 16, 1910 – November 26, 1983; London, *Daily Worker*, UK)

Attachment no. 2

List of participants of the second journalist expedition to Lhasa, Lhoka, and Zhikatse in 1959

The second and last journalist expedition to Tibet, organised from Beijing, took place almost exactly four years after the first one. Jan Vinař writes that the group consisted of eighteen journalists from ten countries, among them Hungary, the Soviet Union, Canada, GDR, FRG, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, the USA, France and the UK. There is not any source listing all the participants with their names, but the supposed participants are these:

- Edouard Calic¹⁴ (October 14, 1910, Marzana, Austro-Hungarian Empire – August 29, 2003, Salzburg, Austria)
- Ernő Csonka¹⁵ (Hungary)
- Michail Georgiyevich Domogatskikh¹⁶ (July 23, 1923 – July 3, 2000, Soviet Union)¹⁷
- Sydney Gordon (1915–1984, Canada)¹⁸
- Harald Hauser (December 17, 1912 – August 6, 1994, *Freie Welt*, GDR)
- Leonid Alexeyevich Koryavin¹⁹ (Moscow, *Komsomolskaya pravda*, Soviet Union)²⁰
- Ivan Gavrilovich Loboda²¹ (1916–2002, Soviet Union)
- Jerzy Lobman²² (March 25, 1920–?, Warsaw, *Trybuna Ludu*, Poland)
- Zbyněk Málek²³ (Prague, *Rudé právo*, 1922–?, Czechoslovakia)
- Munteanu²⁴ (Bucharest, *Scînteia*, Romania)
- Eva Siao Sandberg²⁵ (1911–2001)
- Zbigniew Soluba²⁶ (April 1, 1924 – August 29, 2000, Poland)
- Anna Louise Strong²⁷ (November 24, 1885, Friend, Nebraska – March 29, 1970, Beijing)
- Bronisław Tronski (September 23, 1921 – January 15, 2012, Poland)
- Jean-Émile Vidal²⁸ (February 6, 1925 – December 21, 2002, Paris, *l'Humanité*, France)
- Jan Vinař (July 15, 1914 – September 23, 1983, Czechoslovak Radio, Czechoslovakia)
- Alan Winnington (March 16, 1910 – November 26, 1983; London, *Daily Worker*, UK)

Notes:

- 1) Karel Beba stated that the journalists from the below-mentioned leftist media took part in the first expedition without stating their names: *Pravda*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Trybuna Ludu*, *Neues Deutschland*, *l'Unità*, *Il Nuovo Corriere*, *Daily Worker*, *National Guardian*, *l'Humanité*, *ČTK*.
- 2) Marian Leon Bielicki, *Opowieści Szidikura: baśnie i legendy Tybetu* (Warszawa: Nasza księgarnia, 1957).
- 3) Franco Calamandrei and Maria Teresa Regard, *Rompicapo tibetano* [Tibetan puzzle] (Firenze: Parenti, 1959).
- 4) See Beba, "Tajemny" Tibet, 11.
- 5) Martin Döring was German journalist who joined the Communist Party before World War Two. From the year 1939 up until the end of the war, he was imprisoned in Sachsenhausen concentration camp. He stayed in Eastern Germany and became the chief editor of *Die Wirtschaft*. Shortly before his death in 1957, he was an accredited reporter of ADN (Allgemeiner Deutscher Nachrichtendienst, East-German press agency established in the Soviet occupation zone in 1946 and operating until the reunification of Germany in 1992) in Beijing. See Michael Minholz – Uwe Stürnberg, *Der Allgemeine Deutsche Nachrichtendienst (ADN): gute Nachrichten für die SED, Kommunikation und Politik*, Band 27 (Berlin: De Gruyter Saur, 1995), 405.
- 6) Beba, "Tajemny" Tibet, 51.
- 7) Beba, "Tajemny" Tibet, 99. Epstein, *Tibet Transformed*. Israel Epstein visited Tibet four times – in 1955, 1965, 1976 and the last time in 1985 (see his book *My China Eye: Memoirs of a Jew and a Journalist*, 271)
- 8) Beba, "Tajemny" Tibet, 7.
- 9) Vadim Borisovich Kassis, *Vosemdesyat dney v Tibete* [Eighty Days in Tibet] (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoye izdatelstvo geograficheskoy literatury, 1956), 91 pages, [8] pages of plates: illustrations; 20 cm. He published many books and articles about espionage. See also Vadim Borisovich Kassis, *Prodelki diadushki Denba: tibetskoye narodnoye tvorchestvo* [Granddad Denba pranks: Tibetan national art] (Moskva: Gosizdat, 1962).
- 10) Marius Magnien, *Le Tibet sans mystère* (Paris: Éditions Sociales Paris, 1959, 11 ill., 196 pages).; see also Marius Magnien, *Symphonies tibétaines* (Genève: Éditions-Librairie Rousseau, 1963, 176 p.).
- 11) V. V. Ovchinnikov visited Tibet two times, in 1955 and in 1990. He published two books and several articles about his visits. See his book *Puteshestviye v Tibet* [Trip to Tibet]. Moskva: Gosudarstvennoye izdatelstvo detskoy literatury, 1957; *Vozneseniye v Shambalu. Sto dney v Tibete p'atidesiatykh i devianostykh* [Ascension to Shambhala: one hundred days under the skies of Tibet in the 50s and 90s] (Moskva: AST, 1997).
- 12) Beba, "Tajemny" Tibet, 11.
- 13) Alan Winnington, *Tibet – Record of a Journey* (London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd., 1957, 235 p., 27 Fig., map); *Tibet – Record of a Journey* (New York: International Publishers, 1957); in Russian: *Tibet: Rasskaz o putieshestviyi* (Moskva: Izdatelstvo innostrannoy literatury, 1958); in German: *Tibet. Ein Reisebericht* (Berlin: Verlag Volk und Welt, 1960, 324 p., 20 fig., map).
- 14) Originally Eduard Čalić was a Yugoslavian journalist and historian of Croatian ethnicity. Since his book about Tibet called *La Chine grande Puissance* (Paris: André Bonne) was published already in 1960 (German edition *Die roten Söhne des Himmels* [Hannover, Fackelträger-Verlag Schmidt-Küster GmbH, 1962]), it is possible that he participated in the 1959 expedition. As he does not mention any details about the trip in the book and his name was never mentioned by other participants, it is possible that he visited Tibet separately. He was sent to China as a reporter for the Parisian journal *Combat*. In August 1942, he was imprisoned in a concentration camp in Sachsenhausen, where he survived the so-called death march in 1945. After World War Two, he was a journalist in France and FRG. He published several books about the Nazi regime and its leaders, such as Heinrich Himmler and Reinhard Heydrich.
- 15) Bronislaw Tronski, *Na dachu świata* [On the Roof of the World] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1960), 115.
- 16) Michail Alexeyevich Domogatskikh, „Segodnja v Tibete“ [Today in Tibet], *Pravda* 48/265, 15024 (September 3, 1959): 3.
- 17) Ibid.
- 18) Personal information, Tom Grunfeld (July 20, 2019).
- 19) Tronski, *Na dachu świata*, 115.
- 20) Leonid Alexeyevich Koryavin, „Chystyi sneg Tibeta“ [Clean Snow of Tibet], *Komsomolskaya pravda* 35/224.10549, (September 23, 1959): 3.

- 21) Tronski, *Na dachu świata*, 108.
- 22) Personal information, Tom Grunfeld (July 20, 2019).
- 23) Jerzy Lobman, *Tybet*, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza 1960, 160.
- 24) Jerzy Lobman, *Tybet* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1960), 116. He does not mention the first name.
- 25) Eva Siao Sandberg was a Soviet citizen at the time of the expedition. She held the citizenship of the Soviet Union until 1962 when Beijing threatened her with expulsion from the PRC if she insisted on keeping it.
- 26) Tronski, *Na dachu świata*, 116; see also Janusz Roszkowski, „Zbigniew Soluba. Pożegnanie (1924 – 2000)“, *Gazeta Stołeczna* no. 209, September 7, 2000, 15.
- 27) Anna Louise Strong, *Tibetan Interviews* (Peking: New World Press, 1959); *When Serfs Stood Up in Tibet* (Peking: New World Press, 1960); *Entschleiertes Tibet* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961); *When Serfs Stood up in Tibet* (San Francisco: Red Sun Publishers, 1976). Concerning her activities in China before World War Two, see Paul French, *Through the Looking Glass: China's Foreign Journalists from Opium Wars to Mao* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 208–211.
- 28) Domogatskikh, *Utro Tibeta*, 12.



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Jan Vinař

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