



INDIA AND CHINA

By MICHEL PABLO

"It is a part of historical fact that the center of gravity of conflict is shifting from Europe to Asia," declared Nehru on the same day he received Eisenhower in New Delhi.

"For the first time," he added, "a would-be world Power is sitting on our border. Two mighty

armies are facing each other across 2,500 miles of the Himalayas, and today they are facing each other in anger . . . Mighty changes are converging on the 600 million Chinese. The 400 million Indians are also changing, but not in that violent and abrupt way. If two mighty countries face each

other in an armed way, it is a major world event.”¹

For nine whole years, Nehru admits, he avoided raising the question of China, despite the fact that he was aware that “Communist China was making some kind of claim on Indian territory,”² and that she had even established administrative and military control over the territories appearing as Chinese in her maps.

Why, then, does Nehru now change his attitude, and even go so far as to allow himself to foreshadow the menace of a possible war between India and China?

The main explanation for this significant about-face is in reality to be found in the consequences which the events in Tibet this year are beginning to bring.

The “friendship” of India and China during these last nine years was based in large part on the existence of a barrier — the feudal régime embracing the whole Himalayan region which separates the two countries.

This barrier to some extent dammed up the dynamism of the Chinese revolution and considerably lessened the danger of its contaminating feudal-capitalist India. The Tibetan events, forcing the Peking government to proceed with a radical social transformation of the Himalayan zone, busted the dam. Henceforward the torrent of the expanding Chinese revolution will come bursting through the mountains, overflowing into India itself.

This is the fundamental reason now impelling Nehru to hover between alarms and threats. Already the question has gone far beyond a dispute over some frontier positions, never clearly defined historically — though certainly of very considerable strategic interest — and situated in a deserted area. It is now becoming an extremely serious affair: *concerning the revolutionary infection of all the buffer territories stretching over 2,500 miles, which should form a barrier to the Chinese revolution — Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal, Tibet, Kashmir.*

For so long as this danger did not exist, Nehru avoided raising the question of the control established by the Chinese over the territories figuring on their maps.

For example Nehru admits that he knew, two years ago, that the Chinese were solidly installed in Ladakh and that they had even built a road. “In order not to stir up Indian national feeling,” he claims, he withheld the information from parliament.

Really he avoided for a long time negotiating the delimitation of frontiers, as the Chinese had

never ceased from requesting, knowing that, *even from the historical and juridical points of view, his case was not so solid.*

“The quarrel with India is about frontiers which were fixed by British imperial power,” the British *Observer* frankly admits (November 22, 1959). It adds:

Britain, having conquered India, *pushed out her frontiers as far as they could be carried without a major war.* In doing this, Britain occupied a border area *much of which was inhabited by non-Indian peoples.* The frontier with China, where demarcated at all, *was fixed arbitrarily and surreptitiously,* or by treaties which Peking now denies were correctly negotiated with the Chinese central government of the time. (Emphasis added.)

The frontier incidents of this year did not occur as a result of a so-called recent incursion of the Chinese into Indian territory, but on the contrary as a result of the entry of Indian patrols into regions and strongholds controlled administratively and militarily for a long time by the Chinese.

END OF “BUFFER” ZONE

This is a point which generally escapes the hasty critics of Peking. *But then why, after being uninterested for so long in the presence of the Chinese in these regions and strongholds, does Nehru decide so late in the day to dislodge them by military force?*

That is the question to which an answer must be given.

Let us listen to the voice of the London *Times* (November 28, 1959), which no one could very well suspect of particularly friendly sentiments towards Peking. In a leader of very great consequence, the organ of the British big bourgeoisie made some extremely significant and important confessions. We cite them almost in full:

Ever since Chinese power was reasserted in Tibet, the whole Himalayan region has been given a new importance. At times, in the past, this area may have served as a *buffer zone.* But it has also been for long periods under the influence of either India or China. . . . Now Chinese influence *could return again to Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim.* All these territories have at times recognized some kind of shadowy authority in Peking. *To say that Chinese power threatens to spread in the area is not to impute any present aggressive designs to the Chinese.* They have, indeed, been expressly denied in Peking. But *the steady transformation of Tibet cannot go on in total isolation. Change will always filter through these high valleys and across these bleak plateaux where most of the inhabitants are*

¹ *New York Herald Tribune*, December 10, 1959.

² *Ibidem.*

Tibetans by race. This is true of Ladakh, of parts of Nepal and Sikkim, of most of Bhutan and of some pockets along the McMahon Line. For the moment the rulers and the priests in these territories have reacted sharply against Peking and its works. But absolute rule is being questioned even in these remote places and those who question it may not be so ready to abhor the changes going on across the frontiers. The long-term possibility is therefore quite simple. Either *progress in Tibet* — ruthlessly imposed maybe, but visible in its material change — will slowly *draw the people of these other territories into its orbit* or India must make a move to assure her own northern frontiers from this possibility as well as reaffirming lines on maps. The buffer state can survive only so long as the Powers on each side respect and value its position and its own internal development proceeds in the same relative isolation. That can no longer be true of these Himalayan territories. In Mao Tse-Tung's phrase, they must *lean to one side or the other*. The shift may not come about immediately; a certain neutrality can and should survive. But to the question: on which side are you neutral? Mr Nehru has now stated the Indian answer. (Emphasis ours.)

It is impossible to be more clear on the revolutionary consequences of the events in Tibet, and on the profound reasons for the new attitude of Nehru, conscious representative of the threatened Indian bourgeoisie.

Recent events perfectly underline these conclusions.

Nehru is in process of applying pressure on Nepal to align this state with New Delhi against Peking. He has gone so far as to declare in parliament that "any attack on Nepal or Bhutan would be regarded as aggression against India"!

But the masses of these areas are far from welcoming Indian "friendship" and "protection." Obviously the language of the Chinese revolution emanating from Tibet suits them much better.

"The land of Gurkha warriors surrounded by mountains and sandwiched between Red China's Tibet and the Ganges plain, is determined not to get dragged into Delhi's squabbles with Peking," writes the correspondent of *The News Chronicle* in Khatmandu. (November 30, 1959.)

So determined, that its inhabitants openly revolt against Indian officers who try hard to utilize these Gurkha warriors to exterminate the supporters of unification of Nepal with Tibet and China!

"India has withdrawn almost all its crack Gurkha troops," writes the correspondent of *The Daily Express* in Calcutta (December 2, 1959),

"from the two vital strategic areas of Sikkim and the North-East Frontier Agency, and replaced them by Punjabi regiments of Sikhs.

"The move follows repeated reports of disaffection and intensive political activity among the Gurkhas, the hardy hill fighters from Nepal and the surrounding districts. An organization called the Gurkha League has been active among Gurkha troops." Members of this League "talk of a Mongol Brotherhood in which Nepal, Tibet and China would be 'blood brothers.'

"When the Gurkha troops," commanded by Indian officers and destined for the repression of such League members, "found that the people they were supposed to shoot at were exactly like themselves, some units became completely demoralized."

NEHRU'S HYPOCRISY UNMASKED

Thus the hypocrisy of Nehru in accusing China of having suppressed the "national revolt" in Tibet is completely unmasked by his own attempt to crush the national and social revolt in Nepal. The revolutionary infection originating in China and Tibet is penetrating ever more profoundly into Indian territory.

Despite the shameful attitude of the Communist Party of India to the frontier incidents, and in spite of the nationalist propaganda which the Indian bourgeoisie is spreading among the masses, and particularly the petty-bourgeoisie, of the country, the peasants of India, hungry for land and justice, are interpreting the Chinese "provocations" after their own fashion: they continue in some regions to vote in massive proportions for the Indian Communist Party.

The same correspondent of *The Daily Express* in Calcutta cables (December 3, 1959):

The Communist Party of India has just won a crucial by-election in a constituency of Assam on the edge of the North-East Frontier Agency. Previously the seat had been won twice by Congress. They had confidently raised the Chinese border issue during the campaign." (Emphasis added.)

When Nehru speaks of the new "historic" fact constituted by Sino-Indian relations at the present moment, which he wishes to present in terms of nationalist tension, this should deceive nobody.

It is the expanding Chinese revolution, "brusque" and "violent," which is threatening the rotten feudal-capitalist régime of India. The peasants, serfs and share-croppers of the Himalayas, and beyond the Himalayas deep into Indian territory, are beginning to cock an ear to the powerful echo sounding out of rumbling Tibet and from the revolutionary Chinese countryside. The Indian bourgeoisie and imperialism have instantly understood the danger. The Eisenhower visit, the con-

versations which have taken place, the agreements reached, have sealed the rapprochement between New Delhi and Washington now under way, which has no other aim than to try to consolidate a lasting feudal-capitalist reactionary bastion "as a counterweight to China" (*Le Monde*, December 11, 1959.)

Imperceptibly the "neutralist" régime of Nehru and his "socialist" economy — so-called, presumably, because of the preponderance of the public over the private sector — are sliding into alliance, including military alliance, with imperialism, and the sudden and swift enlarging of private, in-

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cluding foreign, enterprise and capital. The Third Five-Year Plan, in preparation, is based more particularly on the more or less concealed contribution of the latter (foreign capital.) For "defense," in case of need, "both guns and butter are equally useful," declares Nehru, counting on the comprehension, already attained, of Eisenhower.

But it will not be long before the Indian bourgeoisie understands that such a "defense" against the revolution will only have the effect of accelerating the irrepressible advance of the latter.

Rolling round the Himalayas, already thunder sounds the coming of the storm.