Truth is Our Only Weapon

SAVE TIBET
CHINESE GET LOST FROM
IT BELONGS TO US

THE TIBETAN NONVIOLENT STRUGGLE
NONVIOLENCE IN ASIA SERIES
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Truth is Our Only Weapon
Truth is Our Only Weapon: 
The Tibetan Nonviolent Struggle

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Right from the moment when we Tibetans first came into exile, we calculated that our struggle might take generations to fulfil. However, we were all determined to work hard to preserve our unique culture, particularly our rich Buddhist heritage. Today, when we look back, we can note with some satisfaction the achievements we have made in education our young people and preserving our cultural traditions and values at a time when they are under extinction in our homeland.

Tibetan culture places great importance on compassion and nonviolence. The Buddha’s advice that we should help others as much as we can and at least avoid harming them or contributing to their harm, remains an essentially practical and relevant message today. It is because of these essential humane values that I feel that we have a contribution to make to peace in the world. So, the message is that it is not the possession of wealth and weapons, but whether you have patience, compassion and concern for others that is the source of peace and happiness.

Despite recent developments inside Tibet, which have seen an increase in repression, I am still committed to a nonviolent middle-way approach. Many younger people, and some older ones inside Tibet are losing patience and I can understand their feelings. But I feel strongly that nonviolence is the only way and that it is the right way. And until my death there will be no change in my own commitment to nonviolence.

Today, nearly all those Tibetans inside and outside Tibet who fought against the Chinese occupation in the early 1950s have gone, but the issue of Tibet remains on the international agenda and is still very sensitive to the Chinese government. Why? Because young Tibetans who have never seen our old Tibet have shouldered the responsibility of carrying on our nonviolent struggle.
One encouraging result of our commitment to nonviolence is that many of our Chinese brothers and sisters, not only those outside China, but also those within China and Tibet, have begun to express their appreciation of our situation. This is valuable and important. They understand that Tibet was a separate nation, geographically, linguistically, culturally, racially and historically. According to these factors, Tibet is now an occupied country.

As a leader of the Tibetan people, my prime concern is to pursue all effective means to relieve them from Chinese oppression and restore their freedom. And as a convinced follower of nonviolence I support the path of reasoned and peaceful change. I feel that although it is very difficult to struggle for freedom through nonviolence, it is very important to try. If the last century was an era of war and bloodshed, I feel that this century should open an era of dialogue. Instead of using force to resolve conflicts, we must listen to our opponent’s views, ideas and opinions. We urgently need to find such a new approach to solving human problems.

Therefore, support for the Tibetan cause will not only help the six million Tibetans, but will serve to help create a new pattern or model for the struggle for freedom. I believe that if we fail, it will be a disaster for everyone, but if we are successful in using nonviolence with compassion to achieve our goal, it will be in the interest of the entire human community. Therefore, I appeal to everyone who reads this book, please continue to extend your support until our goal of freedom is achieved.

Tenzin Gyatso
14th Dalai Lama
8 May 2000
The Tibetan Nonviolent Struggle

Tsering left Tibet in 1991 to travel to the Tibetan community-in-exile after his mother died. He had spent years wondering and collecting traditional songs and dances throughout Tibet, and his mother had told him that his interests and activities were special. Few people still knew the old songs and dances, she had told him. When we met him, we immediately were intrigued by his way of speaking in English, which had a singsong like cadence. He described to us his classification of traditional songs he has memorized for performance. “One group of songs is about 800 years old, a second group is about 1,000 years old. Then there are the old ones.” He now lives in India to keep these Tibetan songs and dances from being lost. He teaches them at the Tibetan Government-in-exile’s Institute for Performing Arts.

As a vehicle for cultural survival, Tsering is a ‘frontline warrior’ in the Tibetan liberation struggle. The Tibetan Government-in-exile has made the survival of culture its priority in their struggle to regain governance from the Peoples Republic of China. It would not be unexpected if hatred ran deep among Tibetan exiles towards the people who have colonized their homeland. With humility and honesty, Tsering told us that he had no hatred toward the Chinese in general. “I had several Chinese friends in Tibet, and I must say I like the Chinese people. They suffer too, you know. Look at what happened to their aspirations at Tiananmen Square. They tried to stand up for what they wanted. It was the same as with us....”

Separating the oppressor from the act of oppression is the heart of the nonviolent struggle. The struggle by Tibetan people for the liberation of their homeland is one of the longest running anti-colonial campaigns with the exception of the Irish and Palestinian struggles. Unlike others, it has not become a protracted violent conflict; the Tibetan people have steadfastly resisted the occupation of their homeland through primarily nonviolent means. In recognition of their means, and their persistence, the foremost Tibetan in exile, the Dalai Lama, was recognized for these actions in 1989 by humanity’s highest honor for peacemakers—the Nobel Prize for Peace.
The goal of this publication is to introduce the general reading public to the methods of strategic nonviolent political struggle and to document one of its most dramatic applications in the world today. The use of active nonviolence by the Tibetan liberation struggle is well known, at least to the extent that it is generally recognized that they are not waging an armed struggle. Exactly what the Tibetans have been doing, and why that makes a difference, is less clear. Even sometimes to the Tibetan people themselves. This is due, in part, to the fact that the global media give us few tools to analyze strategic nonviolent struggle, and that the political vocabulary has few agreed upon terms to describe nonviolent action or ‘political struggle.’ When we began this research, we interviewed some refugees who had recently fled occupied Tibet. We initially asked what examples of active nonviolence were taking place within Tibet, to which they replied “None. It is not permitted”. After some time, we learned to ask “Do the people of Tibet accept the current government,” to which we would receive a less ambiguous, “Oh No!” “How do they show that?” We would then ask, to which we would frequently receive a dramatic story of a bold and nonviolent action that was used by an individual or a small group to demonstrate its nonacceptance of the current PRC occupation government.

Even after imprisonment we discovered many stories of individuals or small groups of people who refused to passively accept the authority of their jailers. They carried on their protest within the prison by non-cooperation with work regimes, writing about their experience to other Tibetans or the chanting or singing of songs of national liberation or Tibetan culture.

The Tibetan liberation struggle is hidden behind today’s headlines. Frequently it is only portrayed as a human rights abuse. Abuse of Tibetan human rights is certainly widespread. We were drawn to documenting the depth of the tactics of nonviolence used by Tibetans, which demonstrate their absolute rejection of Chinese governance, by reading a series of human rights reports. These reports revealed a vast number of individual or small group acts of resistance and defiance, both in the capital, Lhasa, and in other areas of the country.

In the section of this manuscript titled the Tibetan Liberation Struggle, we give examples of over 30 different nonviolent methods used repeatedly throughout Tibet. They fall under three broad categories: Protest Actions (saying what they are against); Constructive Programs (saying what they are for) and Actions of Non-Cooperation (withdrawal of their permission to be ruled by the current government).

Participation in these nonviolence actions has a high price. Arrest, interrogation and imprisonment, frequently for 10 years or more, follow acts against the current government. While clearly a violation of a person’s rights under the UN Declaration to nonviolently express a political opinion, we can point to few countries on the planet today where the population would continue for years to take part in nonviolent demonstrations in the face of such prosecution and loss of freedom. In our opinion, civil disobedience, as currently practiced in North America or Europe, would crumble as a form of political expression if its practitioners were routinely placed under such long prison sentences, especially since it is usually accompanied with torture and hard labor in Tibet.

During the last decade and a half Tibetans have carried on what we now believe to be the most dramatic and inspiring use of nonviolence as a method of national liberation to be found anywhere on the Earth. Immediately following invasion and occupation by the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA), some Tibetans engaged in an armed guerilla campaign. This was doomed to failure against the world’s largest standing army, whose sophisticated police and crowd control equipment is now exported to a variety of repressive regimes, such as the military junta in neighboring Burma. Non-violent struggle is something the highly militarized Peoples Republic of China (PRC) has not been prepared for, and cannot combat. Each violent action the Chinese government takes in response to nonviolent action reveals them to be an oppressor. Tibet has drawn enormous international support due to its consistently nonviolent character. Retaliatory actions by the PRC against any government which allows a visit of the Dalai Lama appears petty and unjust. Nonviolence is a weapon, which by its nature reveals the truth. The PRC says they liberated Tibet, however, their need to continually suppress and stifle dissenting views of Tibetan people nonviolently rejecting the PRC’s claim, prove Tibet is not free.
The role of the international community in helping people who are in an active nonviolent struggle against repression is extremely important. All of us who value freedom and justice and nonviolent resolution of dispute have an obligation to use what freedoms we have to support those who have little and seek justice through nonviolent means. International solidarity is a key link in the great chain of active nonviolence. This report is one contribution by us to the international nonviolent struggle for a less violent world.

Katherine Kramer
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July 2000
The spirit of Mahatma Gandhi’s liberation struggle was still alive in India, only a few years after his assassination, when the Dalai Lama made his first trip to India. Gandhi laid the foundation for the use of nonviolence in political struggles for this century in his campaign for India’s independence. The Indian liberation struggle demonstrated that nonviolence is not a passive or unplanned response to conflict. Rather it is a planned and active engagement with the conflict situation. Gandhi was guided by both deeply religious beliefs and an acute political sense, a combination that is also present in the Tibetan struggle for independence. Gandhi believed that nonviolence must ‘reveal the truth’ while simultaneously maintaining compassion for the adversary. He practiced a form of political struggle that attacked the structures of a system of oppression, rather than the people within the system.
Principled and Pragmatic Approaches to Nonviolence

I object to violence...because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary, the evil it does is permanent —Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi’s approach to nonviolence is called the **principled approach**, which incorporates the philosophy of non-harm as a way of life, rather than solely as a tool for dealing with conflict. This approach to nonviolence is more than a moral decision not to inflict suffering on the opponent. There is an understanding that the means and ends for achieving one’s goals are indivisible. Violence can not be used to bring about peace. Only through nonviolent methods can one attain a nonviolent result. Fundamental in the principled approach is recognition that both parties have needs, which have to be resolved. Therefore there is a dedication on the part of the activist group to pursue problem-solving negotiations to achieve a solution equally beneficial to both parties in conflict.

Several political struggles in the world today, particularly in the western democracies, but also in some recent large liberation movements, such as the actions by SOLIDARITY in Poland in the early 1980s, use what is called the **pragmatic approach** to nonviolent struggle. Pragmatic activists use nonviolent methods because they believe it is the most effective means of defeating the adversary under the circumstances, i.e. violence is not a realistic option and/or is seen as counter-productive. Nonviolence is seen within its pragmatic use as only one of several possible methods with which to respond to the conflict situation. No firm decision to reject violence may have been made by the group. Pragmatic activists do not usually incorporate a philosophy of non-harm into their way of life.

Methods of Nonviolent Action

Street demonstrations, hunger strikes and peace walks are some commonly recognized methods of nonviolence, but the number of ways to do nonviolent action are only limited by the creativity of the activist group. A popular peace researcher, Gene Sharp, has produced an easily understandable classification system for nonviolent methods, which breaks them down into three categories of action:

**Nonviolent protest and persuasion** can include demonstrations, the use of posters, street theatre, and processions, in other words symbolic acts of peaceful opposition or attempted persuasion that extend beyond verbal expression. The goal of a protest action is to publicly register a grievance with the authorities, or to register a demand that a policy of practice be changed. Nonviolent persuasion attempts to bring about a change of heart or approach by the adversary or authorities.

**Non-cooperation** includes boycotts, strikes, and non-cooperation with authorities; in other words, the activist withdraws their cooperation from the person, activity, institution or regime with which the activist is engaged in conflict. The goal is to bring about change by withdrawing the activists’ group support or acknowledgement of the formal power holder or policy maker.

**Nonviolent intervention** includes nonviolent blockades, fasting, and establishing alternative or parallel political, economic, and social institutions. In other words, methods in some form intervene in the situation by disrupting, destroying or providing preferred alternatives to the established behavioral patterns, policies, relationships, or institutions that are considered unacceptable.
by the activist. Here the goal is change in a situation in which the activist isn’t always the direct victim of injustice, but acting in solidarity, or on behalf of, a victimized group.

Constructive Program

A successful nonviolent campaign manifests not only a willingness to mobilize political protest, but should also offer positive alternatives to the current situation, while always maintaining avenues for negotiation with the adversary. Gandhi defined the inclusion of actions, which build a positive alternative to the current situation as constructive programs. For example, the promotion of one’s culture in cases of assimilation, the creation of a new government structure, and international resolutions supporting dialogue are a few. Most nonviolent power struggles use a combination of all four categories within their campaign strategy.

A nonviolent power struggle needs a cohesive strategy in order to be effective. Social movements, or individuals without a constructive program and plan of action, are left in a reactionary position. They can only follow or re-act to events orchestrated or led by the adversary. The adversary then controls the situation. An analogy can be drawn from sports, where teams must play both defensively and offensively. Simply using a nonviolent method in a defensive reaction is not nonviolence; it is simply not being violent. Developing a cohesive nonviolent strategy places the nonviolent struggle on the offensive, giving control of the situation to the nonviolent practitioner.

Strategic Nonviolent Campaigns

Robert Burrowes, a nonviolent strategist, offers great insight on how to plan a nonviolent struggle. He believes that all strategic nonviolent campaigns have the twin goal of both altering the will of the adversary to conduct oppressive acts, and to undermine their power to do so. To do this, the nonviolent practitioner must identify the focal point of the adversary’s power and support, in other words their political center of gravity. It is the political center of gravity that the adversary must defend while simultaneously maintaining their oppression. To undermine the adversary’s will to conduct oppressive acts, the nonviolent practitioner seeks to build alliances with, or influence the opinion of, the key social groups that support the adversary. This includes the adversary who carries out aggression or oppression, the constituency of the adversary, and the allies of the adversary’s constituency. In order to have optimum effect, the nonviolent struggle must engage all social groups on both sides of the conflict as well as third parties. It is imperative to actively engage as many people as possible in positions within governments; the media; business; academia; religious groups; non-governmental agencies and the public, to support the goals of the nonviolent campaign.

Simultaneously, the nonviolent struggle must also defend its own political center of gravity, the focal point of its power and support. This is accomplished by mobilizing all key social groups and by consolidating the will and the power of the defending population to resist the aggression. This framework of strategic nonviolent action is illustrated below.

The Tibetan nonviolent liberation struggle contains all the key elements of a well-planned nonviolent campaign, seeking to undermine the will and ability of the Chinese authorities to continue their aggression and occupation of Tibet. In the following pages we will outline the methods and strategies being used by both those within Tibet as well as those in exile.
The Political Purpose of the Tibetan Nonviolent Resistance

Strategic Aim of the Tibetan Resistance:
To consolidate the power and will of the Tibetan people to oust the occupation while building an independent government system.

Within Tibet:
- Conducts secret activities to undermine the occupation system.
- Engages in cultural and educational pursuits to nurture resistance.

Outside Tibet:
- Maintains political positions outside Tibet to garner support.
- Organizes conferences and meetings to spread information and strategies.

Constructive Program:
- Launches key cultural institutions, including religious, medical, and educational.
- Engages in economic development projects.
- Attracts and retains high-energy professionals.

Strategic Goals of the Counteroffensive:
- To influence the Hong Kong people to support and support PRC activities in Tibet.

Tibetan Nonviolent Resistance

PRC Activities in Tibet

Strategic Aim of the Tibetan Counteroffensive:
- To counteract the Tibet situation and influence the PRC through the Tibetan's will and power.
Nonviolent Resistance in Tibet

The Tibetan Liberation Struggle
Tibetans have exhibited an undaunted determination to obstruct Tibet’s incorporation into China. Quite literally, Tibetans have refused to be silent. Resistance has involved both a short-lived guerilla war and an enduring nonviolent struggle. Our report will focus on the widespread increase in nonviolent activity since 1987, which began with a demonstration lead by twenty-one Buddhist monks in Lhasa on 27 September 1987. This demonstration, though relatively small, breathed new life into the Tibetan nonviolent movement.

In 1986 people and monks at my monastery began thinking of doing something to speak out against the Chinese occupation, however it wasn’t until 1987 that the monks of Drepung Monastery showed us the way to act.


More than a decade later, nonviolence actions continue to be carried out by the Tibetan population against the Chinese occupation. The nonviolent movement is gaining momentum, even when confronted by China’s increasing brutality in their attempt to eradicate the new upsurge in pro-independence support. The Buddhist monks from Lhasa’s three most prestigious monasteries, Drepung, Sera and Ganden were originally deemed the instigators of the movement by the Chinese authorities, however, soon it became apparent that the seeds of discontent are widely spread. Participation in the movement is not restricted to the monastic population or the young, some of the most courageous acts of nonviolent resistance have been carried out by the lay Tibetan population and the elderly. What was first perceived as an urban phenomenon contained to Lhasa and its vicinity, has since spread to all ethnic Tibetan areas within the People’s Republic of China. Tibetan experts partially attribute the spread of pro-independence activity to China’s policy of sending released political prisoners who were monks back to their county of origin, rather than allowing them to return to their monastery. Chinese political campaigns to counter the Tibetan independence
movement, especially the campaign demanding that Tibetans denounce the Dalai Lama, are a driving force in the spread of nonviolent activities. Action by the state to quell the nonviolent movement is inadvertently creating a whole new generation of state enemies in response.

Applying well-known forms of nonviolent action, Tibetans have also used their ingenuity to discover new approaches to confound the Chinese, leaving them at a loss as in how to respond. These new methods are adopted from their culture, traditions and circumstances and are incorporated into the overall movement. The methods used by the Tibetans can be categorized as: protest action - pro-independence protest; non-cooperation - defiance and non-compliance with the occupation; and positive action/constructive program - protection of Tibetan religion and culture. These broad categories do not fully encompass the complexity of the Tibetan nonviolent struggle, in which many nonviolent methods used by Tibetans may be mixed together. These categories are given for the purpose of facilitating understanding of how Tibetans are applying nonviolent power.

Protest Action

POSTER CAMPAIGNS

Tibetans! Tibet is an independent country.
Tibet will be free and the day of shining happiness will come.
—Tibetan pro-independence poster

Poster campaigns were the main form of expressing dissent within Tibet’s political culture long before the Chinese invasion. Today, they are one of the most common forms of nonviolent action. Posters are put up in the early morning hours throughout Tibetan areas with texts in Chinese, Tibetan and English incorporating such slogans as “Tibet is Free,” “Chinese quit Tibet,” and “Long Live His Holiness the Dalai Lama.” In March 1991, the poster campaigns became so prevalent in Lhasa that the Chinese authorities sent out squads of policemen at night in order to catch Tibetans in action. Tibetan activists showed a subtle sense of humor in response—one night as the police returned to the police station they found it completely covered with pro-independence leaflets.9

Posters serve multiple purposes. They communicate to the Chinese and the world Tibet’s desire for independence; encourage the Tibetan population to unite in the struggle for independence; and serve to educate Tibetans on such issues as human rights and Tibet’s political status. Content depends largely on the prevailing circumstances of the day. In 1993, the Chinese published a notice that Tibetans currently holding positions in the Tibetan Autonomous Regional government would lose their jobs if Tibet became independent in an attempt to divide the Tibetan population. A member of the Tibetan underground movement immediately countered Chinese propaganda efforts by putting up posters in Lhasa reaffirming the
Dalai Lama’s commitment that Tibetan government employees would retain their positions in the event of Tibetan independence. The poster campaign served to create the opposite affect to that desired by the Chinese as it built a greater unity among the Tibetans than was previously evident.9

GRAFFITI

Similarly, Tibetans use graffiti to express their views and frustrate the Chinese authorities. In July 1992, Lobsang, a monk from Dumbhu Choekor Monastery, along with eight friends and four others, painted pro-independence slogans on the wall of a local bank and along the main public street in Chideshol, Lhokha Prefecture.10 The following year, Gyaga, a monk from Pomda Monastery, wrote pro-independence slogans on the walls of a government building in Pomda, Kham.11 In 1998, four monks of Rongpo Rabten Monastery in Sog county, Nagchu Prefecture humorously employed graffiti when they wrote freedom slogans on the back of a township official’s vehicle.12 Eleven monks from Karze Dhargye Monastery were charged with inscribing “Tibet is Independent” with red paint on the gates and walls of their monastery.13 These are just a few examples of the use of graffiti by Tibetans within Tibet.

PRODUCING/DISTRIBUTING PAMPHLETS, LEAFLETS, BOOKS, ETC.

We print literature in the forms of letters, brochures, and pamphlets and keep them in places where there are a lot of people, such as the Barkhor Lingkor, as well as tying them with prayer flags as a way of gaining support
—Former Ganden Monk now living in exile 14

Unlike poster campaigns and graffiti, the act of producing and/or distributing pro-independence material in the form of letters, pamphlets, leaflets, books or audiocassettes by individuals or groups of individuals is conducted for the express purpose of educating Tibetans regarding their political history and status as well as current world events. Most of the material is printed
by hand or with wooden printing blocks, with the exception of some books, brochures and audiocassettes obtained from the exile community in India and distributed in Tibet. Popular items for translation and circulation have been the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Dalai Lama’s autobiography and the Five-Point Peace Plan presented to the European Union by the Dalai Lama in 1991 in an effort to resolve the Tibetan conflict. The ban by the authorities of publication of long life prayers for the Dalai Lama, as well as some other religious texts, has transformed the simple act of publication and distribution of these materials into acts of political defiance and another opportunity to not-cooperate with the rules of the occupation.

DEMONSTRATIONS

All the people expect that if they demonstrate nicely, then they will get a chance at freedom
—Tibetan farmer who participated in the 1988 mass demonstration.\textsuperscript{15}

The most blatant form of expressing non-acceptance of Chinese occupation has been through public pro-independence demonstrations. The latest era of nonviolent struggle within Tibet began in September 1987 when twenty-one Buddhist monks from Drepung Monastery, one of the largest in Tibet, held a demonstration in the Barkhor, central market area of Lhasa surrounding the main Buddhist temple. They began a procession circulating the temple carrying a hand-drawn version of the banned Tibetan national flag on a piece of cloth and chanting, “Tibet is Independent” and “May the Dalai Lama Live Ten Thousand Years” in support of the Dalai Lama’s meeting with the United States Congressional Representatives. After completing the first circuit, they were spontaneously joined by 100 people. When they completed the customary three circuits according to Buddhist ritual, they marched towards the regional administrative offices of the Chinese Government and there the procession was dispersed by the police.\textsuperscript{16} The demonstration in effect was a dam breaking. Despite heightened surveillance and the authorities proactive stance in preventing demonstrations from occurring in Lhasa by arresting instigators within a few minutes of an attempt, there are still cases of individuals and small groups who try to demonstrate. Four demonstrations have been reported in Lhasa alone in 1999, a year marking a number of significant anniversaries for China and Tibet.\textsuperscript{17} In essence, the demonstrations, or attempts to demonstrate, are keeping the momentum of the nonviolent movement alive. Demonstrations have also occurred outside of Lhasa. In October 1999, over 3,000 people in Karze county protested the arrest of Sonam Phuntsok, a well-respected monk who was charged with indulging in political activities. Though not specifically calling for Tibetan freedom, because Sonam was associated with the cause of independence, their protest was placed within the larger context of the Tibetan freedom movement and was harshly put down by Chinese authorities.\textsuperscript{18}

The Chinese authorities have been unable to deter political demonstrations by imprisoning the demonstrators. Rather, the political demonstrations are staged within the prison walls, often corresponding to visiting delegations from around the world. Most worrisome for the Chinese authorities has been the increasing number of non-political prisoners who have initiated pro-independence demonstrations within the prisons. Chinese authorities keep political and criminal prisoners separate to prevent the former from influencing the latter with political ideas, just as in the wider society they marginalize dissident thinkers so that ordinary people are not influenced by their ideas. The most recent demonstrations, and most
significant thus far of the prison demonstrations, occurred in Drapchi prison, the main prison for political prisoners in Tibet, on 1 May and on 4 May 1998. Both demonstrations were begun with a criminal prisoner shouting slogans. Prison officials brutally responded to the demonstrations with gunfire, killing two prisoners and severely injuring at least two others. Another eight deaths were reported from subsequent interrogations, torture and solitary confinement following the demonstrations. Clearly, segregating the two categories of prisoners has not been effective. If anything, the recent demonstrations strongly attest to the unity among Tibetan prisoners with the common cause of a free Tibet. Prisoners’ defiance shows their jailers that the Chinese system of political reform through incarceration is not succeeding.

Non-political demonstrations are also occurring with purposes ranging from promoting Tibet’s culture and fragile environment, to protesting Chinese economic and migration policies. In December 1988, three hundred students and teachers of the University of Tibet demonstrated around the Potala palace, the former residence of the Dalai Lama, demanding the reinstatement of Tibetan as the official language of the region as well as more respect for Tibetan religion and culture. The demonstrators did not exhibit any blatant forms of pro-independence. However, by choosing green cloth for their banners, a color associated with respect for the Dalai Lama, the students and teachers subtly displayed their support for the independence movement. The symbolism was lost on the Chinese authorities who allowed the demonstration to be held because it conformed to their criteria for a limited protest addressed to the Chinese government, and thus, acknowledged China’s sovereignty over Tibet.

There have been several demonstrations protesting increases in business taxes and commodity prices that not only were allowed to occur, but also achieved some amount of success, the increases were withdrawn. Some non-political demonstrations have erupted into pro-independence demonstrations. Most notable is the 1993 protest over price increases in Lhasa involving over 1,000 people, the largest demonstration since 1989. Police used tear gas to disperse the crowd.

DISRUPTION OF PATRIOTIC RE-EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS

In June 1992, four youths disrupted an afternoon patriotic re-education session in Gyama Trikhang village, Meldrogungkar when they entered unfurling a Tibetan national flag and chanting slogans calling for Tibetan independence, long life for the Dalai Lama and for the Chinese to go home. Other members of the community joined in the chanting of slogans until the police appeared with pistols and machine guns ready to shoot. A similar incident occurred in Gyama village, also in Meldrogunkar, after three farmers walked into a patriotic re-education session carrying a large Tibetan national flag with a picture of the Dalai Lama and shouting pro-independence slogans. As the farmers were being taken away by the police, villagers ran after them chanting slogans. After the small demonstration, 2/3 of the villagers chose not to return for the meeting’s conclusion, forcing it to be cancelled. In another form of disruption, Buddhist monks from a small monastery in Tsethang County walked out en-masse in June 1997 to protest re-education demands. In each case, Tibetans were able to frustrate manipulation efforts of the Chinese authorities.
DISPLAYING/POSSESSING THE TIBETAN NATIONAL FLAG

“We also make use a lot of the Tibetan national flag. They are not small in size. We use colossal flags everywhere.”
—Tibetan refugee.

The primary symbol of Tibetan independence, the Tibetan national flag, has been banned from public display and possession by the Chinese authorities. Tibetans openly defy the ban by displaying the flag whenever possible, often within pro-independence demonstrations. Tibetan national flags have appeared on numerous occasions, sometimes printed on posters and leaflets and on other occasions independently. Colossal flags have been pasted on walls or hung above prominent locations, such as monasteries or government buildings. On three occasions in May 1987, October 1988 and February 1989, the Tibetan flag was hung on the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa, the most important Buddhist temple in Tibet.

CHANTING PRO-INDEPENDENCE SLOGANS

Chanting slogans is a vocal act of political defiance. Tibetans take advantage of the chanting of slogans above and beyond its use in political demonstrations. Political prisoners chant pro-independence slogans while receiving punishment for acts of non-cooperation as a show of ultimate defiance to their oppressors. Chanting slogans can build a strong sense of unity among the resistance as one observer noted during a prayer session at Lhasa’s Ganden Ngamcho in December 1994 when a number of Tibetans started calling softly for independence. In another context, in May 1996 sloganeering was used to celebrate the departure of a re-education team from Ganden Monastery after monks refused to take down photographs of the Dalai Lama.

SINGING

“...Though prisoner today, we will never be disheartened...
—excerpt from a song written by a political prisoner

As with poster campaigns popular songs, sometimes referred to as street songs, have a historical importance in Tibet’s political scene. With the invasion of the Chinese, these songs assumed greater
significance. They not only serve to exhibit political defiance among the general population, but also act as a source of inspiration for Tibetans to resist Chinese occupation. In 1993, fourteen nuns incarcerated in Drapchi prison secretly recorded themselves singing songs whose lyrics alluded to their love for Tibet, support for the Dalai Lama and Buddhism, and for freedom in Tibet. The tape was smuggled outside and copies were distributed widely among the Tibetan population. In a more recent Drapchi prison incident, prisoners sang Tibetan freedom songs in competition with the Maoist tunes. Lay Tibetans continuously write Songs. A few years ago, a famous Tibetan singer was detained for three months for having composed a song containing political undertones. Even children have been arrested for singing songs, as in May 1997 when 40 middle school students from Ngabasang a song of praise to the Dalai Lama in front of their student body.

DEMONSTRATIVE FUNERALS

On 1 October 1987, 2-3000 Tibetans gathered in front of a police station in Lhasa demanding the release of prisoners arrested during the September 1987 demonstration. A fourteen-year old boy was shot and killed as a direct result of the violent response taken by the police. Tibetans carried the body before the Tibetan Autonomous Regions’ administrative offices. Tibetans have also been known to carry those killed in demonstrations around the Barkhor. These actions serve to morally condemn the Chinese authorities’ violent response to peaceful demonstrations.

BUDDHIST RITUAL AS PROTEST

Tibetans have displayed a large degree of ingenuity in transforming their religious and cultural heritage into forms of political protest. The upsurge of nonviolent activity in 1987 began with a daily Buddhist merit-making ritual of circumambulating a holy site, khorra. The Barkhor area of Lhasa surrounds the Jokhang Temple, an important pilgrimage site for Tibetans everywhere. By circulating the Barkhor during the demonstration, the monks incorporated khorra into the nonviolent movement. Thus, familiar, everyday actions become avenues for expressing political opposition. A network of lay people converted prayer into protest when they organized a mani (prayer) recital for those who had died in the 1987 demonstrations which was attended by two hundred lay Tibetans. Tibetans poured into the Barkhor in 1989 to perform khorra, burn incense, light butter lamps, release windhorses (prayers written on small squares of paper designed to float in the wind), and throw tsampa (roasted barley flour). All these acts are customary actions associated with auspicious events, used in this case to celebrate the Dalai Lama receiving the Nobel Peace Prize. The Chinese government responded by banning tsampa throwing.

In essence, the Chinese government is criminalizing Tibetan culture with their insistence on banning various Tibetan religious and cultural customs. Many Buddhist monks have now become ‘criminals’ for reciting long-life prayers for the Dalai Lama, a fundamental aspect of Tibetan religious ritual.
SPONTANEOUS PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Tibetans compensate for their inability to organize openly by spontaneous involvement in protests organized by a few individuals. This reveals widespread support for the nonviolent resistance movement. There are a number of cases where Tibetans numbering in the hundreds joined demonstrations begun by a handful of nuns or monks in Lhasa. The large-scale demonstrations of 1987, 1988 and 1989 were all results of spontaneous public involvement. Rural demonstrations by a few individuals have generated widespread support from other villagers who also join in the chanting of pro-independence slogans. There have also been cases of spontaneous demonstrations, such as one that occurred in front of the Jokhang temple in Lhasa in November 1995 after police attempted to remove a Dalai Lama badge from a nun.

RELIGIOUS BOYCOTT

The monastic community actively use religious boycotts to withdraw their support and cooperation from the Chinese authorities. Two years in a row, 1988 and 1989, the Buddhist monks attempted to boycott the annual Monlam Prayer Festival, which had been prohibited since occupation. The Festival was sanctioned again in 1986, however with some changes which suggested legitimate Chinese rule of Tibet. The monks refused to attend, thus withdrawing their support of China’s propaganda efforts. In 1995, the monks of Tashihunpo Monastery in Shingatse boycotted a major Buddhist festival where they were to unravel a giant scroll painting at the monastery. The boycott followed a denunciation meeting condemning their abbot, Chadrel Rinpoche, for communicating with the Dalai Lama over the choice of the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama. The meeting was called off after being disrupted by the hissing and spitting of monks who decided to boycott the festival the next day. The boycott led to the cancellation of the festival. In 1998, in Ngaba prefecture, five monks from Kirti Monastery printed posters encouraging Tibetans to boycott the Chinese campaign banning photographs of the Dalai Lama. They, themselves, boycotted the ban by organizing a display of photographs.

HARTAL

Tibetan shopkeepers show their support for the nonviolent struggle by declaring hartals—a temporary halt to all commercial activity—a activity used to great effect by Gandhi in India. Hartals have occurred a number of times in association with demonstrations in the Barkhor. For example, on 27 September 1989, Tibetan shops and market stalls in front of the Jokhang Temple stopped trading in support of a demonstration in the Barkhor. Shops also closed during the celebrations of the Dalai Lama receiving the Nobel Peace prize. When the Chinese proposed a tax increase in 1994, a hartal was called and all the traders took to the street to protest. A similar incident took place in Shigatse in 1993. A hartal was called as a direct political protest to the Chinese celebration of the 40th anniversary of the “peaceful liberation” of Tibet. The hartal was in direct defiance to police orders that shops should remain open for business.
PROCESSIONS

Precessions resemble demonstrations, but cover a greater distance. In rural areas, Tibetans have organized precessions protesting the Chinese occupation of Tibet. One example is the 25-mile-long peace march in 1996 organized by Tulku Kabu Kyi, the abbot of Nulsur Monastery in Golog Prefecture, Qinghai, from his monastery to the Serta district displaying the Tibetan national flag and calling for Tibetan independence while simultaneously distributing pro-independence pamphlets along the way. Another peace march took place in 1995 when 64 monks from Phenpo Nalandra Monastery in Lhundrup County staged a peaceful march to the nearby town of Phenpo to protest the arrest of one of their members for wearing a pro-independence badge.

ROAD BLOCK

In June 1993, farmers from Snuggling village, Lhokha prefecture set up a roadblock to prevent and delay travel as a form of political protest. They checked all the traffic on the main road through the area. Chinese officials sent to look into the incident spent the day without food beside the road while the demonstrators spat on them and called them names. The officials were eventually reduced to bargaining with the crowd for hot water, which they received. Later that month, villagers in Sungrabling, Gongkar County, Lhokha prefecture barricaded the main road to prevent police from raiding the monastery after a recent pro-independence protest during elections. While older villagers tried to plead with the police, younger ones sang the forbidden Tibetan national anthem and shouted praises to the Dalai Lama and called for Tibetan independence.

Non - Cooperation with the Occupation

NON COOPERATION/COMPLIANCE

I didn’t say anything about feudalism. Tibet has been independent for thousands of years. I said that Tibet has been subjected to Chinese imperialism.

—Rato Monastery monk during a re-education session

The Chinese authorities have responded to the resurgence of pro-independence by launching several political campaigns throughout Tibetan areas. Most of the campaigns have been applied by the central government to China in general, but have been applied to Tibet with special vengeance. For example, the Strike Hard Campaign, implemented in Tibet in April 1996, was aimed at cracking down on crime throughout China, however, in Tibet it focused on individuals throughout the society who supported Tibetan independence. Also in 1996, the patriotic Re-education Campaign was implemented in Tibet and was paired with an Anti-Dalai Lama campaign in order to attack the foundations of the Tibetan independence movement. The patriotic re-education campaign primarily targets the monastic population. “Re-education” is a process involving study sessions and tests to force people into accepting the Chinese version of Tibetan history, embracing Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, and denouncing the Dalai Lama. The price for non-cooperation or non-compliance is expulsion from a monastery as well as possible arrest, beatings, and torture, which can result in death. Monastic as well as lay communities are still less than cooperative. Very few Tibetans are willing to denounce the Dalai Lama, their spiritual and temporal leader. At Rato monastery, when asked to write a self-criticism the monks refused, saying they had nothing to confess, and then proceeded to fold the sheets of paper they had been given into paper airplanes, which they tossed around the room. Another monastery used their training in Buddhist dialectics, a form of debating, to argue the point that since Tibet was part of China it must be equally true that China
is part of Tibet.49 When a Tibetan national flag appeared on the top of a flag-pole in Sera Monastery, the monks argued with the Chinese authorities when ordered to take it down. “Since it is not ours, why should we take it down?”50

The monastic community has also tried to circumvent the regulations imposed on it by government work teams. One way in which monasteries have tried to get around the rules without overtly disobeying them is by setting up schools within the monastery for monks without official certificates. Many of the students are below the age of 18 and thus would have to return to secular life. Some monks, who are expelled from the monasteries by work teams, return to the monastery as laymen to avoid returning to secular life. Another manner was to delay the carrying out of direct orders given by work teams. For instance, one Democratic Management Committee in one monastery, given the task of distributing the re-education materials and collecting written responses from the monks at first delayed the implementation for over a month. When the officials came for the written responses, the committee informed them that, since it was a holiday and there were not many monks in the monastery, they had not been able to complete their task. When they could no longer delay enacting the order, they called the monks together, and informed them, “We have received this document from the government. If you study this document, you have to oppose His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and if you don’t study this document, that will be against government policy. We are neither asking you to study this nor stopping you from studying this. You can decide for yourselves.” All the monks unanimously replied that they would not study the document and would prefer to close the monastery.51

**DISPLAYING/POSSESSING PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE DALAI LAMA**

*If we can not see the person in real life, then what is there in a photograph?*

—Rinzin, a sixty-one-year old Tibetan man when confronted by Chinese Authorities for displaying a photograph of the Dalai Lama 52

The possession or display of photographs of the Dalai Lama is both a religious and political statement. The Dalai Lama’s photograph has often appeared in demonstrations, clearly an exhibit of political affiliation. Yet, there is a religious devotional aspect that surrounds the Dalai Lama as well. The Chinese ban on displaying photographs of the Dalai Lama has therefore affected both the monastic and lay population. Many monasteries have refused to take down the photographs, or when forced, have resorted to trying to hide them rather than giving them over to the Chinese authorities. Even in the privacy of one’s own home, Tibetans are not allowed to possess a photograph of the Dalai Lama. Many Tibetans have resisted. Some have ingeniously placed photographs of the Dalai Lama behind the photographs of permitted Lamas. The laws reach even government employees. In a speech made on 29 July 1998, the deputy

![Pilgrim in Tibet surreptitiously revealing his photograph of the Dalai Lama (Meridian Trust)]
secretary of the TAR Party Committee openly referred to “a few Party members and even a handful of leading Party officials who even go so far as to set up temples in their homes and display pictures of the Dalai Lama.”

HUNGER STRIKES

Female political prisoners, primarily nuns, are known to have initiated several hunger strikes in Drapchi prison. In February 1997, July 1997 and May 1998 hunger strikes were staged in protest to extreme punishment and a bid to release fellow prisoners from solitary confinement, as well as to express non-cooperation.

SILENCE

Tibetans have used corporate silence to express moral condemnation of actions taken by Chinese authorities. In December 1990, over 90 male prisoners at Drapchi led a silent protest over the death of student Lhagpa Tsering after being beaten and tortured inside the prison. In December 1994, a few nuns were arrested for demonstrating in the Barkhor. An observer noted that a crowd of 150 Tibetans gathered in front of the police station watching with serious and concerned faces in what appeared to be a silent protest to the arrest.

REMOVAL/DESTRUCTION OF SYMBOLS OF AUTHORITY

Tibetans have openly displayed their contempt for China's occupation by removing and destroying symbols of Chinese authority. The primary targets have been nameplates on government buildings, which have been removed and then replaced with pro-independence posters. On one occasion, a monk from Lhoka region ripped down Chinese posters banning independence demonstrations and replaced them with independence leaflets. Chinese flags have been torn down and replaced with the Tibetan national flags over schools in Rekong, Malho prefecture, Qinghai province and Karze prefecture, Sichuan province as recently as 1997 and 1998. In 1997, acting out his rejection of the patriotic re-education campaign in his monastery, Ngawang Phelbay, a Drepung monk, tore down the Chinese flag over his monastery and stamped on it.

POSSESSION OF BANNED LITERATURE/ITEMS

The Chinese authorities have attempted to control all ideology contrary to that propagated by the government by making it inaccessible to the Tibetan people. The primary purpose is to prevent the infiltration of material produced by the Tibetan government-in-exile or the Dalai Lama. Among the items prohibited by the Chinese authorities are books written by the Dalai Lama, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, pro-independence material and prayer books. Even maps of India are suspect. Residences are frequently searched and those individuals found in possession of banned literature or audiocassettes can be imprisoned.
SYMBOLIC GUESTURES

Tibetans incorporate symbolic gestures either independently or in association with other nonviolent actions. In the early morning hours of 7 February 1989 Tibetans found their national flag hung on the Jokhang temple, the main Buddhist temple in Tibet, were it flew several hours before being removed. They placed ceremonial blessing scarves at the base of the flagpole, a symbolic gesture displaying their loyalty to an independent Tibet while the police stood by helplessly. Frustrated Tibetans have burned photographs of the Chinese appointed Panchen Lama reincarnation to display their allegiance to the choice selected by the Dalai Lama. There has been symbolic resistance in Lhasa to the Chinese ban on photographs of the Dalai Lama. Some Lhasa street vendors placed empty picture frames on their stalls alongside photographs of permitted lamas. In the privacy of their homes, Tibetans are known to place a plain sheet of paper in a frame to symbolize the Dalai Lama on their altars in a symbolic gesture of affiliation. Monks and nuns wear badges to signify their support for the independence movement and the Dalai Lama.

VOICING OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT POLICIES

A few high level Tibetans have risked their positions to voice opposition to Chinese government policies in Tibet. In 1991, the moderate Tibetan fraction of the Communist Party made an unsuccessful public appeal to the Chinese Communist Party to relax their demand that Tibetan communists renounce religion. Nagagchen Rimpoche, one of Tibet’s leading lamas and involved in the search for the reincarnated Panchen Lama, was denounced by Chinese authorities for his refusal to accept China’s decision to use the Golden Urn to choose the reincarnation. Instead he publicly supported the choice made by the Dalai Lama.

SOLIDARITY ACTS

Tibetans have displayed their unity in purpose through a wide variety of actions above and beyond spontaneous public involvement. On 10 August 1994, thirteen nuns, all the female prisoners in Trisam Prison at the time, refused to emerge from their cells for their monthly visitation. Their action, a source of embarrassment for prison officials and guards, was one of solidarity with two nuns denied visitation as a punishment for accidentally splashing water on a Chinese man while the nuns were tending vegetables. In 1988, when asked to vote for Student of the Year, students at the University of Tibet are said to have voted for a Tibetan by the name of Lobsang Tenzin who had been imprisoned five months earlier under the suspicion of killing a policeman during a demonstration in the Spring.
Positive Action/Constructive Program

COMMUNICATING WITH OUTSIDERS

Tibetans are well aware of the international community’s role and concern about Tibet’s continued occupation. They have therefore used every means possible to convey their sufferings and desire for independence abroad. Posters are written in English as well as Tibetan and Chinese. Tourists are encouraged to take photographs of demonstrations. Other tourists are handed pieces of paper containing pro-independence slogans. In addition, Tibetans speak directly to foreigners about Tibetan independence, a criminal offense in occupied Tibet. In 1990, a young Tibetan man spoke with two foreigners at the Snowlands Hotel in Lhasa regarding Tibetan independence. A doctor from the Lhasa Municipal Hospital spoke out for a free Tibet to a Western tourist who was taping the conversation. Both were arrested following the interviews. Even within prisons, the majority of pro-independence activity has corresponded with visits by international delegations. They are clear attempts by Tibetans to counter Chinese propaganda efforts.

COMPILING PRISONER LISTS/HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Another action in conjunction with communicating with outsiders is the act of compiling lists of prisoners and human rights violations and smuggling them abroad. Jampa Ngodrup, a Tibetan doctor, was arrested for compiling lists of Tibetans known to be arrested during the pro-independence demonstration of March 1988 and handing them to Lhamo Yangchen, a Tibetan women who the Chinese claimed was a foreigner. In August 1990, Gelek Yonten, a Lhasa resident, was arrested for his involvement with a foreign journalist trying to learn about conditions in Tibet. In 1993, a tour guide in Lhasa was arrested for attempting to hand over information on human rights’ abuses to a team of visiting European diplomats. Tsurtrim Sherap, a monk from Sungrabling Monastery in Lhokha prefecture, was arrested for sending news abroad of a recent patriotic re-education team visit to his monastery, which had resulted in the expulsion of many of the monks from the monastery. The penalty for being caught smuggling these “state secrets” is between five to ten year’s imprisonment. Yet, Ngawang Choephel, a Tibetan Fulbright scholar and musician who was in Tibet doing research on Tibetan folk music and dances when arrested by the Chinese authorities in August 1996, was sentenced to 18 years in prison for allegedly gathering sensitive intelligence and engaging in illegal separatist activities on behalf of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Tibetans continue to risk incarceration to ensure that the international community remains informed on the true conditions within Tibet.

UNDERGROUND ORGANIZING

Due to the repressive measures employed by the Chinese authorities to root out and clamp down on pro-independence sentiments, Tibetans are unable to organize openly. Rather, they must operate underground, in small loosely knit groups to prevent discovery. Most groups are made up of two to three individuals who work together. Each member in turn knows other individuals sympathetic to the cause. Members of the underground organizations frequently make a political pledge. One Buddhist monk now living in exile described the pledge as a commitment to love the
motherland and religion, not to cooperate with Chinese officials and, if summoned, to be silent. Structuring the organizations in this way prevents the Chinese from crushing the movement if one or two individuals are caught. Activities carried out by underground organizations include poster campaigns, distributing literature, demonstrating, and organizing such activities as the prayer session for those who had died in the 1987 demonstrations. However, underground organizing does not insinuate leadership. Tibetans throughout the former provinces of U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo look toward the Tibetan Government in exile for leadership and direction in the nonviolent struggle.

PROMOTING TIBETAN LANGUAGE/CULTURE

Brothers and sisters, who stand at the edge of a cliff holding hands.
We have compiled this in memory of our ancestors, who have written this history in blood so that progress might be made in our literature...
We have written this out of love for the snow mountains
— postscript by editors of Laughter from the Tsongla Rang-mo.

Over the last ten years, the Chinese authorities have been slowly eradicating Tibetan language and culture. Even with such seemingly supportive measures as instigating Tibetan as the official language of the region in 1988, Tibetan language and culture has slowly been chipped away at by other policies of the Chinese government. Tibetan children are taught in Chinese rather than in Tibetan, even after studies proved that the children dramatically improved their test scores in all subjects, when taught in Tibetan. Courses at the University of Tibet have increasingly been taught in Chinese, prompting student protests. Tibetans have risen in defense by actively promoting Tibetan language, culture and identity. One method has been by opening schools that teach Tibetan language, performing arts, medicine and astrology among other subjects. The task is not without risk. In 1994, Shabdrul Lobsang Tsultrim and Shabdrung Rimpochhe, both founders of such institutions in Lhasa, were arrested by the Chinese authorities on grounds of “counter-revolutionary activities” and the schools were closed. In Sog county, Kunchog Tenzin, a teacher who made no secret of his belief that Tibetan language and culture should be given priority in the school syllabus, was arrested in 1995 for allegedly putting up pro-independence posters. Also in 1995, four monks from Kumbum Monastery in Haidong were arrested after publishing an anthology of new Tibetan literature called Laughter from the Tsongla Rang-mo. The officially approved, 52-page magazine consisted of 20 hand written love poems, prayers, riddles and short stories by local Tibetans. Even though there was no overt political reference to Tibetan independence, besides a short note by the editors, the publication was banned and copies were withdrawn and destroyed. Even Tibetan artists have suffered, as in the case of Yung-drung who specialized in painting portraits of the Dalai Lama. He was found in a state of severe shock in a public toilet in Lhasa shortly after his release from a police detention center where he’d been tortured. His house had been raided and paintings were confiscated. He is the first known artist to be arrested in connection with his art.

In an important move to make sure that traditional knowledge is not lost, a few Tibetan academics have been re-publishing some traditional Tibetan religious and medical manuscripts with permission by the Chinese government.
PETITIONING

Tibetans have petitioned international bodies in an effort to seek redress against particular grievances they have against the Chinese government. Villagers in Lhokha prefecture petitioned the United Nations to intervene in the security measures being carried out by the Chinese in their area after a protest. They declared, “We Tibetans have no human rights and are at risk of being exterminated.” Tibetans also joined in an Amnesty International campaign to petition for the release of a Tibetan political prisoner. Most likely, they were informed about the campaign from Voice of America’s Tibetan language short-wave radio broadcasts as people from a large area of Tibet participated. Prisoners have attempted to deliver letters protesting prison conditions to visiting international delegations. Tibetans have petitioned the Chinese authorities as well. University students petitioned the Chinese government and Tibetan public for better environmental protection. On the humorous side, a large number of Tibetan traders from Kham and Amdo in Eastern Tibet petitioned the government regarding an order that all those without resident permits had to leave Lhasa during the period of martial law. The traders said they were quite happy to leave Lhasa, since they didn’t belong there. They added that since the Chinese also did not come from Lhasa, they would have to do the same. The Chinese authorities arrested a token number of illegal Chinese workers in Lhasa, apparently as a concession to this demand.

MONASTIC HARTAL

Monasteries have also performed hartals as a show of extreme dissatisfaction with Chinese policies. A series of monastic closures were begun in May 1996 after one Ganden Monastery monk was shot and 40 monks arrested after a fight broke out between the monks and the authorities over their refusal to comply with orders to remove photographs of the Dalai Lama. In a show of support for the Ganden monks, the monks of Drepung Monastery, Lhasa’s third great monastery, closed itself to the public. The following day, the temple of Ramoche was also closed, and the main temple of Tibet, the Jokhang temple in the heart of Lhasa followed suite by staging a one-day shut down. A hartal was also used by the monks of Samdrupling Monastery in Lhokha county when work team officials instructed them to criticize the Dalai Lama and denounce Tibetan independence as part of the patriotic re-education campaign.

NONVIOLENT SABOTAGE

Sabotage is one method by which Tibetans have been able to disrupt Chinese propaganda efforts. In association with the Chinese attempt to win Tibetan acceptance of their candidate as the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, there was a photograph taken of high level Chinese officials with Tibetan lamas. The photograph was printed in the Chinese edition of the Tibetan Daily, clearly showing the Chinese officials seated in front of the Tibetan lamas. When the photograph was re-printed for the Tibetan edition of the same newspaper the following day, the photograph had been altered and the lamas were seated in front of the Chinese officials. Tampering with the photograph was a clear act of nonviolent sabotage.
PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS

“We were very fearful of demonstrating, because it is a question of our lives, but if there is no human rights, there is no use to be alive.”
—Former Chubsa nun now living in exile.

Tibetans have consistently made an effort to promote human rights in Tibet. Wall posters frequently condemn human rights violations committed by the Chinese. Tibetan language copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have been printed and distributed to educate Tibetans about their human rights. In addition, demonstrations have been organized with the intention of addressing the issue of human rights in Tibet. In 1988, a demonstration was organized to correspond with the International Human Rights Day. As one participant commented, “We were demonstrating for the sake of all sentient beings.”

LISTENING TO BANNED RADIO BROADCASTS

The main avenue of receiving news from abroad comes in the form of Tibetan language broadcasts on short-wave and other Tibetan radio broadcasts. Just listening to the broadcasts is an act of political defiance. As one rural farmer commented, “We listen to the banned radio broadcasts at 10 p.m. I share the news with others from my village.” People have been known to record the broadcasts and distribute them. An official Chinese source reported that 211 short wave radios and all the transistor radios were sold-out in Gertse county, Nagchu Prefecture. The implication is that a large percentage of people are listening to Tibetan language broadcasts of Voice of America, All India Radio, Voice of Tibet and Radio Free Asia.

PROVIDING ASYLUM AND REFUGEE ASSISTANCE

Providing asylum and refugee assistance to Tibetans is a nonviolent act, similar to the underground railroads developed in Nazi occupied Europe during World War II that assisted Jewish people to find a safe haven and in the United States during the Civil War that helped Black slaves escaping the South. A few Tibetans have been imprisoned for assisting Tibetans escape into exile. In 1992, Wandu, a former government soldier, was arrested for helping Tibetans escape into India. In 1999 alone, there were four cases of Tibetans being arrested for guiding Tibetan “escapees” into India. One of them was sentenced to eight years imprisonment. In a similar action, Dawa Drolma, a Lhasa school teacher, was arrested in part for providing asylum to protestors during a demonstration in 1988.

RECLAIMING HISTORY

An important nonviolent act is the process of reclaiming history. Buddhist monks at Kirti monastery in Ngaba reclaimed Tibetan history by painting a wall in the monastery with illustrations of Tibet’s history and previous independence. One illustration contained the phrase “Tibetans will be happy in Tibet, and the Chinese in China,” that was derived from the inscription on a 9th century pillar commemorating a peace agreement between the Tibetan empire and the Chinese empire. Considering how monastery walls play an important role in traditional forms of educating the public, this was a tremendous act on the part of the monks to reclaim their history for the Tibetan people.
Miscellaneous Nonviolent Action for Liberation

Sometimes Tibetans will lock a Chinese official inside their home so they will miss an important meeting. Or they will make a hole in a dish to prevent the Chinese from cooking food... Whatever the Chinese want, Tibetans try not to do. When the Chinese morn, Tibetans celebrate with songs and dance.

—former Ganden monk, now living in exile.  

Research has uncovered a few miscellaneous nonviolent methods used by the Tibetans. In April 1993, a group of Lhasa secondary school students protested against tuition increases with a sit-in, barricading themselves on the school premises. By occupying the facilities, the students were able to disrupt the normal pattern of activities for two days. Tibetans have also used nonviolent methods to protest increased migration by Chinese into Tibetan territory. A former nun said her father refused to sell Yak meat to Chinese settlers in protest to the Chinese migration policy. Other villagers spoke about refusing to sell or lease property to the incoming migrants.

Less Than Nonviolent Actions for Liberation

There are instances within the Tibetan resistance struggle when the methods used became violent. For instance, in some of the many large scale demonstrations that occurred in Lhasa between 1987-89, Tibetans responded to the Chinese use of violence to disband the protestors by throwing rocks at police. In the protests that took place in March 1989 lasting nearly a week, Chinese shops were ransacked and all the items burned. Some Chinese bicycling past the area were stoned and had their bikes confiscated which were added to the bonfires that were created. At least one was severely injured after being hit by a rock and attacked by Tibetans. However, simultaneous with these acts of violence other Tibetans attempted to stop violent actions towards Chinese unfortunate enough to have bicycled or have businesses in the area and instead helped them to safety. In 1993, racial violence broke out in Sog county between Tibetans and Chinese Muslims. Shops were burned and in some villages, the Chinese were forcefully evicted from the villages. Tibetan vigilante groups formed to hunt down Chinese "gangs" accused of assaulting Tibetans. Citizen arrests were made and suspects were handed over to the police. There have also been several bombings that have occurred in Tibet. And though one Tibetan believes the bombs were set by Chinese, a Buddhist monk confessed to being responsible for at least one bombing which had been set in a Chinese restaurant. There were no reported injuries following the incident.

In a failed attempt of a suicide bombing on 26 August 1999, Tashi Tsering, a Tibetan layman residing in Lhasa, lowered the Chinese flag on the Southwest side of Potala square and attempted to replace it with a Tibetan flag. When the police came to arrest him, he tried to detonate a home made explosive he had strapped to his body. The explosive did not go off, and as he was hauled away he shouted "Free Tibet" and "We want freedom." He died while in police custody.
Tibetan Resistance in Exile

Tibetan Liberation Struggle In Exile &
Activities by His Holiness the Dalai Lama
strategy for the Tibetan nonviolent struggle began to form shortly after the Dalai Lama and his cabinet fled Tibet in 1959. Unhindered by Chinese oppression, Tibetans in exile were able to organize a coordinated approach to their liberation struggle. It began with a concerted effort to maintain their culture and religion. Soon Tibetans began challenging the very foundations of Chinese control over Tibet in the international arena. Simultaneously, they restructured the government to democratically meet the needs of the Tibetan people. A world-wide network of actors encompassing every sector is now working together for a free Tibet. This said, all efforts made by the Tibetans in exile would be fruitless without the legitimacy provided by the ongoing nonviolent struggle being carried out within Tibet.

**Corporate Actions**

The Dalai Lama along with several of the previous Tibetan ministers established the Tibetan government-in-exile, otherwise known as the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), in 1959 in India. The CTA is the cornerstone of the Tibetan nonviolent movement. The CTA’s first step was to see to the immediate survival needs of Tibetan exiles. However, it rapidly became apparent that there were more than solely physical survival needs to be met.

Chinese policy in Tibet threatened the continuation of Tibet’s unique culture, religion and language. The CTA set in motion a campaign to preserve Tibet’s national identity. Schools were established (with the generous assistance of the Indian government) in Tibetan settlements throughout India, Nepal and Bhutan. Tibetan schools follow the educational systems and required
The curriculum of each country in which they are located, but also offer something that schools in occupied Tibet do not offer: the integration of Tibetan language, values and culture. To this moment, Tibetan children continue to cross the highest, most perilous mountain passes in the world in order to be able to receive a Tibetan education. The CTA also made a dedicated effort to preserve Tibetan cultural practices. Institutes have been re-established in exile to preserve and support Tibetan art, dance, song and medicine. The institutes have received world recognition and students from around the globe come to Dharamsala, the seat of the Tibetan government-in-exile, to take courses from the few remaining masters alive. Tibetan Buddhism flourishes in exile, whereas in China, Tibetan Buddhism is allowed under severe restrictions and is strictly monitored. Monasteries and nunneries have sprung up in India and throughout the world. Tibetans in exile freely develop their own cultural and religious traditions, something that is no longer possible in their homeland. This human right has been preserved by the CTA.

The CTA has actively pursued a constructive program for a free Tibet. Perhaps their strongest statement of opposition to China’s authoritarian regime is eloquently made in their activities in democratizing the government-in-exile. The democratic structure of government developed is unique. It encapsulates Tibet’s cultural integrity. For example, the legislature consists of 46 elected members; ten members from refugees who come from each of the three traditional provinces of Tibet, U-Tsang, Amdo, and Kham; two members from the traditional Bon faith and each of the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism; and three members from the Tibetan Diaspora to Europe and North America. In addition, three members with distinction in the fields of art, science, literature and community service are nominated directly by the Dalai Lama. Besides representing the refugee community and administering to the needs of the Tibetan people, this government structure ensures that a power vacuum will not result from an immediate withdrawal by the Chinese from Tibet.

Tibetans around the world, including within Tibet itself, acknowledge the CTA is the sole legitimate government of the Tibetan people. The CTA provides unity of purpose and direction among all the elements of the nonviolent movement. This sanctions them to direct the Tibetan people to actively resist Chinese occupation, and emboldens them to take direct action as the only government representing the Tibetan people. Within this role, the CTA pursues an active dialogue with the Chinese government in order to resolve the Tibetan conflict. They approach Beijing according to the five-point peace plan presented by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, which has since been addressed as the ‘middle path’ to peaceful coexistence. This middle path calls for the transformation of Tibet into a zone of peace; the abandonment of China’s population transfer policy; respect for the fundamental human rights and democratic freedom of the Tibetan people; the restoration and protection of Tibet’s natural environment; and most importantly, the commencement of negotiations between the Tibetan government in exile and the People’s Republic of China.

The CTA also conducts foreign relations on behalf of the Tibetan people. The Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) is designed to educate Tibetans and international public opinion on the political, human rights and environmental conditions in occupied Tibet. Part of this responsibility includes:

- Interfacing with the international media to reveal the current situation of occupied Tibet and Tibetan’s view on history to counter Chinese propaganda efforts.
Partnering with issue related organizations to campaign for Tibet, for example, linking Tibetan prisoners with Amnesty International campaigns or linking China’s sterilization policy with the international women’s movement; and

Facilitating activities undertaken by international groups supporting a free Tibet, for example, two international support group meetings have been orchestrated by the DIIR to provide an opportunity for cooperative campaigning strategy to take place.

Through the auspices of the DIIR, the CTA has established foreign offices that function as de-facto embassies for Tibet in New Delhi, Geneva, New York, Tokyo, London, Katmandu, Budapest, Moscow, Paris, Canberra, Pretoria and Taipei to facilitate communication with those governments. The embassies provide services for Tibetan refugees living abroad, promote Tibetan history and culture, and raise financial support for the movement. Basically, they carry out the normal realm of embassy functions as would any embassy throughout the world. Though none of the host governments have officially acknowledged the legitimacy of the CTA as the government of Tibet, they still refer to the embassies for accurate information on the situation within Tibet. The exception would be Australia, who granted the CTA equal standing with the Palestinian Liberation Organization, thereby recognizing the legitimacy of the Tibetan government-in-exile as representing the people of Tibet which is not currently recognized as a state.

The CTA has undertaken a direct nonviolent strategy that serves simultaneously to defend Tibet’s center of gravity— the uniqueness of the Tibetan people— and to mobilize the resistance. They have also directly engaged China’s unity of purpose in regards to Tibet. Realizing the importance of altering the Chinese public opinion on Tibet, they have actively sought to engage Chinese citizens living abroad, including students, intellectuals, and dissidents. After Tiananmen Square and the repression of the Democracy Uprising in China in 1989, the Tibetans invited the Chinese Democracy Movement (CDM) to Dharamsala to see what the Tibetans had accomplished in exile. Up until then, many of these new Chinese exiles did not question the popular mainland belief that Tibetans were a ‘backward race’ benefiting from Han Chinese civilizing influence. The dissidents were impressed by the democracy of the Tibetan exile government and the CDM and CTA agreed to work together, alternating years where they would focus on each other’s campaign. With this success, the CTA encouraged Tibetans abroad to reach out to their Chinese counterparts. A former Tibetan Fulbright scholar relayed what a fellow Chinese student once said to him soon after Tiananmen, “I refused to believe what you said about Tibet. Now I believe you.” Tibetan efforts to alter Chinese public opinion have begun to show on the mainland. One example is that in Shanghai, 54 delegates submitted a petition to the Chairman of the National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China. The petition included an article recommending the Chinese government to have a dialogue with the Dalai Lama and mentioned that the human rights and the rights of a national identity and economic prosperity in the Tibetan areas should be achieved. A number of Chinese scholars and dissidents have also published articles supporting Tibet as a separate entity from China.

The exile government is not the sole Tibetan organization involved in corporate nonviolent action. Tibetan non-government organizations, and a number of smaller Tibetan people’s organizations, also mobilize the Tibetan population to resist as well as reach out to sister organizations around the world. The Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) and the Tibetan Women’s Association (TWA)
are the two largest Tibetan NGOs in terms of membership. Both organizations are similarly structured, maintaining both social and political activities. It is their political activities that contribute most directly to the nonviolent struggle. They organize collective activities for Tibetans to undertake outside of Tibet to protest China’s continued occupation of Tibet. A number of demonstrations, candle-light vigils, boycotts, blockades, peace marches, long-distance bicycle *yatras*\(^{107}\) and petition campaigns are organized each year to coincide with important days on the Tibetan calendar. 10 March, the anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan uprising, is a day on which demonstrations, processions and candle-light vigils are held throughout the Tibetan communities in exile each year. The activities are large scale, involving hundreds or thousands of Tibetans and their supporters and generate international attention and media coverage. The Tibetan Youth Congress won widespread support and international sympathy with the hunger strike they organized in Delhi in 1998 and again in 1999. The hunger strikes were directed at the United Nations, demanding the Tibetan issue be discussed in the General Assembly, that a special envoy be appointed to monitor Tibetan affairs and facilitate dialogue between China and the Dalai Lama, and a special rapporteur be selected to investigate human rights violations in Tibet.

These Tibetan NGOs also network with other organizations worldwide that support issues of concern to Tibetans. For example, the Tibetan Women’s Association sent delegates to Beijing for the United Nation’s Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. International media exposed the constant surveillance and harassment by police suffered by the Tibetan delegates, demonstrating vividly the harsh treatment faced by all Tibetans at the hands of the Chinese. As one exile was quoted, “If they can do this [harassment] to us here at what is suppose to be a UN conference on peace and equality, in front of the world media—what is happening to our people in Tibet where no one is watching?”

### Individual Actions

Within Tibet, large-scale organization of activity is impossible, and therefore dependent on spontaneous involvement of the population. However, in exile, Tibetans are able to organize themselves and act. Thus most of the nonviolent activity occurring outside of Tibet is an organized group activity. Individuals express their support by participating in organized events, such as peace marches, bike rallies, boycotts of Chinese goods and demonstrations against the Chinese occupation. However, some Tibetans demonstrate individual acts of conscience in their opposition to occupation of their homeland. Pro-independence slogans and graffiti can be found near any Tibetan settlement in exile. In 1998, Thubten Ngodup, a 60-year-old Tibetan participant in the TYC hunger strike onto death, set himself alight to symbolize the frustration felt by the Tibetan people (and died two days later from the burns).\(^{108}\) However, some acts of individuals are actually part of the CTA’s organized efforts to raise awareness about Tibet, such as when a doctor of Tibetan medicine or art who is on a lecture tour, or a Tibetan student speaks to a Chinese classmate about Tibet. These ‘independent actions’ are actually a part of the corporate activities of the Tibetan exile community to liberate itself from occupation by nonviolent means.
Activities by His Holiness the Dalai Lama

“In our struggle for freedom, truth is the only weapon we possess.”

While speaking of himself as a ‘simple Buddhist monk’, Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, is the most well known Tibetan in the world. To many non-Tibetans he is a charismatic figure who both symbolizes and embodies the Tibetan liberation struggle, as well as being a Nobel Peace Laureate. The Tibetan people believe that he is the embodiment of Chenrezig, the Buddha of Compassion. Prior to invasion by the PRC, the office of the Dalai Lamas was the highest political and spiritual authority of the country. Since fleeing into exile, the Dalai Lama has worked hard to build the basis for a separate and democratically elected political leadership within the Tibetan exile community. He travels abroad primarily in his role as a pre-eminent religious teacher and scholar within the Vajrayana Buddhist tradition. He frequently travels abroad as a respected world religious leader, and has been invited to the Vatican in Rome, was a key figure in the World Parliament of Religions in 1993 and is active in most global religious forums for peace. He is sometimes treated in the countries he visits with the ceremony reserved for visiting heads of state. When so treated, the PRC usually launches retaliatory actions against the offending state, accusing them of ‘meddling in the internal affairs of China’. The Dalai Lama generally, out of consideration to host countries, steers clear of making solely political speeches, but always refers to a Buddhist basis for peacemaking. He has gained global appreciation for his lifelong condemnation of violence as a means for resolving disputes and the promotion of dialog as the only way to overcome problems. Through joint activities of the Nobel Peace laureates, he has helped mobilize campaigns on other pressing issues, such as the international trade in arms - a form of livelihood proscribed by Buddhist precepts.

In his combined role as religious leader, delegate of peace and representative of Tibet, the Dalai Lama has placed a special emphasis in visiting countries physically and politically close to China, including Mongolia, Japan, Taiwan and Thailand in his attempt to influence China through the goodwill of others. Broadcasts of his speeches on religion in Taiwan could be received in many mainland coastal provinces and had a positive impact for many mainland Chinese people who had otherwise only heard of the Dalai Lama as an enemy of the state through PRC media. These broadcasts helped to undermine the counter-Tibetan propaganda which the PRC produce for their own people. In what he describes as ‘the middle way approach’ to resolving the conflict between the Tibetan exile government and Beijing, he has proposed a Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet.

- Transform Tibet into a zone of peace.
- Stop China’s population transfer policy;
- Respect human rights and democratic freedoms;
- Restore and protect the natural environment; and
- Commence earnest negotiations with China on the future status of Tibet.

He has maintained that he is ready to begin talks on the future of Tibet without preconditions at any time.
Solidarity!

Support for the Tibetan Resistance Struggle in the International Community

Nonviolent Struggle in a Globalized World
Support for the Tibetan Resistance Struggle
in the International Community

Non-Tibetan people around the world have felt moved to support the Tibetan nonviolent liberation movement. In a world with so much social injustice, Tibet's ongoing occupation offers a clear issue. The Tibetans are fortunate to have a leader whose integrity is undisputed as a Nobel Peace Laureate. No other struggle is so admirable in its determination to meet violence with nonviolence. As a result, the Tibetan nonviolent movement has been a magnet for international support that has materialized from many different venues in both the government and non-government sector.

Non-government Actors

The positive reception by the international community in part may be due to the international media, which has proven to be a strong supporter of the Tibetan movement. The Dalai Lama fascinates the international media. Not only the Dalai Lama receives the spotlight either, but recent arrivals as well. Numerous human interest stories have been published documenting the difficult journey taken by refugees in order to reach India. There have also been numerous news stories world wide featuring Tibetan art, religion, medicine and travel. All this has lead the media to delve into the “question” of Tibet, more often than not in feature length articles and news documentaries. The international media has not directed their actions solely toward the world outside Tibet, but inside Tibet itself, providing an alternative news source to Tibetans in their own language via radio broadcasts. There are currently four radio stations broadcasting in the Tibetan language that can be received inside Tibet: All India Radio, Voice of America, Voice of Tibet, and Radio Free Asia. The international media directly challenges the credibility of the Chinese state monopoly on news about Tibet, and directly influences public opinion in favor of the Tibetan liberation struggle.
As public opinion has mobilized in support of the Tibetan nonviolent movement, individuals around the world, including well-known personalities, have taken up the Tibetan cause. Artists in particular are drawn to Tibet. Thankas, religious paintings, are intricately designed using vivid contrasting colors that draw artistic appreciation from around the world. Recently, a web site was established in which artists could admire these artworks of the Himalayas. Tibetan art exhibits and performance troops have toured the world. In March and June 2000, thousands gathered to participated in two large Tibetan cultural festivals held in Delhi and Washington, DC. The festivals included performing arts, monastic rituals, philosophical debates, displays of Tibetan arts and crafts, photographic exhibits and both feature and documentary films. Several books have also been published on Tibet. Most recent are the releases of The Search for the Panchen Lama by Isabel Hilton, Tibet Handbook by Victor Chan and Running a Hotel on the Roof of the World: Five Years in Tibet by Alec Le Sueur. Two recent Hollywood movies, Kundun and Seven Years in Tibet, demonstrate that Tibet has not lost its appeal. Not to mention films like The Cup, that depict life within the monastic community. Actors, like Richard Gere, have taken up the Tibetan cause, as well as a number of music artists who have joined together in concert tours around the world to raise support for Tibet. There is no doubt that their combined actions have helped to shape public opinion in favor of Tibet.

As world awareness has built, individuals from around the world have joined in the nonviolent struggle. People have carried out individual demonstrations outside of the Chinese embassy in their home countries in support of Tibet. In Washington, D.C., one woman has staged a vigil every Friday outside the Chinese embassy since 1987. In Paris, two Frenchman chained themselves to the gates of the Chinese embassy, which increased the duration of their demonstration as it delayed policemen in their attempts to remove them. There have also been numerous Tibetan flag raisings, such as on 10 March 1999 when two French alpinists climbed the Notre Dame Church in Paris to plant a Tibetan flag at the top. Tibetan supporters have also used sporting events as a platform for speaking out on Tibet either by collecting pledges for campaigns or simply participating in an event with “Free Tibet” icons. Hiking, kayaking, marathon races, and race car competitions are just some of the venues that have been employed.

As individuals have been moved into action by the clear, “just cause” surrounding Tibet, non-government organizations have sprung up around the world to work exclusively for the freedom of Tibet. These organizations, referred to by the CTA as Tibetan Support Groups (TSG), work independently, but cooperatively with each other to subvert Chinese efforts to oppress the Tibetan people. To date TSGs
operate in 55 countries around the world. An independent letter writing campaign conducted by a Canadian TSG, resulted in
1,500 birthday cards for the Panchen Lama, the youngest political prisoner in the world today. The cards were delivered to
Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy who broke precedence by agreeing to forward them on to Beijing authorities
via the Canadian Embassy. A government spokesperson commented that, “It’s highly unusual. Using Canadian diplomats to
pass on a message to a political prisoner hasn’t happened before.” TSGs have also organized a number of demonstrations
commemorating Tibetan anniversaries, Human Rights Day, or just to harass Chinese diplomats on official tours in their countries.
In 1996, around 7,000 people gathered in Brussels to protest China’s continued human rights abuses and occupation of Tibet
in the largest demonstration to date. In April 1999, a small plane evaded security to circle over the Butchart Gardens in
Victoria, Canada with a welcome banner for Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji reading, “Human Rights Now, China Out of
Tibet”. The Prime Minister was later quoted as saying: “Everywhere I go I am followed by two groups. One group is the
reporters and the other is protestors from Tibet.” 112 One of the most successful campaigns sponsored by TSGs was to block
China from being awarded the honor of hosting the 2000 Olympics. TSGs have also been able to influence multi-national
corporate interest in China. In 1998, Adidas cancelled contracts for the manufacturing of footballs due to allegations that
the balls were made by forced labor in prisons. However, some companies act on their own accord to support Tibet. The
Charles David Shoe company has taken out a series of double page Ads promoting the release of Tibetan prisoners of conscience
Ngawang Choephel and the Panchen Lama. The Ads appeared in Vogue, Marie Claire, George, Elle, and Mirabelle to name a
few. The text of the Ad ends with this appeal: “Please join us as we seek one million signatures in a petition for Ngawang’s release.
Give a voice to those who can’t speak. And walk with us.” 113 Actions by TSGs around the world compliment the overall strategic
aim of the nonviolent movement.

International organizations have supported the Tibetan nonviolent movement by including Tibetan related issues in their agendas.
Amnesty International led a successful campaign to secure the freedom of a Tibetan political prisoner by the name of Gaden Rinchen.
Thousands of letters were sent from around the world, including Tibet itself, to petition his release. The International Commission
of Jurists conducted independent investigations on the historical status of Tibet, concluding that Tibet was, in de-facto, an inde-
pendent country when China invaded in 1959. They published a report to this effect in both 1959 and 1960. In 1989, the
Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the Dalai Lama with its Prize for Peace. The committee stated what most international
governments have refused to do, that the Dalai Lama was both the religious and political leader of the Tibetan people. Being
awarded the Nobel Peace Prize was a great step forward for the Tibetan nonviolence movement, simultaneously building inter-
national awareness and credibility.

Governments

Governmental support for the Tibetan nonviolent struggle is a complicated issue. On one hand, governments of the world are
sympathetic to the Tibetans. On the other hand, most governments around the world are unwilling to face the ramifications of
openly confronting China on the issue of Tibet. In some ways, it has been easier for governments to criticize China’s human rights
violations in Tibet rather than question Tibet’s political status, but even that has become increasingly hazardous. China has
successfully used trade and diplomatic reprisals to block any criticism directed their way. Most governments of the world have
succumbed to the pressure, refusing to jeopardize financial or diplomatic gains on the basis of principle. This is best illustrated
by U.S. President Bill Clinton’s 1994 decision to abandon any effort to place human rights conditions on China’s Most Favored
Nation (MFN) trade status. The argument, that a tough human rights policy was hampering the ability of the U.S. to pursue
trade and security issues. India, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, among others, have responded similarly. NATO’s
bombing of the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia capital of Belgrade in 1999, furthered China’s ability to successfully postpone
human rights criticism yet again.
The World Bank Action

As one of the most significant and far-reaching actions of international solidarity, the World Bank campaign deserves special mention.

The World Bank (WB) came under scrutiny for a proposed project which would move Han Chinese into Tibetan areas as a ‘poverty alleviation program’ under the Chinese government. Called the Qinghai component, this project was first brought to public awareness through the research of the Tibet Information Network, a non-governmental organization based in London. The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) and Students for a Free Tibet (SFT) quickly organized a global action campaign to challenge this project, which by that time had already reached approval within the WB process. Well structured alliances with activists calling into question the impact of WB & IMF funded projects worldwide, and public awareness actions by the SFT (Banner hanging on World Bank building in Washington DC, encampment at the Bank building) brought about the cancellation of the project. The World Bank External Affairs officer for the Far East Asia and the Pacific Region stated: “I have not seen anything have this profound an effect on this institution in the seven years I’ve worked at the Bank. I think it has changed the way people inside the Bank think. The Tibet groups have waged the most intelligent and measured campaign the Bank has ever seen.” Tibetan activists involved in the World Bank campaign were told in a meeting with the French Executive Director to the World Bank that the Bank was receiving 500 e-mails a day to all 24 of it Executive directors during the weeks leading up to the vote and that they needed a fax line dedicated for correspondence on the Tibet-China project alone! This high volume was in part as a result of the “COUNTDOWN to cancellation” campaign initiate by the SFT. One of the major public awareness events organized by the SFT was at the Tibetan Freedom Concert in Chicago USA, in June 1999. During this event SFT collected 17,000 signatures on petitions and sent 6000 e-mails and faxes from the concert website, and hundreds of faxes from the physical site of the concert itself during the show. (the concerts were produced by the Milarepa Fund - SFT worked with 2 of their staff to run the “direct action tent” at the concert). Although already an approved project, initial actions by the ICT and SFT brought about a delay in implementation, and the launching of a new and special internal review mechanism at the World Bank. The review board found that 7 out of 10 of the World Bank’s guiding principles were not met in the planning of the Qinghai component. This internal document was leaked to the public, and given circulation by both Tibetan and Bank activists creating even more public concern for the project, culminating in an extraordinary meeting at the WB in July 2000 where Bank directors suggested delay in implementation and a very thorough examination of the region. A furious China pulled the project from the World Bank, claiming “it would go it alone”. It is only the 2nd time in the history of the World Bank that popular protest has been able to halt a questionable program and is a victory for nonviolent activists not only focused on Tibet, but on multi-lateral programs worldwide.
Yet, these same countries have also demonstrated a degree of “support” for the Tibetan issue, most often due to enormous pressure from their citizens supporting the Tibetan nonviolent movement. India is an exceptional case. Unwilling to antagonize China over the status of Tibet, the government has refused to either voice support for an independent Tibet, nor recognized the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. However, India has been a remarkable host for the Tibetan refugees, offering land, allowing them to participate in the economy, providing financial support for Tibetan schools, and not interfering in the ongoing nonviolent struggle. The United States has a more complicated history regarding Tibet. The years shortly after the invasion found the United States supporting the Tibetan guerrilla war with arms, training and funds. More recently, the United States has openly criticized China in their human rights violations and encouraged China to pursue open dialogue with the Dalai Lama for the peaceful resolution of Tibet. In 1991, the United States Congress was even more blunt, passing a resolution declaring that “all Americans are united in the goals of freedom and human rights for Tibet.” The United States Congress has passed a total of nine resolutions, ten public laws and one Foreign Relations Authorization Act regarding Tibet between 1988 and 1995. Germany, to China’s frustration, refused to interfere in strategic planning sessions of Tibetan Support Groups in 1995 and 1999 held in Bonn. French President Jacques Chirac and former British Prime Minister Major met personally and publicly with the Dalai Lama on his trips to their respective countries. The meetings are hard to classify as “official” since neither of the countries recognize the Dalai Lama beyond his capacity as a religious leader and Nobel Peace Laureate and were specifically termed ‘non-political’ in the press coverage. Yet, the meetings are significant. They directly opposed China’s wishes, which has been made emphatically clear to the world: If a country wishes to remain in China’s favor, they must not issue a visa to the Dalai Lama under any premises, and even more important, must not let him meet with their respective Head of State or members of their government. Yet, similar meetings have taken place between the Dalai Lama and Ireland’s President Mary Robinson, South Africa’s President Nelson Mandela, Italy’s Prime Minister Massimo D’Alema, Germany’s Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, Australia’s Prime Minister John Howard, and Thailand’s King Bhumipol to name a few. In 1999, there have also been some reciprocal visits. A United States congressional delegation visited Dharamsala to meet with representatives of the CTA and recent arrivals. Australian Senator Bob Brown, visited Tibet unofficially on holiday. On his return to Beijing he held a press conference in which he expressed his shock at the high level of militarism Tibet and the stifling of Tibetan freedom. Still, there are countries who succumb to Chinese pressure, refusing the Dalai Lama an entry visa into their country, even if the purpose is solely to give a religious lecture at the invitation of a religious community, such as the case with Nepal in 1991 and Sri Lanka.

There are a few admirable countries who have openly defied China, not only to meet with the Dalai Lama on an official basis, but also to openly voice support for the Tibetan nonviolent movement. Lithuania and the Czech Republic are the only countries to date to meet with the Dalai Lama officially as the head of the Tibetan government in exile. In 1950, Malaysia and Ireland sponsored the Tibetan government’s appeal against the Chinese invasion to the United Nations. El Salvador was the only country to openly support the motion. The motion was adjourned after statements made by India and Great Britain.

Despite the lack of attention Tibet has received in the United Nations in regards to their political status, Tibetans have received support from the United Nations against the human rights abuses carried out by the Chinese in Tibet. The UN General Assembly has passed three resolutions condemning China’s human rights abuses in 1959, 1961, and 1965. UN sub-commissions dealing with human rights violations have since taken up the issue. The UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minority Rights made a similar resolution to the General Assembly resolution in 1991. The UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights has also taken up the issue of human rights abuses in China and Tibet. In 1993, a mildly worded resolution focusing on the need to allow UN officials investigate human rights abuses in Tibet was absolved after a vote in favor of a no action motion set forth by China. China has successfully manipulated similar resolutions set forth by the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights in the past.

Gains have been made on other governmental levels. The European Parliament has come out in favor of Tibet, not only in regards to human rights, but also in acknowledging Tibet’s illegal occupation by China and the self-determination wishes of the
Virtual Tibet and Cyber Struggle.

Cyber Struggle activists use the internet as a contest ground for ideological conflicts between states and non-governmental actors. The internet has allowed cross-border alliances of non-governmental organizations to challenge the very legitimacy of some nation states, and their policies. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines is perhaps the best example of this type of global policy formation being implemented ‘from below’. While this form of activism takes place in ‘cyber space’, the stakes can be high and results are sought in the physical world.

Tibet is as accessible and as real as China on the internet today. Tibetans and Tibet Support Groups worldwide use the internet for public education on Tibet as a political issue, to promote Tibetan culture, and to develop campaigns toward certain goals on, literally, hundreds of sites. The most successful use of the internet to challenge to the legitimacy of the PRC to make decisions in relation to Tibet, was the defeat of it’s plans to increase Han Chinese population flow into Tibet using multi-lateral funding (see World Bank campaign). This action will become and inspiration and a blueprint for activists worldwide seeking to curb the power of both the multi-lateral funding agencies (IMF, WB, Asia Development Bank) and authoritarian regimes.
A Tibetan living in exile recently wrote a letter to the editor of a well-known political journal, chiding them for using the phrase ‘India-China border’ in an editorial. “India shares no border directly with China”, he wrote, “India shares it’s northern border with Occupied Tibet. If you want Tibet to disappear, just stop talking about it!”

All of us have the responsibility for quietly supporting or actively condemning injustice in the world. In these brief pages we have attempted to inspire you with the story of what we believe to be the most significant and strategically waged non-violent struggle of our time. While the history of this conflict is still a point for scholarly debate, what has been happening in Tibet today is wrong.

The beauty of the method of waging nonviolent struggle which we have revealed in this booklet is that it is truly open for all to participate. Each of us can ask ourselves how we can help in the strategic goals of this campaign. For non-Tibetans, this takes the form of looking at how we can help bring about a change of policy, if not a change of heart, in Beijing; seeking ways to develop awareness and compassion for the Tibetan cause among China’s allies; and awakening the people of greater China to the effects of their governments policies on their Tibetan neighbors.

To expand the use of nonviolent methods in solving political problems in the world today, it is important that people understand the nature of nonviolent power. The major media outlets (all from Western nations) do not present an analysis as to why certain acts done without armed force can have power. This is because they equate violence with power and non-use of violence with powerlessness. The human heart responds immediately to the practitioner of nonviolence. Think of the most powerful image to arise out of the
recent Democracy uprising in China- a lone person stopping a line of tanks. While that uprising was suppressed it has given birth to a lasting democracy movement both within and outside China.

The choice to use nonviolent methods is an ethical choice- we use it because it seems evident to us that means and ends are connected: it is impossible to build peace through violence. Like any other form of struggle, the use of nonviolence does not assure victory, and the choice to use nonviolent methods does not preclude the adversary from using violence, though it thoroughly undercuts their justification for doing so. Like any other form of struggle, nonviolence should not be applied dogmatically: there are times to advance, times to stay-the-course, and times to make a strategic retreat and re-group.

Tibetans have gained worldwide support and sympathy precisely because they have steadfastly adhered to nonviolent methods. Tibetan support groups have grown enormously in recent times as a result: the Tibetan cause offers a clear cut injustice for people’s innate compassion to respond to in an unjust world that is ever increasing in complexity.

Our own response has been to research and publish this book to inform you, the reader, how nonviolence is being used to pursue political justice and peace. We now encourage the readers to join what Gandhi called “experiments with truth”. Study more about nonviolence, educate yourself about the sources of injustice in your region and then join the experiment.

![Image of a poster with the message: SAVE TIBET CHINESE GET LOST FROM TIBET IT BELONGS TO US]
Appendices

Political History of the Occupation of Tibet in the 20th Century

Nonviolent Actions by the Tibetan Movement

What You Can Do for the Liberation of Tibet

Bibliography

Notes
A political history of the conflict over the governance of Tibet is beyond the scope of our manuscript. It is a subject of a great deal of debate to which several full-length books have been devoted. (see bibliography section)

Current events were triggered by the rise to power of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the establishment of the Peoples Republic of China (PRC), and its subsequent ‘liberation’ of Tibet. In justifying its actions, the CCP focuses both on some legalistic arguments and on its ‘civilizing’ influence—where it liberated the serfs from a feudal and oppressive rule. This line of logic is no different than that of the British when India was its colony, or of the mindset of colonizers everywhere. The Tibetan government in exile counters this version of history with its own, of a ‘happy land of abundance prior to invasion (abetted by Western romance of Shangri-La), and that the Tibetan leadership was a blameless victims of a brutal tyranny.

Tibet is a land with two histories, and the history varies according to the part of the land you are in. Ethnic Tibet, is much larger than the part of Tibet which was under the governance of the Lhasa government in the 1900s. Some Tibetan kingdoms, like Bhutan, are their own independent states. The Tibetan speaking people of the area of Amdo, about the size of the Benelux countries, wasn’t under the direct rule of Lhasa in this century, even though it is the birthplace of the current Dalai Lama.117 (see map of Tibet)

None-the-less, when the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) began its invasion/liberation of the Tibetan plateau in the 1950’s, it entered a land where the language was unrelated to Chinese—its script is related to ancient Brahmani of India rather than Chinese pictaform characters. The PLA entered and ‘reunited’ a land where the inhabitants maintain different and unique religious and cultural practices, with its own art and architecture. This has forced Beijing to focus its claim of sovereignty on obscure historical events, or its interpretation of them.
Key Events of this Century

Prior to the invasion by the PLA, the Lhasa government enjoyed a brief period of total independence and some limited diplomatic relations with the world. The British maintained a foreign embassy in Lhasa. Aware of changes in China, the Lhasa government attempted to negotiate its existence as a state by the Treaty of Simla in 1914. While this Treaty was meant to spell out the relationship between Tibet and China, China refused to ratify. Tibet then sought to sign the treaty bilaterally with Britain, but London, setting the tone for many western states dealing with Tibetans for the rest of this century, declined due to concerns over their trading concessions with China. The Lhasa government had a few years during which it could ignore its neighbor to the East, as the Communist and the Nationalist fought for control between themselves, and against Japan.

Occupation and colonization

In 1949, the nationalist government of Chiang Kaishek fell, and the PRC was established on 1 October 1949 under the CCP. Prior to victory, the CCP’s policy towards the various ethnic nationalities within Greater China appeared to follow the Soviet Union’s lead, wherein ethnic territories would be autonomous republics and would have the right of succession from union. Upon establishment of the PRC, its nationality policy shifted towards political centralism. The new China would be an indivisible multi-ethnic state. By late 1949, the CCP declared that Tibet and Taiwan were an integral part of China.

Lhasa read the writing on the wall, and immediately dispatched letters and delegations to Britain and the United States. The CCP protested loudly to the west about these missions, but they need not have worried. The western democracies were not interested in supporting Tibet against an invasion and refused to accept the delegations from Tibet. Beijing had to consider how to establish its rule over Tibet, as Tibet had international status, dealt with foreign nations directly, signed international agreements and regulated entry into its territory. This set it apart from every other nationality group in China, moreover, there were few Chinese living there. The CCP knew they must move quickly as delay could allow the Tibetans time to attempt gathering international support. Under Mao Zedong’s guidance, the CCP embarked on a campaign of peaceful liberation— but one backed up by force as they massed PLA troops in Tibetan areas outside Lhasa’s control. Lhasa stalled for time, and did not send delegates to proposed peace talks in Beijing, leading the CCP to launch a military offensive. Tibet’s insignificant military defenses crumpled under the onslaught of the battle hardened PLA. With the road to Lhasa open, the CCP halted its military offensive to follow a policy of further ‘peaceful liberation’ and to avoid international censure.

The Lhasa Government turned to the UN. Since it was not a member this led to some discussion as to whether Tibet was a ‘state’, and, therefore qualified to bring up its issue. Britain examined the appeal and decided that Tibet could qualify as a state, however the British Foreign Office felt that it should take the lead on this from its newly released colony, India. India was keen to establish good relations with China and wasn’t about to bring up the issue in the UN. El Salvador eventually raised the issue, but on the recommendation of both Britain and India further discussion on Tibet was squashed.
The Lhasa authorities were left alone to face China, and now felt forced to send a delegation to Beijing. After some months in Beijing, this delegation signed the 17 Point Agreement on the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet, which among other things conceded that Tibet was a part of China. The 16 year old 14th Dalai Lama was sitting with his cabinet and top advisors near the Indian border, prepared to flee into exile, should Tibet be invaded. They were shocked to hear the announcement of the 17 point agreement. On the basis of this legal fiction, enacted between two independent States, Tibet lost any independent identity. Within a year PLA troops marched into Lhasa, completing the occupation. Despite the occupation, the agreement was the only one the Chinese government ever signed with an ethnic minority, and promised some level of self rule. On this basis the 14th Dalai Lama and the Lhasa government concluded it was better to stay within Tibet and attempt some level of co-existence with Beijing.

Over the following eight years, the situation on the Tibetan plateau deteriorated rapidly. The CCP exercised direct rule in ethnically Tibetan areas outside the TAR to the east, and forced collectivization and other socialist reforms that were being mobilized throughout China. This led to both an armed resistance in those areas and refugee flight towards Lhasa. The situation in central Tibet became more and more tense as the stories of Chinese actions in Tibetan areas outside the TAR became well known were combined with the fear that it was only a matter of time before the CCP attempted the same reforms within the TAR. The situation continued to deteriorate until an uprising in Lhasa occurred in March of 1959, due to the popular belief that the CCP was planning the seizure or assassination of the Dalai Lama. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, unable to continue to play the role of a buffer between his people and the Chinese Communist Party, fled with his cabinet to India and at once renounced the Seventeen-Point Agreement and established the Tibetan government-in-exile.

The autonomy granted Tibet was only ink on paper. Following the departure of the Dalai Lama, thousands of Tibetans who had taken part in the uprising and resistance activities were jailed. The same methods of political education which were taking place in China were applied to Tibet. Religious institutions throughout Tibet were closed. All clerics were evicted. Properties were confiscated and redistributed according to class criteria. These seizures were taking place at the same time as the Great Leap Forward within central China. The resulting famine in central China led to an appropriation of Tibet’s agricultural production to offset the crisis in central China, and led to famine conditions in the early 1960s in Tibet.

This period was followed by the Cultural Revolution, and its campaign of destroying the ‘Four Olds’ (old ideology, old culture, old customs, old habits). What this meant for Tibet was that all citizens were ruthlessly punished for displaying, practicing or living any element of Tibetan culture. Perfect Proletarian lifestyle as modeled by Red Guards (mostly young Chinese who came by the thousands from central China) was required. Religion was absolutely prohibited and remaining monasteries were energetically destroyed and uprooted. The population as a whole was forced to endure more political education and struggle sessions, during which the Red Guards attempted to eliminate all vestiges of Tibetan culture and identity.

A further round of collectivization was made which established an ever-increasing work quota and taxation system. As resources were forced to meet unrealistic political outputs the result was a 5-year famine from 1968 to 1973. This led to a widespread revolt in 1969, which had to be suppressed by PLA troops and mass public executions.
With the death of Mao Zedong in the mid-70s, the heavy handed massive campaigns of the past 15 years changed. Reforms were introduced throughout China, and Tibet also experienced some relief. Significantly, the CCP under Deng Xiaoping's leadership, released many of the Tibetans who had been imprisoned during the previous 15 years, and opened dialog leading to delegations from the Tibetan Government-in-Exile to Tibet. Chinese authorities, perhaps under the influence of their own propaganda, invited the delegations to witness the improvements made to Tibet under Chinese rule. They even felt the need to ask the citizens of Lhasa to behave politely and not attack the delegations. The Chinese authorities were shocked when Tibetans turned out in mobs of the tens of thousands displaying both jubilation and defiance, and shouts for independence. The Chinese cut-short the visit of the delegations and further visits were postponed indefinitely.

This shock did lead to some level of self-examination by the CCP. The former hard-line Party Secretary to the TAR was sacked, and CCP General Secretary Hu Yaobang with Chinese Vice Premier Wan Li visited Tibet on a fact finding mission in 1980 for Beijing. Hu Yaobang was so shaken by the devastated state of Tibet he is reported to have said "This reminds me of colonialism". He made a series of recommendations which became policy and led to the reforms of the 1980s. Importantly, they attempted to take in the uniqueness of the situation in Tibet and not treat it like any other part of China. Exemption of the previously mentioned quota and taxation systems were the most important. Also land was de-collectivized, distributed among commune members, who could now keep or dispose of their produce as they saw fit. The standard of living in the TAR improved significantly, and they saw fit to plow some of their resources into the rebuilding and supporting the growth of monasteries and a monastic community, a cornerstone of Tibetan culture and life. This was allowed through reform of the previous restriction on cultural and religious activities. The early 80s were a period in which Tibetan culture reappeared on the Tibetan plateau, and the monasteries in particular have come to signify Tibetan cultural survival and an icon for the Tibetan nation. This set the stage for the monasteries to become the principle "battleground" between Tibetan resistance to the occupation and Beijing's attempts to maintain political control.

Since the mid-90s, CCP authorities in the TAR have attempted to limit the space for nationalist sentiments to take root in the monasteries, by limiting the number of monks. Through the mid-90s, work teams of cadres have expelled thousands of monks from the monastic communities, destroyed and forbidden pictures of the titular head of an independent Tibet AND their religious leader- His Holiness the Dalai Lama. A new round of political education campaigns have been conducted to demand that Tibetan monks and nuns denounce the Dalai Lama. Perhaps no other activity could have been undertaken that would have been sure of triggering enormous resistance. Daily acts of non-compliance, non-cooperation and defiance now characterized one of the longest running nonviolent self determination struggles known in modern history.

"The issue of Tibet is not merely a question of the survival of a people with their own distinct history and culture, it also has direct bearing on the fate of this world and Asian peace, and particularly upon the relationship between the world’s two most populous nations, India and China. At stake is also the serious question of human rights, as enshrined in the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the world body’s effort to put an end to the era of colonialism and expansionism."

– His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet
NONVIOLENT ACTION
BY THE TIBETAN MOVEMENT

Protest Action

- **Poster campaigns**
  The act of posting posters or leaflets is to ensure that the content reaches the widest possible audience. The purpose can be to educate and encourage the resisting population or to communicate political opposition directly to the oppressor.

- **Graffiti**
  Graffiti is used with the same purpose as the posting of posters, however, it uses the direct medium of paint on walls rather than ink on paper then posted on walls.

- **Producing/distributing pamphlets, leaflets or books**
  The act of producing or distributing pamphlets, leaflets or books is a means by which to communicate with the oppressed pro-independence ideas, banned material from abroad and other material central to the nonviolent struggle.

- **Demonstrations**
  Demonstrating is a public act that can be carried out by one to many people with the aim of communicating to the oppressor group and allies group of non-acceptance of the current regime. It also may serve to empower the resisting population.
Disruption of Patriotic Re-education campaigns (walk-out)
One or more people can express their political objections by either disrupting or walking out of a conference, assembly, meeting or discussion before it has been adjourned.

Displaying/possessing the Tibetan national flag/photograph of the Dalai Lama
Public display of a symbol of independence, such as the Tibetan national flag, is an act of political protest, communicating to the oppressor political loyalties and can have a mobilizing effect upon the resistant population.

Chanting pro-independence slogans
Chanting slogans is a vocal outright show of political defiance, often used during demonstrations.

Singing
Singing songs whose lyrics communicate political defiance can both demonstrate non-acceptance of oppressor’s regime, as well as serve to empower the resisting population.

Demonstrative funerals
Demonstrative funerals (or carrying those killed by the oppressor) is a sign of protest or moral condemnation. Those carried may be prominent figures of the resistance or unknown demonstrators. It also may serve to rally the oppressed group.

Buddhist/cultural ritual as protest
Religious and cultural acts may be conducted so that the participants are doing actions of political defiance and protest.

Spontaneous public involvement
Spontaneous (unplanned) public involvement shows widespread support for the oppressed group and the nonviolent struggle in cases where organizing must be underground.

Religious boycott
A religious boycott is a refusal of the religious community to continue/conduct usual religious activities with the oppressor. It therefore signifies withdrawal of support and cooperation with the oppressor.

Hartal (closure of shops)
A method of nonviolent action in which the economic life of an area is temporarily suspended on a voluntary basis in order to demonstrate extreme dissatisfaction with some event, policy or condition, or to show support for an event sponsored by the resistance, i.e. demonstrations.

Processions (peace marches)
Processions or peace marches are similar to demonstration, however, they cover a greater distance.

Blockades/barricades
The act of forming a human blockade to prevent the passage of officials of the oppression in order to draw attention to the severity of issue at hand.

Economic boycott
A refusal of consumers to purchase products certain goods or services.
Self-emulation
Self-emulation is the act of publicly setting one-self on fire in an extreme act to achieve social or political objectives by bringing attention to the gravity and urgency of the issue involved.

Street theatre
The use of performance art to focus public attention on a political issue.

Refusal to enter into business partnerships
Businesses refusing to conduct business or enter into a joint partnership with the oppressing regime on account of its oppressive policy.

Individual campaigns
Actions by individuals nonviolent in nature that serve to educate others regarding the nature of the struggle, or communicate to the oppressor one's support of the oppressed.

Non-cooperation with the Occupation

- **Non-cooperation/non-compliance with Chinese officials**
  Non-cooperation is the outright refusal to follow the orders of the oppressor, whereas non-compliance is the act of not carrying out orders given. The former entails greater risk to the nonviolent actor.

- **Displaying/possessing photographs of the Dalai Lama**
  A public display of a symbol that of independence is politically defiant, communicating to the oppressor political loyalties and can have a mobilizing effect upon the resistant population.

- **Hunger strike**
  A hunger strike is carried out with the purpose of achieving social or political objectives. It is a method of psychological intervention, in that it attempts to alter the will of the oppressor to carry out the oppression or that of the oppressor’s allies.

- **Silence**
  Corporate silence is a method used to express moral condemnation to the oppressor’s actions.

- **Removal/destruction of Chinese symbols of authority**
  By removing Chinese symbols of authority (and replacing them with pro-independence symbols), the resistance demonstrates their non-acceptance of the current regime.

- **Possession of banned literature**
  Possession of banned literature/items is an act of ignoring laws set by the opposition.

- **Symbolic gestures**
  Acts by individuals or groups that have symbolic representation of showing extreme dissatisfaction with some event, policy or condition.

- **Voicing opposition to government policies**
  Public statements made by individuals of social rank in open criticism to policies of the oppressor.

- **Solidarity acts**
  Nonviolent actions used to display a feeling of solidarity with others also engaged in the movement.
Positive Action/Constructive Program

☐ Government-in-exile
This method involves the creation of a new government or a continuation of the pre-oppressor government that receives overwhelming support from the populace that in effect replaces the oppressor's established government in representing the people. Ideally, this government would carry out all official duties of government on behalf of the oppressed population, including foreign relations. This offers an alternative to the existing oppressor regime.

✗ Communicating with outsiders
Relaying the true circumstances of the oppressor's regime to the society of the oppressor's allies is one method by which to change the will of that society in supporting the oppressor.

✗ Compiling prisoner lists/human rights violations
The act of compiling prisoner lists and human rights violations and smuggling the information outside of Tibet has been primarily used to relay the truth of the Tibetan situation to the international community and thus to generate support among the oppressor's allies constituency.

✗ Underground organizing
Underground organizing provides leadership and communication for the nonviolent struggle under cases of extremely ruthless opponents.

✗ ☐ Promoting Tibetan language & culture
The promotion of culture, language, religion, medicine, etc. of the oppressed serves to maintain the identity of the oppressed and empower them by offering an alternative to the oppressing regime. Language and culture is a very powerful medium for empowering individuals, as it keeps them in touch with their identity. In addition, it serves to educate the allies' society by showing that there is something very important to preserve and defend.

✗ ☐ Petitioning
Petitions are written requests or supplications seeking to the redress of a specific grievance signed by a large number of individuals, a smaller group, or individuals acting on the behalf of a constituency. The petitions can either be sent directly to the oppressor or the oppressor's allies.

✗ Monastic hartal
The temporary voluntary closure of monasteries by all the monks is demonstrates support for the resistance or extreme dissatisfaction with some event, policy or condition. It is also a form of non-cooperation with the oppressor regime.

✗ Sabotage
Sabotage is a deliberate act of altering or destroying an item used by the oppressor for purposes of propaganda or oppression. In its nonviolent form it does not lead to the harm of any individual.

✗ Promoting Human rights in Tibet
Promoting human rights in Tibet, whether in public statements, petitions to the Chinese authorities, or simply by translating a copy of the universal declaration of human rights into Tibetan and circulating it to the public in an education effort, has the effect of providing alternatives to the
Radio broadcasting
Like other forms of media coverage, radio broadcasting counters the monopoly China has on media going on in and out of Tibet. Radio broadcasting has formed the main link of communication to Tibetans inside Tibet.

Listening to banned radio broadcasts
Listening to what the Chinese Government considers banned radio broadcasts is not only an act of non-cooperation with the regime (and a practice of a human right) but it also serves as a channel of communication for Tibetans to receive news of the outside world.

Assisting asylum and refugee activities
The act of assisting Tibetans seeking asylum or assisting with refugee activities directly challenges the authority of the oppressor.

Reclaiming history
The process by which the oppressed reclaims their history from the history projected by the oppressor.

Promotional event
An event used for the purposes of educating the allies' society to the issue and generating support for the cause.

Official government resolutions condemning China's actions in Tibet
Official government resolutions by either one government or a coalition of governments shows international condemnation of the oppressor's actions and support for the oppressed and is used to create pressure on the oppressor to refrain from oppressive acts.

Meetings with official government Head's of State to discuss Tibet
Meeting with official government representatives or head's of state to discuss Tibet is a form of education and generating support for the cause. It also allows for the State in question to recognize that the Chinese government does not represent the Tibetan people.

Major media coverage supporting Tibet
Media coverage that reports on the true nature of the situation in Tibet, or helps to disseminate information on the Tibetan liberation struggle, educates the allies' society as well as providing alternative perceptions for the people of China and Tibet regarding the struggle.

International recognition of the Tibetan cause
International awards and recognition given to individuals who are participating in the nonviolent struggle brings international attention to the issue while also creating international pressure on the oppressor to end their policies of oppression.
WHAT YOU CAN DO
FOR THE LIBERATION OF TIBET

Leaders of Tibet Support Groups and Aid Projects have developed the following list of ways for non-Tibetans to support Tibet, the Tibetan struggle and help make a difference in the lives of Tibetans both inside Tibet and in exile. They represent a spectrum of strategies and efforts of people who care about Tibet, and want to do something practical to help. This list is endorsed by the Tibetan Government in Exile.

- We include in [ ] the method of nonviolent action.

BUILD A SCHOOL  [Constructive Program]

Most children in rural Tibet have no schools. 44% of Tibetans are illiterate in any language, and the majority of Tibetans cannot read and write Tibetan today. Under Chinese rule, much of Tibet’s education funding is spent in China, leaving little for Tibetans in Tibet. Groups in several countries are making a huge difference for hundreds of children. They are funding building of schools where there were none, expanding others, and providing funds for text books and basic health care. Contact your nearest Tibet Support group to find an organization you can participate in on this.

GIVE A PRISONER HOPE  [Solidarity]

A Chinese prison official in Lhasa recently said that he had received many letters of concern for Tibetans prisoners. Letters written by ordinary individuals worldwide DO get through. We know that this has made a tremendous difference improving conditions, preventing or lessening torture, and leading to an early release of some prisoners. Gendun Rinchen, a tour guide who was released after 7 months without being tortured, is living proof. Chinese officials received thousands of letters about him. Watch for urgent prisoner appeals in Tibetan support group newsletters, and contact Amnesty International to become part of an international China campaign.
SUPPORT A NUN IN EXILE  [Solidarity]

Tibetan nuns are at the forefront of the demonstrations for Tibetan independence in Lhasa, and they face brutal torture and reprisals in prison. Once released, they are often banned from returning to their nunneries, and many end up fleeing to India for refuge. In India the nunneries are overcrowded and desperately need funds for books, clothes, and general support. Again, offer through a national Tibet Support, or write the Tibetan Government in Exile.

TELL YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS OR GOVERNMENT WHAT YOU THINK  [Political Intervention]

Parliamentarians, usually acting on their personal time, have done a great deal for Tibet. However, they need to hear from their constituents to keep supporting Tibet. Both the US and Norwegian governments have allocated funds which allow for Radio broadcasts in Tibetan language, which are now the most popular news sources in Tibet. Various governments through their refugee assistance and technical training programs provide annual assistance for Tibetan refugees in India and Nepal. Some maintain a policy that Tibet is an occupied nation under foreign rule, and recognize the Dalai Lama as the rightful head of the country. Urge them to continue their support. Letters, phone calls and personal visits count!

VOTE WITH YOUR WALLET - BOYCOTT CHINESE GOODS  [Direct Action/Boycott]

Boycotting Chinese goods is a simple and direct way for anyone to ‘vote with their wallet’. A growing boycott campaign is being led by the Students for a Free Tibet. It is helpful to send notices of your refusal to buy Chinese goods in a letter or fax to a Chinese Embassy or Trade office, with a copy to your local Business council or Commerce club. Be careful not to inflame racial hatred, be specific- you are doing this to oppose China's occupation of Tibet-not to oppose Chinese!

TRAVEL WISELY  [Education for Action]

China is trying to use tourism in Tibet to legitimize its rule there, and to showcase selected monasteries and sites to prove Tibetans are content. Moreover, most tourist dollars, particularly on group tours, go to Chinese pockets, and do little to help impoverished Tibetan communities. If you travel in a group, make sure the company uses Tibetan guides, and patronizes Tibetan businesses. Educate yourself about Tibet before you go, and contact and contribute to Tibetan organizations in exile. For more suggestions about how you can make your trip help Tibetans, and for a map and guide of Lhasa which explains what Chinese tour guides will try to hide, again seek resources through Tibet Support Groups.

GIVE AS IF LIVES DEPEND ON IT  [Solidarity]

Join and donate to both national and local Tibet Support organizations. Local support groups are doing important work such as informing local media, putting on appropriate events to educate the general public. National group schedule events which will move government policy on Tibet. Everybody concerned or working for Tibet needs to make at least a small monetary contribution to one or more of these activities.
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His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in a spirit of moving forward negotiations with Beijing, developed what he calls the middle path. These are talks without preconditions with a possible outcome of true autonomy rather than absolute independence. While this is now the official policy of the Tibetan government in exile, Tibetan NGOs and many individuals still seek complete independence.

There is a great amount of debate as to whether self-emulation or a hunger strike unto death are acts of nonviolence since they are obviously damage inflicted by an individual on themselves. This appears to be an act of great violence even if it is not perpetrated onto another.

However, to the extent that it is a conscious action of self-sacrifice to awaken society to a greater suffering, it can be considered a high act of nonviolence.

Buddhism has three main sects: Vajrayana, Mahayana and Theravada. Each has subsects within. Vajrayana is found mostly among the countries of central Asia, where Mahayana is found more in East Asia and Theravada is found mostly in SE Asia.

These same types of retaliatory measures are taken against countries which receive Taiwanese presidents. Nelson Mandela, whose African National Congress received support from the Peoples Republic of China during its liberation struggle, was criticized as a new president of South Africa by the PRC for having diplomatic relations with Taiwan and receiving the Dalai Lama. His response was “I agree with China that this is an internal matter, so please do not bring it to us and deal with it directly yourselves” as both a rebuke and encouragement for China to begin sincere dialog with the Tibetan and Taiwanese governments.

For the purposes of our manuscript, we focus on predominantly ethnic Tibetan areas within the current borders of the PRC, and where nonviolent resistance to CCP domination of Tibetan culture is taking place. Some of these areas lay outside the borders of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) of the PRC.

The US was even afraid of delivering an answer to Tibet in writing, as it might be “considered by the Tibetans as recognition of their independent status”. Washington instructed its Embassy in New Delhi to pass on a verbal reply, dissuading the Tibetans from sending a delegation. Britain did likewise.

After a lengthy study, the International Commission of Jurists concluded that ‘Tibet demonstrated the conditions of statehood generally accepted under International Law’ (1960).

None-the-less, Tibet was not absolutely friendless. In what today would seem and odd combination, Malaysia and Ireland sponsored the first of a series of UN Resolutions which condemned the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet.
This brief publication seeks to introduce the general public to the methods of strategic nonviolent political struggle, and to reveal one of its most dramatic applications in the world today. The use of active nonviolent political struggle by the Tibetan liberation movement is well known, but only to the extent that it is generally recognized that they are not waging an armed struggle. Exactly what the Tibetans have been doing, and why that makes a difference, is less clear. This is due, in part, to the fact that the commercial media does not consider its role is to give the public tools to analyse strategic nonviolent struggle, nor does the common political vocabulary contain agreed upon terms to describe nonviolent action. This leaves the pragmatic activities of the Tibetan liberation struggle and other nonviolent movements hidden behind today’s headlines.

Nonviolence International