

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Recent Chinese Policies in Tibet and towards the Himalayan Border States

By GEORGE N. PATTERSON

IN the months prior to the recent fighting with India, China initiated a new policy in Tibet and towards the Himalayan border countries in order to recover the ground lost—in the case of Tibet—by its previous policies, and—in the case of the neighbouring Himalayan territories—by its suppression of the Tibetan revolt. China's recent successful attacks in the border areas will probably lend added strength to her diplomacy in the border states whatever the immediate reactions of some local statesmen.

The first official statement on China's new policy in Tibet is contained in an article by Chang Ching-wu (Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party in Tibet and Representative of the Peking Government there) in the June 8 issue of *Peking Review*. The immediate post-revolt stage is announced as being completed in the opening words: "A democratic reform movement was launched in Tibet after the armed rebellion. . . . This movement has now been completed in the main." After an introductory analysis of the many evils of the feudalism of "the reactionary upper strata responsible for the revolt" the article comes to a remarkable conclusion: "The rebellion was a counter-revolutionary war designed to suppress the Tibetan labouring people: it was a betrayal of the motherland." Then comes the startling *dementi*: "The war was one between the revolutionary classes and the counter-revolutionaries and certainly not one between nations."

Having satisfactorily apportioned the blame for the revolt, exonerated Chinese policies and identified the Chinese forces with the Tibetan people, the ground is prepared for developing the new emphasis—"the united front." "In the revolutionary struggle in Tibet," states Chang, "united front work is of the utmost importance. . . . The united front, however, had serious limitations before democratic reform. . . . Today, the Party's united front policy will continue to be implemented so as to unite all the forces that can possibly be united and bring all factors into play."

What this means in practice—in relation to the monasteries, for instance—is that the destruction of the monastic system,¹ and the removal

¹ This is testified to by broadcasts and speeches made by the Chinese in Tibet and by Indian Communist support for these measures, statements by Sikkimese and Bhutanese leaders and reports in the Indian press.

of lamas for "constructive labour reform" (in this article referred to as "reforms . . . firmly carried out according to the principle of political unification and religious principle") is now changed to a more moderate and co-operative policy. The Panchen Lama is reported to have put this policy as follows: (1) the monasteries must give up exploitation; (2) the monasteries must implement democratic administration; (3) the monasteries must observe government laws and statutes and the Constitution of the People's Republic of China; (4) the Government will guarantee the livelihood of the old and young lamas and professional reciters of scriptures.

Politically, "regional autonomy" is being propagated once again. "National regional autonomy is an essential sign of the realisation of equality and unity among nationalities. *It means that a national minority administers its own affairs.*"² Chang states that "the former Tibetan local government," which was dissolved as a result of the revolt, is not being reconstituted, and that the new policy will be carried out by the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet with the help of "a certain number of cadres of Han and other nationalities."

There are three main reasons for this new policy. The first is the growing resistance by the Tibetans to the Chinese occupation of Tibet, despite all that the Chinese authorities have done and are doing. The lack of food due to the demands from China on Tibet's bumper harvests, together with the Chinese measure of imposing stringent rations as a means of breaking the Tibetan guerrillas' tactic of cutting off food supplies, has reduced the whole Tibetan population to a sullen, dangerous state once again. In these conditions many thousands are reported to have left their homes for the inaccessible hide-outs of the guerrillas, who remain comparatively well-fed, thereby increasing the number of raids on Chinese convoys, garrisons and food supplies.

The second reason is the serious possibility that India may perhaps decide, officially or unofficially, to help the guerrillas with supplies of arms through exiled Tibetan leaders in India. It would be the obvious move, Indian military leaders have informed me, in the event of any serious military engagement, and now that India is heavily committed in its border war with China in the North East Frontier Area, this is a definite possibility. The Tibetan rebels are now more numerous than in 1959³ and are in an even more dangerous state of mind, and all that is required to spark the revolt again is an adequate supply of arms. If India could win over the embittered Tibetans (who feel that they have been betrayed by India), and supply them with arms, then the Chinese

² Italics mine, to indicate that this is the dominant emphasis in the new policy vis-à-vis Tibet and the Himalayan countries.

³ See my "The Situation in Tibet," *The China Quarterly*, No. 6, 1961.

would be in the dangerous situation of having a powerful Tibetan guerrilla force operating for a thousand miles behind the Sino-Indian border and even, possibly, deep into West China. At all costs China has to forestall this possibility.

The third reason is to be found in the success which China has been having with her political wooing of the Himalayan border countries and peoples adjoining the "Tibet region of China." After a few false starts, from 1956 or so, with local offers of "autonomy for Darjeeling-Dooars District" (a famous tea-growing area heavily infiltrated by Communists), "federation of Sikkim and Bhutan," "Gurkhanistan"—to include Nepal and the three million Nepalis inhabiting North Bengal and North Assamese territory outside Nepal—these emerged a few months ago in a full-fledged policy of a proposal for a "Confederation of Himalayan States." This would include Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, the North-East Frontier Area and Nagaland. This proposal has had an encouraging response from the Chinese point of view, and it is now being pursued assiduously at various levels in the countries concerned. In addition to the regular broadcasts from Lhasa radio, approaches have been made to Government officials, political leaders and Communist parties.

These three reasons are inter-related and, of course, are supplemented by others, but for the purposes of this article I wish to restrict myself to them as the mainly relevant factors in China's "Sino-Indian dispute" policies. While India's influence has sharply deteriorated in the Himalayan region over the past year, China's influence has been steadily growing and is likely to make itself felt even more in the months ahead. The following is a resumé of the situation in each of the border countries and territories mentioned as the present writer found it during a recent two-month visit to the Himalayan region.

Kashmir

Kashmir has had a stormy history. Originally it was a dependency of the Sikh Empire. When that passed under British rule, the general who was governing Kashmir was allowed to purchase it for approximately £600,000. This ruler and his descendants were Hindus, and by 1947 they held a subject population of four million, 77 per cent. of them being Muslims.

Because of three generations of extortion, tyranny and religious persecution by the Hindu Government, the Muslim subjects, bitterly opposed to the ruling house, formed themselves into two main parties. The National Conference Party, led by Sheikh Abdullah, was in favour of a secular state; the Muslim Conference, led by Chaudri Ghulam Abbas, was a replica of the Muslim League. The late Mr. Jinnah, the national

leader of the Muslim League, gave his support to the Muslim Conference, and Mr. Nehru to his then friend Sheikh Abdullah. The Muslim Conference was the more militant and in 1946 it proclaimed as its objective the establishment of an independent State of Azad, or "Free" Kashmir, and, in 1947, that the state should accede to Pakistan. On August 27, 1947, the revolt against the hated Maharajah began when a young Poonch tribesman, Sirdar Abdul Qayyum, fired the first shot, the repercussions of which resulted in the Azad Kashmir Liberation Movement.

When the hundredth use of the veto by Russia was used in the U.N. in June 1962 to prevent a move to bring Pakistan and India together for negotiations on their fourteen-year dispute over Kashmir, the Government of Azad Kashmir declared its intention to liberate the part held by India, if necessary by force. The President, K. H. Khurshid, informed me of this in a private interview with him shortly afterwards: "We Kashmiris no longer believe that the U.N. will implement the Security Council's resolutions on Kashmir; we no longer believe that the West will put pressure on India to submit to those resolutions, and so we have decided to settle the matter in our own way."

But the Azad Kashmir Government is too tied to Pakistan, economically and militarily, to be able to take any unilateral action. However, the Muslim Conference, still led by Chaudri Ghulam Abbas and supported by Sirdar Abdul Qayyum, is not subject to these influences, and on May 20, they decided to launch an armed Liberation Movement, with the declared objective of precipitating a decision by forcing a crisis. At a public meeting attended by 1,000 delegates and 50,000 supporters the start of this struggle was scheduled for on or after August 20, and since that time, Abbas and Qayyum informed me, they have recruited 10,000 armed and trained fighters, with a reservoir of 30,000 armed tribesmen across the border. Their immediate plans are to launch a series of raids across the cease-fire line, and increase these when India replies with large-scale retaliation. They will then carry on extensive guerrilla war, calling on all Muslims to join them. The arms for this they have in small supply at present but they hope that China will provide whatever is required should the war continue. They have every intention of appealing for them, and they point hopefully to China's recent encouraging repudiation of India's claims to Kashmir. President Khurshid also pointed out that Kashmir had always had good relations with China, and that Kashmir had been most prosperous when trading with China.

Ladakh

Since 1954 China has been quietly occupying 14,000 square miles of this barren north-eastern bulge of Kashmir; with India, since 1960,

desperately building roads and multiplying military outposts to stop the Chinese advance. On August 6 this year, Mr. Nehru told Parliament that there had been another twelve intrusions by Chinese forces into the Ladakh area. Eight of the intrusions were in the Chip Chap River area, two in the Spanggur area and two in the Chang Chenmo area.

According to the Indian Note of July 12, the Indian Government had protested that seven of the Chinese military outposts were "outside the Chinese claim line as shown in their 1956 map." The Chinese boundary in this sector, according to the 1956 map, is a concave line from the Karakoram Pass to the Konka Pass, skirting the origins of the Chip Chap and Galwan rivers. But in the 1960 map the boundary has been pushed forward to include a much wider area. South of the Konka Pass the Chinese claims have also advanced from 1956 to 1960 to include Kharnak Fort and part of the Pangong Lake. Without going into confusing details of which country's outposts are where—often they are behind each other—it is obvious that the Chinese are now well beyond their 1956 line on the entire Ladakh front, and that they are trying to establish themselves on the 1960 line at least. Unless China is seriously contemplating a full-scale invasion of India, with Ladakh as the spring-board for an attack on Delhi, it is likely that any future fighting in Ladakh will be restricted to local "incidents."

Nepal

For more than 100 years up to 1951 the kingdom of Nepal, about 55,000 square miles of mountains and jungle sandwiched between Tibet and India, and the home of about nine million people including the famous Gurkha warriors, was under the unique agnate system of feudal rule by a Prime Minister dynasty and Rana nobles. In 1951 this was replaced by a form of constitutional monarchy with democracy.

Nepal was quite unprepared for modern democratic methods, for in addition to the lack of administrative machinery and means of transport and communications there was no national consciousness, only tribal loyalties. The old order had been disrupted too suddenly before there could be created a countrywide social, economic and political base which might have supported democratic institutions. There was no bridge between the disgruntled Rana aristocrats used to absolute power and the idealistic Congress Party with theories and little experience. To further complicate the situation the Nepali people and many Nepali leaders bitterly resented the interference of India in Nepal's affairs, the Indian Ambassador at that time not helping matters by an inept handling of a delicate situation, and consequently bringing into question the loyalties of the Congress leaders whose associations all along had been with India and who owed their positions to Indian intervention.

During the nineteenth century, until a powerful Prime Minister arose to associate Nepal with Britain, Nepal's links were all with China and Tibet. After one abortive attack on Tibet, Chinese forces were sent to repel them and a humiliating treaty was enforced on Nepal, renewing the historical suzerainty of China. This was withdrawn on Nepal's part in the early part of the twentieth century, but China, even under the Communists, continued to recognise Nepal as her responsibility—as one of the “five fingers on the hand of China,” as broadcasts from Lhasa and Peking showed.

In 1952 a militant nationalist, Dr. K. I. Singh, led a revolt against the Government, but fled to Tibet and China, when, according to him, India started moving troops toward Nepal against him. Following this there was a period of maladministration, corruption and nepotism which King Mahendra, at his coronation, designated “shameful” and gave as his reasons for assuming personal government by “direct rule.” But he was forced to hold elections, from which the Congress Party emerged with a clear majority of 74 seats in a house of 109. However, the King, who had also said at his coronation that there would never “be two sovereigns in Nepal,” decided to take over again, and on December 15, 1961, he dissolved Parliament, banned all political parties, put his Ministers in gaol and said Nepal would now have “basic democracy.”

Wide popular support is officially claimed for the King's rule, but there is real and growing dissatisfaction. This was apparent in the first “free” discussion to be held since the King's latest take-over, at a “Conference of Intellectuals” composed mainly of ex-officials, held in June. The fine distinction has been made that there was no criticism of the King or his policies, but only of the administration and its dilatory implementation of policies. There was little room for ambiguity, however, in Dr. Singh's statements to me in a private interview.

“In two years,” he said, “the King has been exposed as a failure, indulging in the same intrigues of which he accused the former political parties.” Dr. Singh then went on to threaten to lead another revolt within six months if the King did not change his ways, “because,” he said, “as things are I can see civil war coming anyway. And I fear the same sort of action from India as in 1952—India will pretend there has been an appeal from some Nepali source to put its troops in. That will bring Chinese intervention in the north, and Nepal will be finished.”

Dr. Tulsa Giri, the Nepalese Foreign Minister, was also outspoken in his denunciations of Indian actions and policies towards Nepal. Commenting on India's expressed disapproval of Nepal's agreement with China he said: “Nepal is an independent nation. We want to develop our economy, our institutions as we think best. But while India agrees with this in principle it really wants Nepal to go India's way.”

But the most significant development in Nepal today is the interest in the Chinese proposal for a "Confederation of Himalayan States." Mr. Rishikesh Shah, the Finance Minister, cautiously admitted in the presence of other Nepali officials that he knew of the proposal and that the matter had been discussed. He also said that he had information but no evidence that the Chinese were putting pressure on Nepal's Communist Party to make this proposal their chief item of propaganda. There is little doubt that there would be no great difficulty for China to persuade Nepal to accept such a proposal with enthusiasm, for not only is China building a road from Lhasa to Khatmandu, but Nepal has responded with alacrity to China's offer of a "defence treaty."

Sikkim

Sikkim is a small 1,800-square-mile protectorate of India, with a population of 165,000 almost 100,000 of whom are Nepalis subject to political influences from Nepal; the remainder of the population is divided between Lepchas, Bhutias and Tibetans. The ruling family is of Tibetan extraction and was installed by Britain in the early part of this century. Although only a small Himalayan state it has been described by Sir Charles Bell (in *Tibet Past and Present*) as "a dagger thrust at the heart of India" because of its strategic position between Tibet and India's industrial heartland.

Until Britain installed the present Maharajah, Sikkim was under the suzerainty of China, under broadly the same provisions as Nepal and Bhutan, and China still maintains that Sikkim and Bhutan are not India's responsibility, and they were pointedly excluded from the Sino-Indian Boundary Commission's discussions (see Indian Government White Paper).

However, India took over the British agreements recognising Sikkim as a "protectorate" of India—but with certain additions of her own. These were not immediately evident since the strongest political party, the Sikkim Congress Party, had as one of its main policies "the accession of Sikkim to India." But by 1949 the political parties were a growing and unpredictable force in Sikkim and when they looked like removing the unpopular Maharajah India stepped in at the Maharajah's request with troops to "restore law and order." They also added a Dewan, or Chief Minister, to "advise the Maharajah, for a brief period." These two additions, troops and Dewan, plus the growing number of Indian administrators and large numbers of Indian troops stationed in the country, have created great animosity among the people and political leaders who have recently been agitating for a written Constitution to safeguard their rights, the rule of law and responsible self-government.

The Maharajah has withdrawn from all active politics, but his son, the Maharajkumar, has been indulging increasingly in political activity which has exacerbated feelings on both sides. A recent measure of the Maharajkumar was to attempt to push through a "Subjects Regulation," which all groups feel is discriminatory and an attempt to give the Maharajkumar more power. This has increased tensions between political leaders and the royal family, with each initiating measures seeking to destroy the ambitions of the other. The Indian Government is uneasily balanced between both groups, its position depending on a Treaty, which the leaders of the Sikkimese State Congress Party say, was imposed by force and exercised through a Dewan imposed and maintained in office by duplicity. The Congress politicians talked with also alleged that the royal family was less popular than hitherto.

There was little sympathy for China, although the Sikkimese were so closely tied by race, propinquity and trade. Sikkimese officials were too aware of what was happening in Tibet, often to their own relatives, to have any illusions about Chinese Communism. However, in the past two years there has been an increasing inclination to listen to the promises coming from across the border, in view of the attitudes of the Indian Government and the Sikkimese royal family. Now the situation has been made more dangerous with China's new proposal for a Confederation of Himalayan States. The President of Sikkim's most powerful political party, Kazi Lhendup Dorji of the Sikkim National Congress Party, never in the slightest inclined towards China, told me that China had advanced these proposals in several ways, *e.g.*, through Nepalis visiting, or resident in, Sikkim; through Communist sympathisers; indirectly, to himself. He stated that in this proposal lay Sikkim's only hope and that he is completely in favour of it. So what China could not do with the implied threat of an 80,000 army on the border and internal subversion is now likely to be accomplished with her new policy.

Bhutan

Bhutan is larger than Sikkim and its original inhabitants are of Tibetan extraction with only a slight admixture from North Assam. But in the past century there has been a great influx of Nepalis, and while the Bhutanese try to minimise the numbers and admit to 25 per cent, the local Nepali organisation claims 64 per cent.: the true figure is probably somewhere between. The Maharajah is young, popular and cautiously progressive, with a powerful but unpopular Prime Minister. The Government is composed of 130 district headmen, which meets once a year—or oftener in emergency—but is almost completely illiterate and totally without administrative experience of any kind.

Bhutan's relations with India are different from Sikkim's in that Bhutan retains full control over her internal affairs and has a temporary understanding regarding India handling her external affairs. "Temporary," because there has been no officially announced agreement about their earlier dispute over the term in the Indo-Bhutanese Treaty, "guided by the advice of the Indian Government." India claims that this gives her the right to control Bhutan's external affairs, while Bhutan maintains that India can proffer advice but it is not incumbent on Bhutan to accept it.

Bhutan covers a mountain and jungle-slashed area of approximately 18,000 square miles and has a population of approximately 700,000, and lies in the strategic area between Sikkim and Burma, south of Tibet. The southern boundary marches with the plains of India in the rich tea-growing area of North Bengal and Assam, which formerly belonged to Bhutan before it was annexed by Britain—and for which, incidentally, Bhutan was paid an annual subsidy that is still being paid by India. Thus, in the event of a major dispute regarding the control of Bhutan—and China has declared that she does not recognise India's claimed relationship with Bhutan and Sikkim—it would mean that China disputed ownership of one of the richest territories of India.

The Bhutanese Prime Minister, Jigme Dorji, has confirmed that just over a year ago China approached the Bhutanese with an offer to negotiate a border agreement; also, to recognise Bhutan's sovereignty, to extend diplomatic recognition and to provide technical aid. India moved swiftly to counteract this overture and launched a major programme of aid, covering road-building, education, medicine, agriculture and geological surveys. However, reports persist that China is still intent on wooing Bhutan away from its present policy of friendship with India.

I discussed the Chinese proposal for a Confederation of Himalayan States with the Bhutanese Prime Minister and he admitted that, while he had not been approached about the proposed confederation by China, his Government had, and had subsequently referred it to him. He had advised his Government against the proposal for several reasons, among them the present generous help given by India to Bhutan, the lack of sufficient military strength to stand against China or India and the possible dominance of Nepal in such a confederation. Mr. Dorji denied that the Indian offer to persuade the Colombo Plan countries to include Bhutan as a member was a counter to the Chinese proposal for a confederation.

But the Bhutanese Prime Minister's sentiments may not be supported by the Bhutanese people. There is widespread resentment among Bhutanese because of the stopping of their former trade with Tibet as a result of Indian pressure, and China has exploited this feeling by offering high

prices for smuggled goods. Especially there is resentment among the Nepali inhabitants of Bhutan because they have no representation in the Bhutanese Government. Several Bhutanese headmen are reported to have gone to Tibet, and are being used by the Chinese in their future plans for Bhutan. There are three thousand Tibetan refugees moving about the country, infiltrated by Chinese sympathisers. Finally, just across the border there are an estimated 200,000 Chinese troops, with a key headquarters between Lhasa and Bhutan. Every village and monastery has been requisitioned to garrison them, and they are rapidly building a network of roads, airfields, underground installations and anti-aircraft emplacements. And as was recently realised if Chinese troops enter NEFA and reach Tawang Bhutan is seriously threatened.

There is no army in Bhutan, but there is an armed militia and this is trained in an elementary fashion by Bhutanese youths who were sent to an Indian military academy and graduated as junior lieutenants. In the jealous guarding of its sovereignty, Bhutan even refuses to have retired Indian officers to help train its troops, despite the threat from the north and Jigme Dorji has been reported to have protested to the Indian Government because some Indian officers, retreating from the fighting in NEFA, entered Bhutan, suggesting "this might provoke China." Senior military officers have said that there is little that India could do to defend Bhutan once the Chinese had moved in from the north because of the difficulties presented by the mountain and jungle terrain.

The North-East Frontier Agency and Nagaland

The North-East Frontier Agency, between Bhutan and Burma, is also claimed by China, which occupied some of it in 1960 and has since occupied the northern part of the territory with 30,000 troops and may well "reclaim" all of it. Despite intense military preparations since 1960 this is the weakest part of India's border, as the sudden collapse of the Indian army showed.

The occupation of this territory cost the British Government in India as many as fourteen major engagements between 1832 and 1880. But while the Government claimed as British territory the whole country up to the boundaries of Manipur and Burma, it treated the North-East Frontier Agency as outside Assam for all civil purposes. The actual boundary was never very clear, for when the tea industry began to spread along the North Assam border many tea companies entered into negotiations with the tribes across the "frontier" for stretches of territory and paid to these tribes a recognised sum for their plantations. But raids across the border, and even revolts in the area—especially among the Nagas and Abors—remained a constant practice right into the twentieth century. Even in 1911 the boundary was shown in some maps as an extension of the

southern border of Bhutan and it is this line, together with the repudiation of the "McMahon Line" (Simla, 1914) on which China bases its present policy and action.

It was the raids across the border which brought the British Army onto the scene, and in a series of punitive expeditions they annexed several areas which had not previously been under the jurisdiction of any one power. This was the beginning of what has become "the Naga problem," and, by extension, of the later McMahon Line with their repercussions for India at the present time.⁴

But it is the Nagas who provide India with her greatest cause for concern. A proud and independent tribal people whose ancestry goes back to the time of Ptolemy and beyond, they were only partly conquered by Britain and only loosely administered. They remained on friendly terms with Britain—although there were two revolts for independence during Britain's administration—and contributed magnificently towards winning the war in Burma. Formerly head-hunters, they responded to Christianity and are now reported to be 60 per cent. Christian. Mission-school education is widespread and there are 160 university graduates. Earlier, and at the time of Indian independence they warned Britain that they would not accept any arbitrary transfer to the Indian Union, and when this happened eventually they first of all protested, then demonstrated and, finally, revolted, taking to arms in 1955.

Since that time there has been a bloody war, with heavy casualties on both sides. India admits to having 40,000 troops in the area, but claims that this force is required to put down only "1,500 hostiles." The Nagas claim they have built up a 40,000 standing army, a "rebel," or "patriot," "Naga Federal Government" for approximately a million Nagas embittered against India. The "free Nagas" claim that 100,000 Nagas have been killed, 400,000 are in concentration camps, 500 villages and 400 churches have been destroyed and that they are being starved and bombed into annihilation. Before they will accept this, or Indian-enforced domination, they say, they will call on China for help.

Into this seething frontier (for the other tribes, particularly those between "Nagaland" and Bhutan, are now also agitating for a state of their own since India offered to the Indian-created and -sponsored Naga People's Convention statehood of the Indian Union—excluding the "rebels"—and are demanding an "Eastern Hills Frontier State") China

⁴ "The hilly tract inhabited by the various tribes known to us collectively as Nagas had never been subjugated by the Ahoms, and it was no part of the British policy to absorb it. . . . At last, in 1866, it was resolved to take possession of the Angami country. . . . The object in view was to protect the low land from the incursion of the Nagas. It was not desired to extend British rule into the interior, but when a footing in the hills had once been obtained further territorial expansion became almost inevitable." Italics mine. *The History of Assam*, by Sir Edward Gait, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.

has now introduced its proposal for a Confederation of Himalayan States, to include Nagaland and NEFA. The Naga-elected and -supported Naga National Council—outlawed by India—rejects the Indian proposal as not reflecting the desire of the Naga people since it was imposed by military enforcement and through a puppet régime. The President of the Naga National Council, Mr. A. Z. Phizo, is at present in London and he hopes to proceed to the U.S. and the U.N. to protest against Indian “annexation and genocide” in Nagaland. Mr. Phizo told me that he thought the Chinese proposal an excellent idea, and there is no question but that he prefers it to the Indian offer of becoming India’s sixteenth state. At least two Chinese delegations have entered Naga territory since 1960 for talks with Naga leaders.

From this brief résumé of the situation on the Sino-Indian border it can be seen that not only has China satisfying conditions in which to carry out anti-Indian propaganda but that her new policies are meeting with an encouraging response and have some prospects of success. The recent defeat for India in NEFA or Assam might well result in Bhutan joining China, politically and/or militarily. In this event Sikkim would be out-flanked and the present large concentration of Indian troops there might have to be withdrawn—with far-reaching repercussions. For the rich, income-earning tea-gardens and oil-fields of North Bengal and Assam would all be threatened (they were formerly in Sikkim and Bhutan territory—and, by extension, under Chinese suzerainty) and the Chinese would be within striking distance of India’s most heavily industrialised area, in West Bengal. The “battle for Asia” may well have been settled during the recent struggle for the foothills of the Himalayas.