

Students for a Free Tibet Organizing on Campus

Students for a Free Tibet (SFT) is organizing a local chapter at UPEI. If you would like to take part in action aimed at advancing the cause of the people and nation of Tibet, now is your chance. Canada's growing support for the Chinese government has raised concern among students across the country. Locally, UPEI's involvement with Sichuan University and The Beijing School of Business is lending the good name of this university to the cause of China's corrupt regime.

While activities aimed at bringing the issue to the forefront of everyone's mind are being planned for the coming year, student involvement is key to the initiative's success. Here are some brief facts on Occupied Tibet that you should know:

1. The nation of Tibet was invaded by China in 1949. Since that time, over 1.2 million Tibetans have died as a direct result of the occupation, over 6,000 monasteries have been destroyed, and thousands of Tibetans have been imprisoned and tortured for their political or religious beliefs.

2. The Dalai Lama, Tibet's political and spiritual leader, fled Tibet in 1959. He escaped to India along with over 120,000 other Tibetans, and established the Tibetan Government in Exile in Dharamsala. In 1989, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his steadfast dedication to nonviolence.

3. Tibet was independent. Tibet had a sovereign government, currency, postal system, language, laws, and customs. Prior to 1951, the Tibetan government had signed treaties with foreign nations including Britain, Mongolia, and Nepal. While the Chinese government claims that Tibet has always been part of China, its invasion of Tibet resembles the same imperialist aggression that China accuses other powers of exhibiting.

4. The "Tibet Autonomous Region" is not Tibet, nor is it autonomous.

The Chinese government has divided historical Tibet into many regions and prefectures. The TAR encompasses only the central area and some of the eastern regions of historical Tibet. Well over half of Tibet's original territory has been absorbed into Chinese

provinces. "Autonomous" is a euphemism for direct control by Beijing. **5. In Tibet today**, the basic freedoms of speech, religion, and assembly are strictly limited, and arbitrary arrests continue. According to human rights groups, there are currently hundreds of political prisoners in Tibet, including the young Panchen Lama, imprisoned since age six. Torture of political prisoners is common.

6. The Chinese government's policies of cultural assimilation and population transfer of ethnic Chinese into Tibet threaten the very survival of the Tibetan identity. Chinese colonists outnumber Tibetans in most urban areas and many rural areas, making Tibetans a minority in their own nation. Meanwhile, thousands of Tibetans continue to flee from Tibet every year, making the treacherous journey over the Himalayas and into the uncertain world of exile.

7. Historical Tibet was a vast nation, whose area was roughly equal to Western Europe. Tibet is the source of ten of Asia's greatest rivers, which provide the lifeblood for 2 billion people. China has endangered Tibet's fragile environment through strip-mining, nuclear waste dumping, and extensive deforestation.

8. Although the Chinese government claims to have developed Tibet, most new jobs benefit Chinese colonists, not Tibetans. Tibetans have little or no say in how their country is developed. China has spent millions of dollars building infrastructure in Tibet, but many of the roads,



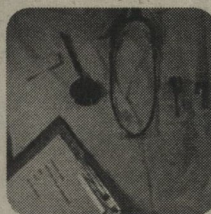
buildings, and power plants directly support heavy militarization of the plateau, allowing China to maintain Tibet as a police state.

9. China is aggressively seeking foreign investment for its "Go West" campaign in Tibet, East Turkestan, and other occupied areas. China is trying to use international funds to develop Tibet as a resource extraction colony and consolidate control over the region. Foreign investment in Chinese companies gives legitimacy to China's colonization of Tibet, and the exploitative projects they fund do not benefit Tibetans.

10. The world community has done very little to pressure China to leave Tibet. China represents a gigantic market and cheap labor force, and its associated businesses have such a strong lobby in democratic governments that politicians are reluctant to impose any trade sanctions. Since western countries adopted policies of so-called constructive engagement with China in the 1990s, the human rights situation in Tibet has drastically deteriorated. In order for this to change, world governments must take decisive action to pressure China into respecting human rights and ending its occupation of Tibet.

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