

## He rode across the Himalayas in the winter of 1949: George Patterson's final contribution to the people of Tibet



George Patterson on his Tibetan horse. George became involved with the Tibetan resistance and his subsequent equestrian journey, across the Himalayas in the winter of 1949, to deliver a plea for help from Tibet to the outside world, is now the stuff of legend.

*(ExplorersWeb.com) We know that ExWeb is read by some pretty cool people. But this one really sent us through the roof. It's like Seven Years in Tibet all over again, except that this time we get to be a small part of it.*

While ExplorersWeb has followed China through a modern perspective; George Patterson turned his back on all that he knew and journeyed into remote Tibet at the conclusion of the Second World War. George became involved with the Tibetan resistance to the invading Chinese Communist army. Close to ninety years old now, the explorer/journalist has also met with the new generation of Tibetans and in the following editorial, George ties up history and today with a remarkable, unique insight.

### Approached by the Dalai Lama

George became involved with the Tibetan resistance and his subsequent equestrian journey, across the Himalayas in the winter of 1949, to deliver a plea for help from Tibet to the outside world, is now the stuff of legend.

Though the international community failed to come to Tibet's aid, George remained in northern India, determined to report on unfolding events and to be of assistance to the fledgling Tibetan resistance.

He had become one of the leading journalists covering the Chinese invasion, when he was approached by the family of the Dalai Lama. They were anxious to smuggle the religious leader out of Tibet and on to the safety of the USA.

Thanks to his contacts, Patterson obtained copies of the classified exchanges between the Tibetans and then US Foreign Secretary Dean Acheson. While these delicate negotiations were under way, a Tibetan delegation in Beijing was stalling for time while the Dalai Lama was attempting to leave Tibet.

### Enemy of the state

It was during these negotiations that the Chinese authorities, in order to excuse their illegal occupation of Tibet, produced a 17 Point Agreement to justify their invasion. When the Tibetan delegation said they had no authority to sign this, the Chinese used a forged Tibetan seal to give it pseudo-authority. When Patterson exposed this international outrage in 1952, the Chinese government marked him as an enemy of the state and ordered him to be silenced.

In response to the seriousness of the threat, the Security Service of Indian Prime Minister Nehru offered Patterson protection, as well as the right to arm himself against an assassination attempt. Regardless of the threats, Patterson continued reporting on Tibetan affairs for the next ten years.

### Raid into Tibet

In 1964 Patterson led an award-winning television documentary team to secretly film the ongoing Tibetan guerrilla activities inside Tibet. The International Commission of Jurists had just issued their investigative report stating that because the Chinese invasion of Tibet had resulted in more than a million deaths the assault constituted an act of "cultural genocide."

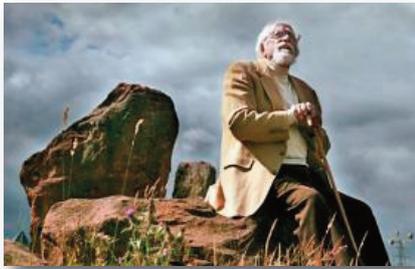
The subsequent showing of this international award winning film, "Raid into Tibet," was released in forty countries and viewed by more than two hundred million people.



George in Lhasa. "I returned to Tibet twenty years ago as adviser to the Hollywood film producers of Seven Years in Tibet. I used that occasion to meet with and film the 'underground' Tibetan youth radical leaders in Dharamsalla, as well as the Dalai Lama and several of his advisers."



George with the Dalai Lama. According to sources in today's Tibetan resistance, the Chinese Communist "fatwa" to silence Patterson has never been rescinded.



George in Scotland. "My own final contribution to the people of Tibet, in the absence of any effective action by mealy-mouthed politicians across the globe, as I approach the age of ninety as the oldest living Long Rider and former champion of Tibet, is to call on all living past and present explorers, mountaineers, and lovers of political freedom everywhere, to join in a united protest on behalf of the people of Tibet against this vicious and immoral regime in China."

## Chinese Communist "fatwa"

Once again the Chinese authorities were enraged with Patterson. His Tibetan and Indian contacts informed him that given the chance, he was to be killed on sight by Chinese operatives.

When President Nixon went to China in 1972 there was an entourage of scores of "China-watching" international journalists accompanying him – yet George Patterson was specifically refused permission to enter China. According to sources in today's Tibetan resistance, the Chinese Communist "fatwa" to silence Patterson has never been rescinded.

## Still at it

Now hailed as "Patterson of Tibet," George is still defending the Tibetan people and those who champion their cause. Having witnessed half a century of Chinese oppression in Tibet, the famous Long Rider has issued a call for his fellow explorers to join him, and Norwegian adventurer Inge Solheim, in denouncing the Chinese exploitation of the upcoming Olympics, as well as recent Chinese efforts to intimidate those who dare to speak out in favour of Tibet.

## Here goes George's unique statement of support

*A Passionate Appeal for Tibet by Long Rider Legend, George Patterson FRGS*

It is a "given" in Tibetan history – or, at least, common belief – vis-à-vis China that every fifty years China has invaded Tibet, and after every fifty years of occupation the Tibetans have driven them out again. It now looks as if that cycle is being repeated.

It was in 1952 that China invaded Tibet and now, fifty years and over a million Tibetan deaths later, the Tibetans have served notice to China to get out.

As a medical missionary working among the sixty-six Khamba warrior tribes of East Tibet from 1947-1950, I was asked by the tribal leaders to travel to India as their emissary to seek help in their planned resistance against the imminent Chinese invaders.

### Three month deadline

Their problem – and mine – was the Chinese invasion was expected to take place in six months. This meant that I had to travel over a thousand miles of unexplored Tibet in mid-winter in less than three months for any help from outside the country to be useful.

After a horrendous equestrian journey I made it to India inside the three months. I even managed to interest the officials of India, Britain and the USA – but without a successful outcome for the Tibetans.

### Tribal leaders opposed Dalai Lama's exile

For the following ten years on the Indian-Tibetan border I was the leading journalist writing about the ensuing 1956-59 Tibetan revolt, including secretly planning with the USA for the Dalai Lama to escape, which eventually resulted in the Dalai Lama fleeing to India.

The Khamba tribal leaders were adamantly opposed to the Dalai Lama leaving Tibet at that time, claiming it was in Tibet's interests for him to remain in the Tibetan mountains, which they controlled, as a continuing focus of their revolt which would attract necessary weapons as well as political support from foreign sources unlikely to be forthcoming from an exile in pro-China India.

### Amdo and Kham

The recent "secret" talks between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese failed over the issue of the Dalai Lama's non-negotiable demand for the return of the two eastern provinces of Tibet, Amdo and Kham, illegally annexed by the Chinese.

These two provinces form two-thirds of the ethnic region of Tibet, consisting of sixty-six tribes, and two-thirds of the Tibetan people.

In their illegal occupation of Tibet the Chinese authorities have arbitrarily included this region and these Tibetan people within their Han territory of Szechuan and Sinkiang. It is this illegal absorption into Han China that caused the International Commission of Jurists, in their Report to the United Nations in 1961, to designate it as "cultural genocide".

These sixty-six tribes of warriors are loyal to the Dalai Lama, but not to the extent of becoming enforced citizens of China, which is the true explanation for the breakdown in the recent "secret" talks between the Dalai Lama and Chinese government as both sides know that the Khambas will never agree to absorption in China.

## Today's young Tibetan radicals

I returned to Tibet twenty years ago as adviser to the Hollywood film producers of Seven Years in Tibet. I used that occasion to meet with and film the "underground" Tibetan youth radical leaders in Dharamsalla, as well as the Dalai Lama and several of his advisers.

At that time the young radicals agreed with the Dalai Lama to hold off their protest activities to give him time to persuade the Chinese authorities to come to an agreement over Tibet.

After fifty years of submission to the Dalai Lama's worthy but failed non-violence policies the now western-educated young Tibetan radicals – many of Kham tribal origin who have been educated in the West– have organized world-wide support both inside and outside Tibet.

## India

While respecting the Dalai Lama's principled but unsuccessful wish for a lack of aggression, they have decided to use the upcoming Chinese Olympics to launch their historical resistance to Chinese invasion of their country.

The breakdown in the Dalai Lama discussions has released the young radicals from their self-imposed public restraint and, combined with the looming Chinese Olympics, have precipitated the series of recent public demonstrations against the Chinese occupation – not only in Lhasa but also, significantly, in the tribal areas of East Tibet.

The frustration of the young radicals is also due to the political intransigence of the Indian government which has imposed a ban on the Dalai Lama's political activities, restricting him to religious talks only, and demanding that the "Tibet Offices" are restricted to non-political representation only.

With neighbouring China and India in their immoral collusion, supported by a pusillanimous Britain and United States, there is little the Tibetans can do officially to represent their interests to the world.

The Olympic Torch on Everest: China's final contemptuous gesture to the world

This political hypocrisy is further evident in the context of the international outrage, and even wars on two Continents of Asia and Africa, because of hundreds of thousands of deaths in Iraq and Darfur, but total silence in the case of over a million deaths and officially declared "cultural genocide" in Tibet.

The blatant declaration by China to close all mountaineering in the Himalayas to safeguard their propaganda exercise by planting the Olympic Torch on the top of Mount Everest is their final contemptuous gesture to the world that they have no intention of withdrawing from their murderous conquest of Tibet.

That is why the courageous gesture of Inge Solheim, the Norwegian explorer who planted a "Free Tibet" flag at the North Pole, has infuriated the Chinese pseudo-Marxist dictators and inspired pro-Tibet demonstrations across the world.

## China's internet attacks on ExWeb classic behaviour

The "protest walks" of some thousands of Tibetans from India through Nepal to the Tibetan border, and the public display of other pro-Tibetan groups across the world, is the only political weapon available to a desperate and despairing country being sacrificed on the altar of hypocritical international power-politics. While these are encouraging signs that the truth about Tibet is being told, we have also witnessed the unprecedented internet attack aimed at silencing ExWeb because of its consistent pro-Tibetan coverage.

Such insidious violence is classic behavior from the ruthless Chinese Communists that I have sparred with for so many years.

As the ExWeb attack demonstrates, any individual, organisation, website or nation that dares to criticise the on-going campaign against Tibetan independence, thereby causing the Chinese to "lose face" during their great Olympic charade, can expect to become the victim of a world-wide vendetta.

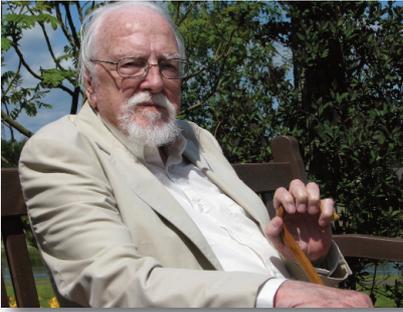
Chinese tactics designed to suppress their opponents have never changed

The ExWeb internet assault clearly demonstrates that the Beijing government may try to hide behind the Olympic torch, yet they are the same cold blooded killers they always have been.

As the death threat lodged against me in 1952 demonstrates, Chinese tactics designed to suppress their opponents have never changed in the 56 years since they began trying to silence or assassinate me.

I would caution the world not to be blinded by the Olympic propaganda being issued by Beijing, urging people instead to realize that the ruthless nature of the Chinese communists is still dedicated to political suppression, state sanctioned murder and cultural invasion.

## "My own final contribution to the people of Tibet"



The Communist regime in China is an affront to the Olympic ideal and the exploration community needs to stand in solidarity with ExWeb when it demands answers about the status of the people of Tibet.

My own final contribution to the people of Tibet, in the absence of any effective action by mealy-mouthed politicians across the globe, as I approach the age of ninety as the oldest living Long Rider and former champion of Tibet, is to call on all living past and present explorers, mountaineers, and lovers of political freedom everywhere, to join in a united protest on behalf of the people of Tibet against this vicious and immoral regime in China.

There was nothing in his early life to indicate that this son of a Scottish minister would go on to lead a life of adventure, travel and intrigue. Yet George Patterson turned his back on all that he knew and journeyed into remote Tibet at the conclusion of the Second World War.

Hailed as "Patterson of Tibet," George is still defending the Tibetan people. He has published a number of best-selling books on the subject, risked his life to make an award-winning BBC documentary under fire in that occupied country and recently lectured at Cambridge University about this on-going political conflict.

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Over these years George published the following books:

*TIBETAN JOURNEY*—Faber & Faber (UK) Norton (US) 1952  
*GOD'S FOOL*—Doubleday (US) 1954  
*UP AND DOWN ASIA*—1956  
*TRAGIC DESTINY*—1958  
*TIBET IN REVOLT*—1960  
*PEKING VERSUS DELHI*—Praeger (US) 1963-4  
*THE UNQUIET FRONTIER*—Dragonfly Paperbacks (US) 1964-5

Also contributed to other edited books:

*THE CHINESE PROBLEM*—edit. Dr Werner Klatt; OUP & HKUP 1965  
*ASIA HANDBOOK*—edit. Guy Wint; pub: Blond; Penguin 1966-69  
(Assistant editor and major contributor).

ExplorersWeb would also like to thank The Long Riders' Guild for their part and editorial work in this story.  
(All photographs © George Patterson)