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French Tibet

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By Pierre Fuller
Visiting family last summer I was surprised to spot the amount of red, blue and gold fabric – yes, Tibetan flags – flying from the roofs of village homes in the French Alps, something of a solidarity I guess with high altitude brethren at the other end of the Eurasian expanse. A little of Tibet in France. After the Olympic torch events of last year, why not. But then that did not prepare me for reporter Edward Cody’s piece on France in today’s Washington Post.

“French Workers Return to Streets in Protest” predictably reported that a million-plus French were pounding pavement to shake Sarkozy out of his cautious, unsympathetic leadership in the face of jobs hemorrhaging around the country. No surprises there. Then:

“Despite the rancor on their banners, most marchers seemed cheerful in the spring weather as they marched and shouted anti-capitalist slogans. They moved past the house where Gustave Flaubert, author of “Madame Bovary,” lived in the 19th century; they walked by the Kunga Tibetan restaurant, from where three Tibetans peered out at a raucous phenomenon that their countrymen left behind under Chinese rule were unlikely to witness any time soon; and they spilled into the Place de la Bastille, where street protesters kicked off the French Revolution in 1789 by tearing open a royal prison tower.”


I guess all (mental) roads these days do lead to Lhasa.