

WORLD OUTLOOK

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SENATE HEARINGS HAVE "TERRIFIC IMPACT" ON AMERICAN PEOPLE

By George Novack

The U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee ended its public hearings on the Vietnam war in two sessions February 17 and 18 by taking testimony from two authoritative advocates of President Johnson's foreign policy, General Maxwell D. Taylor, former army chief of staff and a presidential military adviser, and Secretary of State Dean Rusk.

The hearings, which lasted for two weeks, became the center of what one commentator called "the great battle for the minds and hearts of men" between Johnson and his congressional critics. The sessions, broadcast in full by the major television networks, were viewed by an estimated 30,000,000 people, including the president himself. On Friday the Senate could not assemble a quorum since almost every member had left the chamber to listen to the confrontation.

Johnson's opponents on the committee aimed to "go over the head of the President to the people," smoke out the real intentions of the White House and Pentagon in Southeast Asia, and set limits on the expansion of the conflict. Bristling at Defense Secretary McNamara's refusal to testify in public before the committee, Senator Morse of Oregon denounced "government by secrecy" and demanded that the administration give an open accounting of its actions and purposes to the American people.

The administration spokesmen appeared on the defensive as they tried to justify escalation of the war and their refusal to initiate serious negotiations with the Vietnamese.

Democratic Senator Gore of Tennessee noted that the gap between the Executive and Congress and the people had widened as the war had widened. A majority of the Democratic senators are reportedly critical of Johnson's course and apprehensive about its implications. Republican Senator Scott gleefully quipped in a speech on Lincoln's birthday that President Johnson may soon have to sue his own party for nonsupport.

Although Taylor and Rusk claimed that the U.S. military position in Vietnam has been improving, there is little doubt that the administration's relations to public opinion have been deteriorating. This is admitted by Time magazine, which supports all-out military force in Vietnam, in its lead article on February 18: "Though the pollsters tell [Lyndon Johnson] that a substantial majority of Americans approve of his policies, he knows he can rely only on a thin crust of active support; and a vocal opposition is constantly gnawing away at that crust."

The most relentless member of that vocal opposition on the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Morse, struck back hard during the hearings at administration efforts to smear its congressional

critics as "appeasers" who are giving aid and comfort to Hanoi and stiffening its will to resist. When he was in Honolulu, Johnson gave the cue for this campaign by characterizing his opponents as "special pleaders" who counsel "retreat." His attacks were extended by General Taylor who said that Hanoi and the National Liberation Front hoped to win in Washington the victory they could not gain in Vietnam.

Taylor said that the leaders of north Vietnam had not forgotten that they had "won more in Paris than in [the battle of] Dien-bienphu [in 1954] and believed that the Vietcong might be as fortunate in Washington."

Senator Morse corrected the general's faulty memory, reminding him that in the spring of 1954 Pierre Mendes-France ran for premier on a pledge to bring the Vietnam war to an end, and that he regarded his election as a mandate to carry out the pledge and that he did so at the Geneva conference.

"Now," the Senator asked the general, "when the people of a country demonstrate an opposition to a foreign policy of that country and make clear that they wanted the Indochina war stopped, do you interpret that as a weakness on the home front?"

The general responded by saying that he would regard it as weakness "if one attaches importance to success in Southeast Asia," but he acknowledged the right of a people to change a policy of their government.

Morse continued, offering the opinion that the American people, before too long, "will repudiate our war in Southeast Asia."

"That, of course, is good news to Hanoi, Senator," the general replied.

Morse glared at the Pentagon's spokesman. "I know that is the smear artist that you militarists give to those of us who have honest differences of opinion, but I don't intend to get down in the gutter with you and engage in that kind of debate.

"All I am asking is if the people decided that this war should be stopped in Southeast Asia, are you going to take the position that is weakness on the home front in a democracy?"

The general looked visibly angry. "I would feel that our people were badly misguided and did not understand the consequences of such a disaster," he said.

"Well, we agree on one thing, that they can be badly misguided," Morse replied, "and you and the President in my judgment have been misguiding them for a long time in this war."

At this point a burst of applause came from the spectators in the hearing room who included not only a number of notables but many participants in the teach-ins and demonstrations at the capital.

The exchanges during the committee's "teach-in" disclosed sharp disagreements between the dissidents and the administration on a broad range of issues arising from the war.

Fulbright and Morse contested the legality of the war and the scope of the president's powers to wage it. The government had previously justified its measures on the basis of a letter from Eisenhower to President Diem in 1954 and the Tonkin Gulf resolution of Congress in August 1964. Since Eisenhower has stated that his offer did not promise military aid and many senators have denied that their 1964 vote authorized the current and contemplated escalation, Rusk was forced to shift ground and place primary reliance on the SEATO treaty for the United States commitment. This, too, roused strenuous objections from committee members.

Of greater significance were the differences expressed on the nature of the war and the objectives of U.S. intervention.

Rusk said that the American presence in Vietnam was part of the continuing "process of preventing the expansion and extension of Communist domination by the use of force against the weaker nations on the perimeter of Communist power" which the United States had begun in Greece and Turkey as early as 1945. Both Rusk and Taylor stressed that the war of liberation in Vietnam had to be suppressed to teach Peking (and Moscow) that such subversion could not succeed and would not pay. Just as the Soviet Union had adjusted to the balance of power in Europe after NATO, so China must now be brought to do the same in Asia.

Rusk insisted that the war had been instigated and extended by aggression from the north. Taylor stated that it had been provoked and carried on by "the militant wing of the world Communist movement," embracing the National Liberation Front, Hanoi and Peking. Brazenly standing matters on their head, he asserted that, not the United States, but north Vietnam had replaced France as "the dominant imperialist power" in that situation.

Fulbright reminded his witnesses that the Vietnamese had been fighting for their independence for over twenty years and that the conflict had originated as a war for national liberation from imperialist domination. It was essentially a civil war in the south complicated by the interventions of the United States and north Vietnam.

Rusk maintained that the struggle in Vietnam was vital to the "world security interests" of the United States. To illustrate this point, Taylor argued that "Indonesia would never have crushed the Communists if the United States hadn't held the line in south-east Asia."

On the other hand, Fulbright and others agreed with Ambassador Kennan and General Gavin, who had previously testified, that Vietnam is not a region of major or decisive industrial or military importance to U.S. global strategy and that the basic interests of the American rulers would best be served by restricting involvement

and working toward disengagement.

The senators, who frequently confessed they were "confused" and "in the dark," sought to extract more definite information on the administration's aims and perspectives. Was Johnson trying to get a negotiated settlement -- or was he bent on all-out war?

Rusk told the committee that the enemy's will to fight must be broken. "I get the impression," Fulbright answered, "not only from your statement as much as General Taylor's, that we are in an unlimited war, and the only kind of settlement is unconditional surrender. Therefore, there is nothing to negotiate about."

When Rusk expostulated that Hanoi was unwilling to enter discussions, Fulbright retorted that "there must be something wrong with our diplomacy" if the other side, which was not "mad," could not be brought to the conference table. He seeks a compromise settlement with the Vietnamese, not a war of total destruction at the risk of a global war.

Fulbright pointed out that Johnson's credibility was impaired because "our actions are not consistent with our words" and this creates suspicion of U.S. motives. The U.S. scuttled the Geneva agreements, blocked the scheduled 1956 elections, keeps escalating the war, and builds big bases in Thailand and south Vietnam, he said. Promises to withdraw are distrusted because the U.S. has still to pull out its troops from Korea and the Dominican Republic.

Why, he asked, if this was a plain and simple case of external aggression, as Rusk contended, have the allies and friends of the United States given so little support? Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, Britain and France have supplied no forces for the war and even Australia and New Zealand only token contributions. The only reasonable conclusion is that these countries do not believe their security is at stake and think that the conflict is in great measure a civil war.

Fulbright and Gore said that this government had never made it clear that it would accept the results of free elections in south Vietnam; this left the National Liberation Front no alternative but to continue fighting. When pressed, Rusk answered that the United States would agree to elections but would not state the specific conditions under which it would leave the country.

It had been reported on the highest authority that 600,000 American soldiers were to be assigned to south Vietnam under the requested military appropriation. The senators probed in vain to find out whether this was true. Both Taylor and Rusk evaded an answer and refused to put any ceiling on the extent of Washington's commitments or area of intervention in Southeast Asia, stating that this depended, not on themselves, but on the actions of the adversaries.

Asked if it was correct that there are "no limits" in Vietnam, Rusk replied: "I am not going to say that the United States has accepted a point beyond which it will not go to meet its commitments."

This remark went to the heart of the dispute between the senators and the president. They fear above all that a widening war will push China into the conflict and lead to a nuclear holocaust. Their anxieties were not diminished by the assertion of the clownish and bellicose Senator Long, Johnson's chief defender, that he sometimes wished "the Red Chinese would come in" because it would be better to lose to a large nation than to a second-class power!

"We are stumbling along to World War III," warned Senator Morse. Gore of Tennessee asked Rusk why he didn't mention "the grave danger" of Chinese entry into the conflict in his opening presentation. Rusk replied that "the possibility of a larger war had always been present in all postwar crises," as in Berlin and Cuba. But both sides had "learned the importance of restraint" and China as well as the United States "had the problem of reckoning consequences."

Rusk gave no categorical guarantee that China would not come in. Still remembered in Washington is his prediction in 1950, when he was Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, that the Chinese Communists would not move into Korea to defend their borders. Instead he speculated that perhaps Peking and Hanoi have already been surprised at what the United States is prepared to do, and when they discover that this country will not veer from its course, "they may agree to peace."

General Taylor was more positive that China would not move into Korea or north Vietnam unless troops came close to its borders. "Military involvement with the United States is extremely unlikely," he stated, "because of the problems of feeding a huge population, bitter competition with the Soviet Union and its vulnerability to U.S. attack."

The still unconvinced Senator Gore stated that "very high officials express the opinion that a war with China would be a nuclear war." Rusk denied that anyone in the administration was contemplating nuclear bombings "as a rational act of policy." But he refused to rule out the use of nuclear weapons in the event of war with China.

Taylor told the chairman that China's entry "into a war with us would be a catastrophe for them." Replied Fulbright: "It would also be a great disaster for us."

The official witnesses offered interesting testimony on the Sino-Soviet differences in respect to the war. Taylor stated that Russia, unlike China, had no vital national objectives in Southeast Asia and that Peking alone stood to gain from a victory there. However, Moscow was in a dilemma. Although it didn't enjoy doing so, it had to contend with Peking as "flag-bearer of world Communism" and this imposed on the Kremlin "a dual motivation" in the situation.

Rusk told Senator Hickenlooper of Iowa that a leading Soviet spokesman had informed him that "the biggest problem in the world today is turning Peking toward peaceful coexistence." Rusk said he was not aware that the Soviet government was "in collusion" with

the United States, as Peking has charged. However, when further pressed on what steps Russia was taking to promote peace in Vietnam, he said he preferred to deal with that question in closed session.

In answer to a query, Rusk said that Hanoi could not be regarded as a puppet of Peking but had a measure of independence which he hoped it would exercise even if China would object. He divulged that Moscow and Hanoi had agreed to a conference with the United States last year on Cambodia and Laos which China had blocked.

Johnson's main committee supporters were the Southern senators Long of Louisiana and Sparkman of Alabama along with Senator Dodd of Connecticut, the prime witch-hunter in Congress. Long tried several times to whip up chauvinist feelings by referring to atrocities by the "Vietcong terrorists." Chairman Fulbright reminded his flag-waving colleagues that war was inseparable from atrocities and cited U.S. fire-bombings of German cities and atom-bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in World War II as well as the napalm bombings in the present war.

No one on either side of the policy debate wants to take American troops out of Vietnam now; none of them even questioned the justness of the air attacks on north Vietnam. Senator Morse, the most forthright administration critic, who intends to seek a vote rescinding the 1964 resolution, favors a multination "military protectorate" under the United Nations to solve the Vietnamese problem.

The dramatic clash of views on U.S. involvement in Vietnam was a highly educational experience for the millions who listened to it. As the New York Times put it in its February 20 "News of the Week" review, "It was a drama whose intensity and stakes had seldom been equalled in the nation's history. With the country deeply embroiled in an undeclared war whose toll in blood and treasure was steadily rising, leading members of the Senate challenged before an audience of millions the aims and justification of that war." A New York World-Telegram dispatch from Washington the day after the hearings stated that the televised testimony has made a "terrific impact" on the country and the Senate dissidents feel it may restrain Johnson from plunging forward so recklessly in Southeast Asia.

Fulbright's "teach-in" will not prevent Congress from passing the additional \$12,300,000,000 military appropriation that occasioned the debate. But it has considerably deepened distrust of the administration's course and given a powerful boost to the antiwar feelings among the American people.

FIRST BIG UNION TO QUESTION JOHNSON ON VIETNAM

The general executive board of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union (380,000 members) stated February 18: "Today we find ourselves heavily involved militarily on behalf of a government not enjoying full support." This is the first break in the monolithic AFL-CIO front of all-out support for Johnson's war in Vietnam.

SENATOR KENNEDY WIDENS RIFT OVER JOHNSON'S POLICY

In a statement to the press February 19, Senator Robert F. Kennedy declared that the United States should offer to "admit" the National Liberation Front "to a share of power and responsibility" in a government in south Vietnam.

Kennedy's new position is a considerable departure from the stand of the Johnson administration that the NLF could be admitted to "negotiations" to present their point of view but not to be recognized, the argument being that to include the NLF in an eventual government to be set up would mean their taking over eventually.

This was also the position of the Eisenhower administration which blocked the holding of elections in south Vietnam in 1956 out of conviction that the representatives of the freedom fighters would win by an overwhelming majority.

Kennedy's main argument is that the terms on which the United States would negotiate must be clearly intimated and that they must be of such nature as not to force the adversary into a position that would mean his destruction. "For the United States it must be that we will not turn South Vietnam over to the North. For North Vietnam it must be that they will not accept a settlement which leaves in the South a hostile government, dedicated to the final physical destruction of all Communist elements, refusing any economic cooperation with the North, dependent upon the continued presence of American military power." As a precedent, he cited the Cuban missile crisis of 1962.

Kennedy's proposal for a "compromise government," is, of course, a calculated bid for leadership of the liberal wing of the Democratic party whose doubts about the wisdom of Johnson's course in Vietnam were dramatically reflected in the nationally televised hearings of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Kennedy also has his eyes on a still more important phenomenon -- the swift rise of an antiwar movement in the United States that goes right down to the grass roots. From the capitalist point of view it is crucially important to gain and maintain leadership of this movement and keep it channelled within the two-party system.

While Kennedy thus assumed a posture that could be interpreted as a break with Johnson's warmongering policy, he did not depart from the basic imperialist position. The United States has absolutely no business intervening in the internal affairs of the Vietnamese people. It is up to them to exercise the right of self-determination and decide what kind of government and economic system they want, free from any restraints, including the demand of a foreign power that they meet its specifications on the composition of their government.

The antiwar movement in the United States is duty bound to continue to insist on the immediate withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam.

INDONESIA DRENCHED IN BLOOD

According to the January 29 issue of the London Economist, the purge launched by Indonesia's reactionary generals in their efforts to crush the Indonesian Communist party (PKI) has gone to such extreme lengths as to drench the country in blood.

"The Masjumi party and its followers, suppressed for many years, and the adherents of Nahdatul Ulama party whose members had often suffered at the hands of the PKI mobs," says The Economist, "have taken a terrible revenge on the communists and anyone associated with them. Deaths from the army's mopping-up operations have been relatively few. Killing by kris and club has taken the heaviest toll. Estimates of the number of killings since October range from 87,000 -- officially admitted by the president -- to gossip of 350,000. Ghoulish rumours of log-jams of bodies in the rivers of Solo and Malan have reached Jakarta but there is no official confirmation or denial. Army sources estimate the deaths of between 185,000 and 250,000. In the East Java district of Malan a welfare organisation has already registered 400,000 children orphaned since October. The scourge has spread to Bali, Sumatra and the Celebes. West Java is comparatively quiet."

FALSE "CONFESSION" WRUNG FROM AIDIT?

The Tokyo daily Asahi Shimbun published a dispatch February 8 from its Djakarta correspondent claiming that D.N.Aidit, head of the Indonesian Communist party, had made a "confession" of some fifty pages in which he admitted to having "instigated" the attempted coup d'etat of September 30.

The Japanese newspaper likewise published a photograph showing Aidit surrounded by army officers as he "edited" the purported confession. Afterward, according to the article, he was questioned briefly, then taken to a mountain twenty miles west of Solo and killed with two shots. His body was buried and later dug up and cremated.

Aidit is alleged to have admitted that he launched the coup d'etat "prematurely," it having been previously planned not to try to seize power "until 1970." He hastened action, however, because army officials "learned" about the project. The fifty pages allegedly signed by Aidit were also purported to contain expressions of "regret" that no support had been forthcoming from the "Communist countries," and in particular from "China."

While neither Sukarno nor the generals who have converted the Indonesian president into a virtual captive have stated publicly that Aidit was arrested and then murdered while in their hands, the rumors persist that he was executed on or about November 22.

It is highly dubious that Aidit made any voluntary "confession." Under torture he may have put his name to papers concocted by the generals who now control the Indonesian government and who launched a nationwide massacre of "Communists" and persons suspected of being "Communists." Perhaps the military plotters thought that such a "confession" could be used to justify killing Aidit but later noticed inconsistencies in the statement that would have exposed it as a crude frame-up.

NJONO REPUDIATES "CONFESSION" AS FALSE

The show trial being staged by Indonesia's generals in an attempt to pin the blame for the attempted September 30 coup d'etat on the Indonesian Communist party got off to a spectacular but bad-smelling start February 14 when Njono, the first defendant, repudiated a "confession" forced from him by the authorities during the preparation of the case. The confession, said Njono, was "false."

If D.N.Aidit, the head of the Indonesian Communist party, was murdered by the army in November, as is widely rumored, Njono may be the most important defendant now in the hands of the generals. He is a member of the central committee of the Indonesian Communist party and president of the SOBSI (All-Indonesian Central Organization of Trade Unions) which has some 20,000,000 members.

It was not clear from a report appearing in the Paris press whether the "confession" was forced from Njono by torture. He was quoted as saying only that "The atmosphere during the preparation of the case was poisoned by hate against the Communists. The Communist party was considered to be the organizer of the September 30, 1965, coup d'etat, and now an anti-Communist campaign is developing."

Njono said that in 1965 the Communist party leadership discussed the situation at several meetings. Aidit confined himself to asking Njono to inform Sukarno about the existence of a "council of generals" which was suspected of preparing a coup d'etat. Aidit told Njono to do nothing until Sukarno made a decision.

That a "council of generals" had been organized was admitted by General Nasution in a speech December 15, 1965. He had denied its existence up until then. (See Le Monde December 16, 1965.) The abortive September 30 coup d'etat, led by Colonel Untung, was directed against this "council of generals" on the grounds that the generals were conspiring to overthrow Sukarno.

Njono reportedly said, after repudiating the false confession extorted from him, that he had disobeyed Aidit. In fact he had gone further. Against the express orders of the Communist party leadership, he participated in the Untung insurrectional movement. "I rebelled against the party's authority; not against the state."

As part of the show, the Indonesian government recalled its

ambassador to China, making the announcement February 13, the day before the militant court opened its hearings.

In a radio broadcast announcing that Njono would be the first defendant the next day, General Suharto said that the military tribunals would meet throughout the Indonesian archipelago. He denounced the Communist party and claimed that it had had the clear intention of taking power, removing Sukarno, dissolving the Indonesian cabinet and committing political murders, particularly against the army chiefs.

With the exception of the final allegation, this is a description of the main course followed by the generals themselves.

The real fault of the Communist party under Aidit's leadership was precisely its failure to strive for power in face of the clear threat presented by the plotting of the generals and their organization of a secret "council of generals."

INDONESIAN CP MADE ILLEGAL

Indonesian Foreign Minister Subandrio issued a statement February 15 that the Communist party had been dissolved by the government.

According to Antara news agency this was confirmed by Sukarno the next day. The confirmation was made in response to an inquiry from two leaders of the Moslem Scholars party who went to see the president about it.

The decree in actuality illegalizes the Indonesian Communist party. Whether it attempts to function as an underground organization remains to be seen. It has been decimated by the blood purge initiated by the generals now in control of the government.

Some of the more militant cadres of the party can be expected, however, to attempt to rebuild the party which with its 3,000,000 members was the largest in any capitalist country.

INDONESIA -- "THE CHIEF PRIZE"

In an editorial in its February 17 edition, the New York Times raises an argument, heard for the first time in imperialist circles, against Johnson's tactical course in Vietnam. The argument is that escalation of the war endangers the greatest prize in Southeast Asia -- a prize that has just dropped within American reach; namely, Indonesia.

The arguments of the Times cast a revealing light on the exact

nature of the rift in the American capitalist class over U.S. involvement in Vietnam, since the Times has played a prominent role in expressing doubts about the wisdom of the policy of escalating the war in Southeast Asia.

Army control in Indonesia has been consolidated, believes the Times. This is shown "by the trial of Communist leaders and the recall of Jakarta's Ambassador in Peking." The consolidation of army control "fundamentally alters the West's strategic problem in Southeast Asia."

In imperialist circles, of course, the "strategic problem" has little connection with peace, democracy or the right of nations to determine what kind of economic systems or governments they want. The Times bases its case on straight imperialist geopolitics:

"Indonesia, with its 105 million people and vast undeveloped resources, is by far the richest, most populous and -- with its command of the straits between the Pacific and Indian Oceans -- the most strategically located country in Southeast Asia. It was the chief prize, along with Malaya, in the drive to the south in 1940-41 that brought Japan into diplomatic conflict with the United States, a conflict that led directly to Pearl Harbor. It remains, politically and strategically, the key country in the region even if its valuable oil, rubber and tin no longer are crucial factors in the world balance of power. No nation in the long periphery of Communist China between Japan in the north and India in the south has comparable importance."

It is this glittering prize that led the U.S. strategists to pay increasing attention to the area. The Times puts it this way:

"As a result, Indonesia has been a significant factor since 1950 in the decisions that progressively have taken the United States deeper and deeper into the Vietnam morass. Washington has seen Indonesia and India as the two most vital of the 'dominoes' it has feared would topple if Vietnam were to fall to Communism."

But, argues the Times, Indonesia has moved "first toward, then away from, Communism" without reference to the events in Vietnam or Washington's policies. It was the "nationalists in Indonesia's army" who, "on their own," moved against the Communists and set out to crush them.

"The struggle in Indonesia is not completely over, although almost the entire top leadership of the P.K.I. has been arrested or killed and more than 100,000 lesser Communists apparently have been massacred by Moslem and nationalist groups." With Sukarno still in office and offering at least some resistance to the generals, they have "not dared either to seek foreign economic aid or, an essential prerequisite, to liquidate the Malaysian conflict." Yet both moves "are essential," in the opinion of the Times to overcome a growing economic crisis.

The British imperialists come in at this point. They believe

that "the point of no return in army control of Indonesia will come some time this year," says the Times, and that this will be signaled by a move, in defiance of Sukarno, to negotiate a Malaysian settlement. The British are all for this, but it means a deal. "Britain's ultimate withdrawal from her base at Singapore will be an unavoidable part of this deal, in the opinion of London." So the British want Washington to finance a substitute base in Western Australia.

"But the Johnson Administration -- unwilling to be left alone in Southeast Asia so long as the Vietnam war continues -- is urging the British to hold on in Singapore whatever the cost. Thus, the war in Vietnam threatens to cut across a far more vital interest, that of stabilizing the most sensitive region in Southeast Asia."

Besides "stabilizing" Indonesia by strengthening the generals as much as possible; i.e., by granting them an attractive diplomatic deal plus a trough generously filled with dollars, the Times visualizes something even bigger: "An Indonesian-Malaysian settlement could open the way for the long-discussed Maphilindo confederation with the Philippines, which, in turn, might be extended one day in looser form to include Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Burma."

Thus the Times comes to its conclusion: "There could be no greater irony than to have this evolution stalled by an American war in Vietnam that was intended, in substantial part, to save an Indonesia that already has saved itself."

The Times and the sector of the American capitalist class for which it speaks are, in effect, charging the Johnson administration with maintaining an inflexible attitude in a situation that requires considerable tactical flexibility, as they view it. But both sides are united in their basic aim. What they want is the stabilization of the colonial world as a vast reserve for exploitation under Washington's leadership and guidance.

The editors of what is probably the most influential newspaper in the United States make quite clear that what really counts after all in the business of imperialist war-making is the size and wealth of the colonial prize at stake. That is why they speak this language when they try to convince a different sector of the capitalist class that it would be wise to make at least a tactical shift in foreign policy.

Those who oppose the U.S. aggression in Vietnam on the grounds of the fundamental right of a people to determine their own fate should note this well even as they seek to take advantage of the rift, however narrow it may be, among the rulers.

"DISENCHANTMENT IN THE SENATE"

U.S. Senator George McGovern from South Dakota, a Democratic critic of Johnson's policy in Vietnam stated February 14, "There's a growing disenchantment in the Senate." He added that 90 of the 100 senators "think we made a mistake in ever being involved in the first place."

COMMUNIST PARTIES DENOUNCE VERDICT IN MOSCOW TRIAL

The barbarous sentences given Andrei D. Sinyavsky and Yuli M. Daniel in a Moscow court February 14 for the "crime" of secretly publishing their writings abroad under pen names, has caused great dismay among Communist circles outside the Soviet Union. Sinyavsky was sentenced to seven years and Daniel to five. Both terms specified "hard labor" and will probably be served in the labor camps that still exist in the USSR despite the "de-Stalinization."

John Gollan, general secretary of the British Communist party, protested the fact that the trial was not a public one. In an article in the February 15 Daily Worker, he said that "The court has found the accused guilty, but the full evidence for the prosecution and defense which led the court to this conclusion has not been made public." Gollan added that justice "should not only be done but should be seen."

Hermansson, the chairman of the Swedish Communist party, declared that he was "utterly opposed to the verdict, as to any blow to freedom of opinion, whether in the capitalist or socialist countries."

Land Og Folk, the newspaper of the Danish Communist party, declared that the verdicts were "incomprehensible."

Erwin Sharf, secretary of the Austrian Communist party, issued a press release in which he said: "The severe sentences handed down by the Moscow court against the writers Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel shocked us, all the more so because we feel profoundly linked to the Soviet Union.

"Our Soviet friends," he added, "ought to consider that the worst enemies of Communism, who are massacring tens of thousands of Communists in Indonesia and Vietnam, are going to be able after this verdict to ridicule the Soviet guarantees of liberty and humanism."

L'Unita, the newspaper of the Italian Communist party, joined in the protests, stating that the USSR "is slow in resolving the problem of relations between the citizen and the state." The editors added: "The trial and its particularly severe sentences cannot be approved by us."

Perhaps the most spectacular protest came from the French Communist party. Up to now, of all the big Communist parties in the capitalist countries, it has been the least affected by the downfall of the Stalin cult and the process of "de-Stalinization." However, the February 16 issue of l'Humanite, the party's official daily newspaper, prominently displayed an article by one of its best-known writers, Louis Aragon, who is a member of the central committee.

The article, sharply protesting the trial of the two writers, caused a sensation in France. The text of Aragon's statement is as

follows:

"I cannot imagine a Communist reacting with indifference to the verdict handed down in Moscow in the Sinyavsky-Daniel case. It has grave implications, particularly in France.

"We can never forget what we owe to the Soviet Union and to its peoples -- it was thanks to their deeds, to their suffering, that the first socialist state in the world was founded, the very existence of which has profoundly modified historical perspectives. And, as Frenchmen, how can we forget the decisive part they played in the war against Hitlerism, the sacrifices they made? It should also be said that the problem does not at all involve the personalities of those found guilty, their talents as writers. Even a mediocre writer has the right to live freely. It involves something quite different.

"That one can oppose what these men wrote, what they signify, that they should be penalized for breaking a law barring the uncontrolled export of their works, this could be perfectly understood, whatever my personal reservations concerning the law itself. But to deprive them of their freedom because of the content of a novel or a story is to make opinion an offense, a crime, setting up a precedent much more harmful to the interests of socialism than the works of Sinyavsky and Daniel could possibly be.

"It can be expected in short that it will be thought that this kind of procedure is inherent in the nature of communism and that the verdict just handed down is a prototype of the justice forthcoming in a country that might abolish the exploitation of man by man. It is our duty to proclaim that it is not and will not be so, in France at least, and that we bear no responsibility for this verdict. The policies of our party are based on several essential theses, the thesis of the possibility of achieving socialism along the peaceful road by winning a majority, rejection of the concept of the single party and, consequently, our willingness to constitute an alliance with the Socialist party and the other democratic parties for the passage to socialism, its construction and maintenance.

"This is not possible unless, whatever its weight in the country, the Communist party adheres faithfully to the principles of political democracy, which are in the French tradition, particularly by affirming that no trials because of opinions will be permitted under its jurisdiction.

"We should like to hope that for the good of our common cause there will be an appeal from yesterday's trial. It is not up to us to tell a great friendly country how it should conduct itself, but it would be culpable of us to hide our thoughts."

POLITICAL COUNTERCURRENTS IN THE SOVIET UNION

By Sandro Mantovani

The shifts in the composition of the leading group of the Soviet bureaucracy that were registered at the session of the central committee of the Communist party of the Soviet Union held last December have provoked all kinds of speculation among Western Kremlinologists as to the short-term tendencies in Soviet society, particularly as they may concern the twenty-third congress of the CPSU scheduled for March. As was to be expected, the lack of verifiable facts and solid information was reflected in conclusions that were often not only divergent but even clearly contradictory (e.g., Shelepin gained a step towards power -- Shelepin suffered a setback on the road to power, etc.). Such readings confirm the correctness of the equation: Kremlinology = astrology.

It therefore appears unprofitable to join the assiduous students of the infinite convolutions of the galaxy presented by the Kremlin, drawing conclusions based largely on conjunctural factors. It is preferable to analyze facts that seem less spectacular but which permit us to better understand the tendencies at work in Soviet society at a less superficial level.

The Western press has headlined the arrest last September of two Soviet writers on charges of having sent writings of their own for publication abroad under the pen names of Abram Tertz and Nikolai Arzhak. One of the defendants, the critic Andrei D. Sinyavsky (accused of being Abram Tertz), is rather well known in the Soviet cultural world as a frequent contributor to the "liberal" magazine Novy Mir, as a lecturer (Dozent) on the Faculty of Literature at Moscow University, author of a book on Picasso and a foreword to the collection of poems by Pasternak published some months ago, the first such collection for many years in the USSR.

Sinyavsky's arrest created a sensation in the Soviet literary world, arousing a good deal of worry and fear among the young -- and not so young -- opponents of the bureaucratic regime, who constitute a broad group today. Among the continual arrests for political reasons that have occurred since 1956, this is the first time that a figure of such prominence has been victimized.

In university circles particularly, Sinyavsky's arrest aroused resentment due to his position and also to the fact that these circles are the most sensitive in the Soviet Union to bureaucratic procedures.

In November illegal leaflets began to be distributed at the University of Moscow calling for demonstrations to win a public trial and freedom for Sinyavsky.

On December 5 -- the day on which the Soviet Union usually celebrates the Stalin Constitution, "the most democratic in the world," -- a demonstration took place in the late afternoon at

Pushkin Square in the very center of Moscow. Sources other than ours even refer to two demonstrations -- one at Pushkin Square, the other at Mayakovsky Square.

Pushkin Square happened to be more crowded than usual at that time of day. Many university students were there as well as, most certainly, many plainclothesmen. A banner was suddenly unfurled from nowhere demanding a public trial for Sinyavsky and a small group formed around it.

The police intervened rapidly and efficiently. They seized the banner and herded those who had raised it and assembled around it into militia "vans" that happened to be conveniently parked nearby. The plainclothesmen nervously took photographs of the people milling around in the square.

It appears that most of the youngsters were freed a few days later. However, in accordance with present practices in the USSR, this means in the best of cases that they will be expelled from the university or dismissed from their jobs and that they will lose the very precious right of residence in Moscow. In the worst case they will be arrested again at a later date under some pretext or other.

While the December 5 demonstration was certainly a modest and limited one, it is of significance for two basic reasons. (1) In the post-Stalin period, it is the first public oppositional demonstration in the Soviet Union with clear and immediate political demands. (2) It proves that there are groups of youth ready to engage in open defiance of the regime, knowing full well that it will mean certain arrest and grave material reprisals.

The demonstration thus took undeniable courage and determination which, of course, stands in contrast to the limited scope and timidity of the demand that was advanced (aside from the intellectuals, Sinyavsky's fate can hardly stir broad layers of the populace).

Whether this was an exceptional occurrence or a sign of a more general intensification of political opposition in university circles cannot yet be determined. Reports have been published in Italy of many arrests at Leningrad University because of the publication and distribution of an illegal political magazine but these reports have not been confirmed.

In contrast to these progressive developments touched off by Sinyavsky's arrest, something of opposite character occurred at about the same time. A number of Komsomol functionaries and officials of various bodies and institutions handling so-called "ideological and educational work" received through the mail a mimeographed document bearing a title of archaic usage, Ustav Nravov (Law of Customs). It seems that this article had been duplicated on a machine belonging to the Moscow Committee of the Komsomol and was signed by Valery Skurlatov, a functionary of the committee in charge of The Young Marxist put out by the People's University. The short text of the mimeographed article corresponded perfectly to its archaic, reactionary title and even to something worse.

Following a brief preamble, in which it was noted that the education of the young generation is determined by the answers given to questions of a fundamental nature such as "What is the meaning of life?" the article lists a series of criteria in the light of which these questions should be answered. The youth should be educated so as not to follow the voice of reason, "which is the source of all treason," but the voice of the heart which is the source of heroism. In connection with this, the author uses a Russian expression that comes quite close to the slogan of the Italian fascists: "Better to live a single day like a lion than a hundred years like a sheep."

The ideals which should be given to youth, continues the document, should not be those of material comfort but those of heroic deeds. Such an ideal can be created only through an education that puts the main stress on national values and that restores the traditions of old Russia in all fields. In this context, Ustav Nравov ascribes particular importance to the problems of sex. It is necessary, it declares, to promulgate the moral and physiological value of virginity. And, to heighten this value, it is necessary to reintroduce the old customs like public display of the bed sheets after the nuptial night, as well as tarring the homes of women guilty of engaging in extramarital relations. Sharp punitive measures, going as far as sterilization, should likewise be taken against women who have sexual relations with foreigners.

In order to prevent amoral and ideologically harmful tendencies from spreading, continues Ustav Nравov, it is necessary to develop esprit de corps among the youth, setting up honor awards for different categories (students, young workers, soldiers, etc.). It is necessary to put the education of children on a military basis from the very beginning, with games and physical exercise aimed at this goal. Corporal punishment, which tempers the body and soul, should be recognized as of great educational importance. The best citizen is the soldier; the worst, the intellectual, a slave of reason.

It is not necessary to dwell at length on the ideological tendency manifest in the article; in fact, the word "fascist" is the immediate characterization that comes to mind. It is accurate.

A few of those who received the article -- but only a few! -- after overcoming their stupefaction, sent the article on to leading political and cultural figures. The scandal then broke out. But the scandal -- very significantly! -- hit primarily those who had referred the article to political leaders. They were threatened with the severest punishment if they sent copies outside the USSR. The actual authors of the scandalous article were less in the line of fire.

It seems that it was not the personal product of Valery Skurlatov. A number of functionaries of the Moscow Committee of the Komsomol as well as some writers close to the editorial board of the Komsomol magazine The Young Guard also participated in drawing it up. Skurlatov was expelled from the party but was not hit by administrative measures such as usually accompany expulsion. It

appears that since then he has even been given another job at higher pay.

Trotsky noted in 1938, on the basis of declarations made by Soviet bureaucrats who fled to the West, that under cover of the official ideology in the Soviet Union were hidden all kinds of political-ideological products of decomposition extending as far as fascist trends. Today we again see tendencies in the bureaucracy that break with the official ideology towards the right or even the ultra-right in Soviet society.

This is manifestly a result of the ideological crisis following "de-Stalinization." The Stalin myth, strengthened by repressive measures, served the role of disciplinary cement for the masses and a cohesive factor in the bureaucracy.

Khrushchev's attempt to substitute for it the myth of material comforts, borrowing partially from Western sources, seems to have failed in recent years, not only due to economic difficulties but also, probably, to reasons related to the internal structure of Soviet society itself. It is therefore not strange that Komsomol and other bureaucrats feel, as a result of their specific functions, the need for an ideological means to arrest the more and more obvious process of disintegration of the bureaucratic system. The expression of this need, incorporated in the Ustav Nravov is, of course, an extreme one which, in this form, is not typical of broader currents in the bureaucracy.

It is nevertheless a symptomatic expression of the malaise of certain groups of bureaucrats "linked to the masses" -- insofar as this is possible in an organization of a Jesuitical police type like the Komsomol of today -- a malaise resulting not so much from the policy of "de-Stalinization" as the inevitable consequences of such a policy: the collapse of the ideological requisites for the rule of the bureaucracy. It is rather interesting to note that in his speech at the December 1965 plenum of the central committee, Pavlov, the secretary of the Komsomol, centered his conclusions around problems similar to those selected by the authors of Ustav Nravov. But it should be emphasized that Pavlov saw the solution in increased official police control, something that has to be covered up ideologically by partial rehabilitation of Stalin.

The line of this tendency has serious chances of being adopted as the official party line at the twenty-third congress of the CPSU in March. The victory of this line is not certain but without doubt it is one of the various lines around which the present internal struggle in the CPSU is developing. And it is necessary to stress that such an orientation would not contradict the cautiously reformist line in the economic field presented by Kosygin at the December 1965 plenum. The technocrats can very well "coexist" with the advocates of a harsher police regime, particularly since this current will not and cannot return to the exercise of mass terror such as characterized Stalin's time, proposing instead something "milder" and more "reasonable." It is quite possible, too, that among the technocrats there are groupings that fear violent mass reactions

against the consequences of the policy of economic rationalization proposed by Liberman and now officially adopted by the Soviet leadership (e.g., temporary appearance of unemployment). These groupings would be inclined to accompany this phase of "rationalization" with a stiffening of the police regime.

Given the episodic character of the mass struggles of today and their lack of coordination on a national scale, the more advanced layers of the masses do not yet have the possibility of determining the outcome of the conflicts existing within the bureaucracy. It is certain that a harshening of the regime's repressive aspects would result in slowing down the construction of the antibureaucratic vanguard now in process of formation. But it is also true that in the long run such a "solution," unable to meet the difficult and complex problems facing Soviet society -- particularly the economic ones! -- is doomed to failure. In the final analysis it would only favor the radicalization of the masses.

KREMLIN DIPLOMATS EMBARRASSED BY HAVANA CONFERENCE

According to Richard Eder, Washington correspondent of the New York Times, Soviet officials "are making quiet disclaimers of the aggressive calls for revolution in Latin America, Africa and Asia issued at last month's tricontinental conference in Havana."

Eder does not disclose the source of his information. Very likely it is the State Department but that does not necessarily guarantee inaccuracy. In his February 16 dispatch, Eder cites the following case:

"The Uruguayan Government summoned the Soviet Ambassador in Montevideo to the Foreign Ministry to explain the statement by the Soviet delegate to the conference, Sharaf R. Rashidov, who said that his country was in a position of solidarity with the revolutionary struggles of the peoples of all Latin America.

"According to reports originating with the Uruguayan Foreign Ministry, the Soviet Ambassador assured the Government that the Soviet Union was not giving its support to subversion in the Western Hemisphere. He added that Mr. Rashidov, a high-ranking member of the Soviet Communist party, was speaking 'privately' and not for the Soviet Government."

IMPRISONED WIVES OF PERUVIAN REVOLUTIONISTS ON HUNGER STRIKE

Taken hostage by the Belaunde government and held under shocking conditions at the Chorrillos prison in Lima since last spring, six wives of leading revolutionists engaged in the guerrilla

struggle in Peru started a hunger strike February 11.

They are demanding that the government either officially deny or confirm the rumored execution of Guillermo Lobaton, one of the heads of the MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria). Government sources have spread the story that the leader of one of the active guerrilla fronts was killed. The MIR has issued denials from the underground.

One of the six women is Jacquelin Lobaton, the wife of Guillermo.

The women political hostages are denied the most ordinary rights of prisoners. Nevertheless they managed to pass a letter through the bars revealing their anguish and despair over the official conspiracy of silence on the fate of Guillermo Lobaton.

INTERVIEW WITH A BOLIVIAN TROTSKYIST

(The following interview with Elio Vasquez, one of the leaders of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario, the Bolivian section of the Fourth International, has been translated from the January issue of Lucha Obrera, monthly journal of the POR.)

* * *

After more than three months of being confined in the jungles of Beni, Comrade Elio Vasquez, together with other miners, has returned. The return of these comrades constitutes a victory made possible by the vigorous struggle of the miners and the courageous hunger strike which their wives and mothers conducted at the university. We hail the return of the victims. We salute Comrade Elio, young and influential leader of Catavi. Many others have not yet gained their freedom, including comrades Orlando Capriles, Sinforsoso Cabrera, Isaac Camacho, Rocha and others whom the fascist dictatorship has refused to release. But we are sure we will succeed in getting them out of the concentration camps, once more defeating the murderous generals.

In order to let our militants and readers hear from Comrade Elio Vasquez, we interviewed him and recorded the following conversation:

Q. When and under what circumstances were you taken prisoner, Comrade Vasquez?

A. On September 16 I was in the town of Panacachi handling some business. When the army came they followed me because the next day, the morning of the seventeenth, when I was with some friends and comrades, a truckload of heavily armed soldiers under the command of Captain Zacarias Plaza pulled up. They surrounded the house and everybody in it. Then they took us prisoner and brought us to

the Uncia barracks where they held us incommunicado for five days.

Q. Where were you confined and with whom?

A. After the brutal massacre at Llallagua, Siglo XX and Catavi, I was taken in a plane to Oruro and from there brought in a car to this city (La Paz), remaining locked up in the filthy cells of the DIC (Direccion Investigacion Criminal). On the twenty-third I was taken in a plane to Santa Rosa de Yacuma together with comrades from the mines -- Jaime Linneo, Agustin Santander, Filipe Flores, Alverto Salazar, Diogenes Vargas and Andres Valenzuela. The first three were from Llallagua and the others were from the San Jose mine. We were also accompanied by the bank workers leader Rene Gomez Garcia.

Q. How were you treated by the military and the police?

A. As you can understand, from the moment I was detained I was subjected to bad treatment and I also saw torture applied by the military to the miners and students of Llallagua Uncia. From my cell in the Uncia barracks I heard the military planes machine-gunning a demonstration of students of the Colegio Primero de Mayo (May Day College). But why talk about the way the DIC agents treat political prisoners? It's already known by everyone.

In Santa Rosa de Yacuma, a small camp lost in the enormous jungles of Beni, we were left without any economic resources, without clothing, without food or a place to stay. Accustomed to working at an altitude of 5,000 meters (more than 16,000 feet), in a cold but healthy climate, we suffered temperatures of 40 degrees (104 Fahrenheit), among mosquitoes of all species and wild animals of all kinds, without any medical services. Only a Hitlerite type of mentality could have conceived of this torture, which, without a firing squad, condemned to death miners sick from tuberculosis and silicosis. Under these conditions we had to work in the camp as peons, porters, bricklayers. When we were lucky we worked two or three days a week at a wage of ten bolivianos.

Q. What do you think of the present situation and what are your plans?

A. The repression has not modified our revolutionary will or ideas. I am rejoining the struggle for my cause and for my class. For the battle has not ended and we must continue to combat the butchers until we win a radical change in the social system. This struggle must be supported by all the people. In the mines it is necessary to strengthen the underground committees and construct a new leadership of the miners that will measure up to the needs of the present tasks and struggles.

COLOMBIAN ARMY SLAYS REBEL PRIEST

The announcement February 17 by the Colombian government that the army had slain the rebel priest Camilo Torres Restrepo touched off bitter student demonstrations in Bogota.

The priest was reportedly shot in a battle between a guerrilla contingent and an army patrol. According to the version published in the Bogota press, a guerrilla group of about twenty-five men ambushed the troops. In the gunfire, four soldiers were killed and three wounded. Five of the guerrillas were killed, including Father Torres and a boy of sixteen.

The battle took place in the municipality of San Vicente de Chucuri in Santander Department. This is near rich oil fields and refineries along the Magdalena River.

The son of an upper-class family, Torres was a sociology professor and chaplain at the National University. He became a prominent figure in Colombia because of his concern over social problems. Last June when he strongly criticized the Colombian government for its failure to solve the social and economic problems of the country, he was hauled on the mat by the Catholic hierarchy.

The archbishop of Bogota pressed him to leave the country, and when the rebel priest refused, he was defrocked.

Torres made a tour of Colombia calling for the overthrow of the government. At the beginning of January he created a nationwide sensation when he announced that he had joined the National Liberation Army.

It would be a mistake to consider the course followed by Torres to be just an exceptional case. The social contradictions have grown so acute in many countries in Latin America that circles are affected which in past times remained aloof from the class struggle or were active participants against those who rebelled.

In the intensifying upheaval affecting vast areas of the world, there will be many others who will demonstrate like Father Torres that they do have a conscience and who will follow his example in dedicating their lives to the social and economic emancipation of the poor through the only realistic means -- revolutionary struggle.

HAVANA NEWSPAPER ATTACKS YUGOSLAVS

A violent attack against the League of Yugoslav Communists was levelled February 14 by the daily Granma, official newspaper of the central committee of the Cuban Communist party.

"The only ones who can make the revolution on this continent

are going to do it despite the insulting campaign and the slanderous editorials of the Yugoslav Communist organ Borba," said the Havana paper.

Granma likewise attacked the "intriguers of the so-called League of Yugoslav Communists" for attacking Cuba and the revolutionary conclusions of the Tricontinental Conference held in Havana and for standing in the road of the revolutionists of Latin America.

Borba was accused of having "submitted to imperialism." The Granma editorial also attacked the Yugoslav government for not having accepted the exclusion of the Belgrade representatives from the Tricontinental Conference.

There were no doubt multiple reasons for the editorial fire against the Yugoslavs. One of them was probably Borba's expression of opinion January 24 that the Tricontinental Conference had "negative" results. Borba claimed that a number of Latin-American Communist parties were very reserved with regard to the conference and the militant tactics that had been approved there.

CASTRO TAKES HIS STAND IN THE SINO-SOVIET CONFLICT

By Joseph Hansen

The declaration made by Fidel Castro February 6, on the differences that have arisen between the Cuban and Chinese governments has been widely interpreted as signifying a rupture in diplomatic relations between the two countries. This remains to be seen, but it is nonetheless clear that Fidel Castro is concerned about making the record as to the responsibility for the increasing coolness in relations that has developed.

Two main issues are involved, one can conclude from reading the text. (1) Mao subjected the Cuban government to economic blackmail in hope of winning a political concession. (2) The Chinese government sought to flood Cuba's armed forces with political literature and persisted in this course in the face of a strong official protest.

In addition to these points, Castro charges the Chinese leaders with conducting themselves in an uncomradely way; i.e., the Chinese government aped the attitude of an imperialist power toward a small weak country, disregarding the common socialist ties binding them together.

On the latter matter, Castro charged that a minor and anonymous official was given the chore of calling Fidel Castro a "liar" in connection with his public version January 2 of the decision of the Chinese government not to increase or extend the previous year's level in the barter of rice and sugar. This way of proceeding, said

Castro, was hypocritical, "because such pronouncements can only emanate from the highest levels of the Chinese government."

Besides being "dishonest," the Cuban prime minister added, "such a method reveals an attitude of depreciation toward other peoples, because it is equivalent to saying that the declarations of the prime minister of a small state, although the question under dispute seriously affects this state, only merits the reply of a minor and anonymous functionary of China's Ministry of Foreign Trade."

Obviously aiming his remarks at Mao Tse-tung and the close circle around the Chinese leader, Fidel Castro said that he would proceed in a different way. Citing facts and figures from both Chinese and Cuban sources, he took up the dispute over the exchange of rice and sugar item by item.

From this detailed account, which occupies quite a few pages, it would seem that the best that can be said for Mao's case is that the Cubans might have had a misunderstanding of the agreement and that they should have gone to the highest levels of the Chinese government if they wanted to keep up or increase the 1965 level of rice imports in exchange for sugar.

Castro indignantly rejects the concept that a small country must go hat in hand to a big power, begging for handouts. He points out that the offer to the Chinese government to increase the level actually meant no added cost to the Chinese government. On the contrary it could prove quite advantageous financially. But the Chinese government would not even grant the Cubans extra rice for the ten million in credits they still have in China!

The Chinese argue that (a) they do not need more sugar because they have finished paying off a loan in kind from the USSR in this commodity; (b) they must hoard rice in preparation for an attack by U.S. imperialism; (c) they must sell rice on the world market in order to get money to purchase other grains in short supply in China.

Castro's rejoinder to this is (a) that the Chinese ended the arrangement so abruptly as to make it impossible to obtain the needed rice elsewhere for the coming year; (b) that the blockade of Cuba by American imperialism progressively cut off Cuba's normal sources of supply -- Castro stressed in particular the charges about the alleged Cuban role in guerrilla activities in countries like Venezuela which led to a resolution of the Organization of American States in July 1964 virtually isolating Cuba from the rest of Latin America and compelling her to turn in an ever greater degree toward the workers states for markets and for goods; (c) that in the common struggle against U.S. imperialism, Cuba, which is in the front lines only ninety miles away from the U.S., surely deserves special consideration, at least in the matter of economic supplies. If China is proceeding correctly in building up stockpiles, what about Cuba which is threatened with attack at any time!

Despite the sharpness of his language, Castro did not place

the entire blame for this bad situation on Mao. "We do not blame the Chinese government exclusively for lowering this quota," he said. "The responsibility lies primarily with the Yankee imperialists who placed an economic blockade against us."

To this he added that the Chinese government bore responsibility "for having submitted in practice to this blockade" and that the Cuban government itself bore responsibility "for having believed in the internationalist spirit of the Chinese government."

Some telling arguments were thus scored by Castro. Certainly one would think that if Mao considered the interests of China's own defense in an objective way, he would do his utmost to strengthen Cuba's position -- if not with missiles, then at least with rice from this year's bumper crop -- and this regardless of the merits of the dispute over the barter arrangement and regardless of any political differences he might have with Castro. In fact even if the Cubans were completely in the wrong about the length of time or the amounts involved in the bartering of rice and sugar, it would seem to be much in Peking's interest -- including factional interest in the dispute with the Khrushchevist revisionists -- to block a dispute of this nature from being taken as a pretext for an attenuation of relations with Havana.

Castro stands on much less firm ground in his second main point. The Chinese government, he said, began to import and distribute massive amounts of propaganda among Cuba's armed forces and the lower ranks of the government. A formal protest was lodged with the Chinese representatives in Cuba on September 14. However, the propagandistic activities did not halt. They increased. From September to January, a period of five months, a total of 58,041 "bulletins" were brought into Cuba from abroad by the Chinese.

In addition, after the September 14 protest, "tens of thousands of other bulletins and material of a political character, printed or accumulated by the Chinese representatives in Cuba, were distributed."

The abrupt ending of the rice-sugar barter agreement came, Castro charges, as the answer of the Chinese government to the protest lodged over the distribution of Chinese political literature among Cuba's armed forces.

And why was Fidel Castro so exercised over the distribution of this free literature?

"This was a really unheard of happening that no sovereign state, no government that respects itself will ever tolerate. A flagrant violation of the norms of the most elemental respect that must exist among socialist and even nonsocialist countries."

Castro does not develop this point. Yet it raises a series of questions relating to the broad principles of revolutionary socialism as well as Havana's position in the current dispute between Moscow and Peking.

(1) It would be interesting to know the content of the literature distributed in Cuba by the Chinese. Was there a single item directed specifically against either the Cuban Revolution or the Cuban government? Most likely it consisted of the same material being distributed on a world scale by the Chinese against U.S. imperialism on the one hand and the Khrushchevist revisionists on the other.

Since the Cubans can match, if not outdo the Chinese in material exposing U.S. imperialism, it can be concluded that so far as content was concerned what embarrassed the Cuban government was the attacks levelled against the Khrushchevist revisionists. This can easily be deduced from Castro's speech itself, for it includes a strong attack against U.S. imperialism, a powerful defense of the Vietnamese people and their cause, and an appeal for united action among all the revolutionary forces in behalf of the common struggle. Castro, in fact, quotes extensively from his March 13, 1965, speech on the need to close ranks in face of the escalation of the war in Vietnam. He does not say a word about Khrushchevism.

It should be noted, likewise, that a blanket condemnation of propaganda issued by the Chinese sounds somewhat strange coming from Fidel Castro. During the first years of the Cuban Revolution, it was widely acknowledged that the July 26 Movement had learned much from the Chinese revolutionists. In particular, teachings of Mao on guerilla warfare were widely referred to in Cuban literature.

(2) It would be interesting to know what successes might have been registered by the Chinese with their propaganda campaign in Cuba. Did it lead to the formation, or incipient formation, of a pro-Peking tendency in the Communist party of Cuba? Or among the troops or government ranks?

Elsewhere in the world Peking's extreme factionalism and ultraleftism (sometimes combined with or offset by the grossest opportunism) have proved self-defeating; and in many countries where rather promising beginnings were registered, the pro-Peking tendencies have withered on the vine.

Must we conclude, then, that the Fidelista leadership is incapable of meeting a tendency of this kind on the political level and defeating them with political argument? Why must the armed forces be barred from reading any kind of political literature they wish? Are they vulnerable to Peking's arguments against Moscow? If so, it is a dangerous delusion to think that it is possible to compensate for it by banning the overly tempting literature.

(3) In resorting to this kind of argument, Castro descends to the level of Mao and the Khrushchevists. While Peking and Moscow have reprinted selected pieces from the polemics of the other side, both of them have barred the free circulation of the opponent's literature -- and this in countries that claim to be "socialist"! The tradition involved here belongs to Stalin, who, in his concern to maintain and safeguard the special privileges of the bureaucracy, sought to hermetically seal off Soviet society from ideas or prac-

tices connected in any way with proletarian democracy such as was practiced in the days of Lenin.

(4) There is no escaping the conclusion that in addition to the reasons advanced by Castro for the cooling of relations between the Chinese and Cuban governments there is an additional unspoken one. In the Sino-Soviet conflict, Castro now feels he has no choice but to line up in a public way on Moscow's side. However justifiable his case is in relation to the dispute over the sugar-rice barter agreement, Castro is granting a considerable political concession to the Kosygin-Brezhnev team.

(5) The dead-end factionalism of the Mao group is proving to be self-defeating as well as extremely damaging to the struggle against imperialist aggression. In the face of the revisionist politics of the Khrushchevists, Peking should seek a united front on the governmental level. This would serve a dual purpose. On the one hand no more effective means could be found to expose Moscow's revisionism in practice; on the other hand it would help assure a much more powerful force to deploy against U.S. imperialism, particularly in Vietnam at the present moment. Instead, the Maoists offer verbal attacks against Moscow's revisionism -- which they could do in any case -- but put themselves in the position of deliberately rejecting a united front and thereby sabotaging the struggle against imperialism. Where does this leave those like the Cubans who were among the first to propose a united front -- and not for revisionist reasons?

In conjunction with this it must be said that Fidel Castro's charge about Peking's arrogant attitude toward smaller countries is certainly justified, at least in the case of Cuba. It would seem only realistic on the part of the Chinese to appreciate the difficult position of the Cuban revolutionists. No matter what their sympathies for Peking's side in the dispute with Moscow, they have no choice but to depend on Moscow for economic and military aid. To insist that they line up in the Sino-Soviet conflict and convert Cuba into the Albania of the Caribbean is equivalent, in the present relationship of forces, to demanding that they commit suicide.

Of course, from the viewpoint of Peking this is perfectly consistent with the policy of openly rejecting any united front whatsoever with the Khrushchevists unless they give up revisionism and make a public self-criticism. But in addition to other disadvantages this leaves no opening for those in no position to operate as big powers. In the case of the Cubans it means forcing them into deeper dependency on the Kremlin.

(6) This is undoubtedly a very difficult situation for the Cubans. Instead of the relief from their exposed position which they confidently counted on through one or more successful revolutions elsewhere in Latin America, they have become increasingly isolated. By their struggle for power and their establishment of a workers state and a planned economy they have set an imperishable example. But they remain in the position of a beleaguered fortress. The imperialist colossus has succeeded in drawing the noose of the

blockade tighter and tighter. They are becoming ever more closely linked in with the bureaucratized workers states on whom they depend economically. The Sino-Soviet dispute worsened everything for them.

The main strength of the Cuban revolutionists has been their strong inclination for practical action. As is well known, for a considerable period they appeared to have achieved a revolution without paying any attention to theory. While this was considerably exaggerated, it remains nonetheless true that the whole emphasis was on practice and it was only after the deed was accomplished that they came to recognize its meaning in theory.

Despite considerable efforts to overcome their depreciation of theory, it still remains true that the Cubans have not yet produced a theoretical work of importance and there is still great resistance to theory. This was particularly evident at the recent Tricontinental Conference where Castro openly voiced depreciation of theory, calling for the revolutionists of Latin America to stop theorizing and to go ahead and make their revolution. It was not entirely illogical of him in the same speech to attack "Trotskyism" where the main theoretical arsenal of the revolutionary-socialist movement is to be found.

One of the consequences of this attitude of the Cubans is to be seen in the way they have floundered in the Sino-Soviet dispute. Castro did very well last year in stressing the need for a united front in opposing the aggressive policy of U.S. imperialism but he has shown little skill in advancing this position.

Instead he has traded political support for material aid from Moscow in a way that appears quite unprincipled. He has sought to make up for this by such devices as the Tricontinental Conference where heavy emphasis was placed on the need for armed struggle in advancing the revolution, particularly in Latin America. However strong the will, it is extremely dubious that another successful revolution can be carried out anywhere in Latin America without much greater theoretical clarity, not least in relation to the basic issues in the Sino-Soviet conflict.

To achieve clarity among the ranks of the revolutionists is also a kind of action and one that will most likely prove to be the decisive link in the next great stage of the world revolution. The Cuban revolutionists would do well to consider this question more deeply and to find better means of establishing the truly independent position which they are obviously seeking.

OIL COMPANIES RECOGNIZE THE REAL POWER IN SOUTH VIETNAM

Esso, Caltex and Shell are doing a "booming business" in south Vietnam reports Drew Pearson in his column of February 15. The three American oil companies pay the National Liberation Front a regular fee like taxes; and so their trucks go unmolested.

ASOKA MEHTA WIELDS THE WHITEWASH BRUSH

By Kailas Chandra

Bombay

Some "big business" journals and spokesmen have come down heavily on Planning Minister Asoka Mehta for a speech made by him at the convocation of the Saugor University in Madhya Pradesh on February 4, in which he said that "curbing of the private sector monopolies and enlargement of the state's hold over the banking system should be considered for increasing the area of social controls." This was his first major speech after joining the Central Cabinet headed by Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

The erstwhile Socialist leader called for the reversal of the policies which he confessed "broadly favoured the better placed agriculturists compared to the sub-marginal and landless farmers." He also suggested a levy on large landholdings. Asoka Mehta, one of the founders of the Congress Socialist party, a radical wing of the Indian National Congress in the thirties, came out of the Indian National Congress in 1948 along with his colleagues to form the Socialist party which in 1952 merged with the Praja party, a dissident Congress group, to form the Praja Socialist party. The chairman of the PSP for some time, he was considered the main theoretician of the reformist socialist movement in India. He resigned from the PSP in 1963 and joined the Congress. He was appointed vice-chairman of the Planning Commission in 1964.

Here are some of the other points made by Mehta that have caused a "furious" controversy in the bourgeois press in India:

- The constitutional guarantee about the rights in and to properties makes it difficult for "the forces of socialism to operate on the level of change in the structure of private property," especially as "we are moving towards the enlargement of a social ownership of new forms of property rather than acquisition of existing private property."
- About 650 accounts of the country constitute roughly two-thirds of the total advances of the banking system and it must be seen whether the position can be remedied by antitrust laws or whether the state will have to be directly involved in the operation of these powerful bodies.
- "The new socialist order" emerging in the country is one with its emphasis on "an increasing area of social ownership and control and overriding anxiety for equality and liberty and lays a great stress on economic growth as a pre-condition for economic equality."
- But "this economic order is not the copy book version of socialism with which the young generation of 40 years ago became familiar in their search for a new way of life. It is more complex, dynamic and live phenomenon with all kinds of contradictions, anom-

alies and pragmatic contortions."

• "Although private enterprise rules over the great part of economy of our agriculture and in the larger sector of our industry, we have made a beginning in acquiring social controls over them." The "predominance of private trade in both the foreign and domestic wholesale market" continues uninterrupted but the overall control of the economy is "a unified control oriented to the requirement of social gain in a broad sense."

• Another "source of anxiety" is that "the affluent pockets" of the economy are not yet showing signs of giving up the old habit of "conspicuous consumption" which has affected the style of work and living even of the public sector of enterprise where one occasionally comes across cases of expenditure unconnected with production.

• "There is no doubt that we continue to be a capitalist economic order with a powerful hangover of a feudal, social and cultural framework and yet our economic and social institutions are straining at the leash to be immediately revised into something which they are not at present, viz., institutions of a socialist order."

The speech has been praised for its intellectual clarity. Asoka Mehta made a very sober and frank assessment of the economic development in India within the capitalist framework. He admitted that the economy being built in India since 1948 continues to be "a capitalist economy with a powerful hangover of a feudal, social and cultural framework." He was forced to admit that the various land "reform measures introduced by the Congress government have created a class of rich peasantry in the villages while the overwhelming majority of the rural poor, the poor peasants and the agricultural workers have been denied all benefits of development." Concentration of wealth and growth of capitalist monopolies have grown tremendously despite the state "regulations" and the so-called "unified control orientated to the growth of social gains."

But Asoka Mehta said nothing new except that as a new minister in the cabinet he tried to whitewash the failures of the Congress government. He warned members of the ruling class against indulging in the habit of "conspicuous consumption" lest they invoke the wrath of the exploited masses who are denied even their basic needs; and he preached against their imparting their corrupt practices to the bureaucracy running the "governmental sectors" of the economy. He said that he does not believe in the "copybook version" of socialism which he learned forty years ago as a student when he was still inspired by the October Revolution. Today his socialism has become "more complex" (and less dynamic) in his attempt to make it "acceptable" to the ruling bourgeoisie while continuing to fool the masses with demogogy.

Asoka Mehta advocated no radical reforms in the present capitalist framework. In fact he thinks that the "changes" he has in view as a "democratic socialist" would take a long time to be introduced. His concept of "evolutionary socialism" as opposed to "revolutionary socialism" is that the process is very slow and tortuous.

What has irked the "big business" spokesmen about Mehta is not so much his "academic exercises" about "evolutionary socialism," which do not constitute a threat to capitalism, but his "dark hints" at "further curbs on the corporate sector and a tighter control over the banking system."

"The proliferation of controls in the last fifteen years," said the conservative Times of India of Bombay editorially on February 7, "has vested new discretionary powers in an expanding army of officials." It added: "The administration of controls has clogged the bureaucratic machinery resulting in inordinate delays in decision-making....the real need therefore is not to increase the degree of control but to ensure that such a control as the Government already has over the economy is exercised to better purpose."

The Times of India took Mehta severely to task for suggesting nationalisation of banking as a solution to the present crisis facing the capitalist economy in India. His suggestion for taxation of agricultural incomes has, however, been welcomed by the journal, which, while speaking for the urban bourgeoisie maintains that the "richer peasants who derive so much benefit from large irrigation, power and other projects can certainly afford to pay more towards their upkeep." But the journal is constrained to observe rather sarcastically that "Mr. Mehta himself does not regard his suggestions as a basis for immediate action." Indeed his declarations are no more than an "academic exercise" in his capacity as the new planning minister.

S.L.Kirloskar, president of the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry at a press conference in Bombay on February 8 said that the statement of Mehta "recommending a stricter control on the private sector and bank nationalisation had shocked and disturbed businessmen." He said that it was "highly improper for a responsible Minister to indulge in loud thinking publicly." According to him, Mehta's statement would have "definite adverse repercussions abroad and make it difficult for the country to obtain the maximum possible help from the World Bank and other institutions."

Kirloskar said he was at a "loss to understand the reasons motivating Mr. Mehta's statement," as business and industrial activity in the country had already been operating under a set of strict and serious controls at all levels. He challenged Mehta to demonstrate how "his socialist policies would solve problems of finance, food-production and unemployment."

Kirloskar pleaded for a "continuance of the pragmatic approach of the Shastri Government" and urged the prime minister "to do her utmost to rectify the impression about India abroad, particularly in the U.S." This he said was "particularly necessary in view of the impression in certain foreign countries that India would not be able to repay its borrowings even with the best of intentions."

But P.A.Palkhivala, the noted "free enterprise" economist has taken a more alarmist view of Mehta's speech. He thinks that it will only serve "to widen the chasm between the Government and

private enterprise." (Times of India, February 7.) Palkhivala said: "If the speech did not reflect the collective thinking of the present Cabinet, it was a grave mistake to give a gratuitous jolt to the capital market, unnerve foreign investors and cast a pall of gloom over the national economy. If it did presage Cabinet action, we can only see ahead even dimmer days and shadows lengthening across the path." A severe warning indeed!

Palkhivala strongly criticised Asoka Mehta's suggestion for "bank nationalisation" or greater state control on banking. He pointed out that there "is already a hard core of the public sector in the field of banking," with the State Bank of India and its subsidiaries "accounting for 25 per cent of the paid-up capital and 32 per cent of the deposits of all Indian scheduled banks" -- extending to 29 per cent of the total credit to the public -- and "owning 32 per cent of all Indian branches and offices of the scheduled banks."

About Mehta's reference to 650 accounts constituting two-thirds of the total advances of the banking system, Palkhivala pointed out that this only meant that "some companies, because of the size of their operations, have much larger requirements for loans than others and it does not prove unfair banking practices." He added that "if one looks at the figures of advances by the State Bank of India, which is in the public sector they would make the same pattern."

The banking system, whether state-owned or private in a capitalist society, subserves the needs of the capitalist economy. The bulk of the advances from the State Bank of India have for example gone to the private sector. In backward countries like India, a centralised state-owned banking system is necessary to discipline and regulate the development of the capitalist economy which otherwise tends to be chaotic. That is precisely what Asoka Mehta had in view when he called for a "unified control of the economy" and the banking system by the state. He only suggested greater state regulation of the banking system in the larger interest of the capitalist economy; and he has not yet advocated nationalisation of banking as such. Mehta said rather cautiously: "It might be considered whether the state should further enlarge its hold over the banking or not in order to introduce social considerations in this important field of activity." He pointed out that even in a developed capitalist country like France, advances of over a million francs made by the banking system required the approval of the planning authority. In fact in India also, the Reserve Bank already exercises such regulatory control over advances by private banks beyond a prescribed limit.

In any case mere nationalisation of banking or certain sectors of the capitalist economy cannot be equated with socialism; socialism presupposes the far more fundamental transformation of the private ownership of the means of production into social ownership. Obviously such a socialist transformation of the property relations cannot be brought about by a bourgeois state wedded to preservation of capitalism and such a transformation is possible only as a result of revolutionary intervention of the masses in the political life of the country.

Asoka Mehta is trying to explain away the failures of the Congress government to solve the basic problems of food, employment and shelter during the last eighteen years of political independence. He therefore has to indulge in some radical phrase-mongering. He said, for example, that there is a "spectacular tussle between the old capitalistic economic order and the new socialist order in India." Socialism, according to him, is India's ruling "ideology" and constitutes "our principal value for our changing times." The so-called "spectacular tussle" between two antagonistic social orders in India is only a figment of imagination on his part. But he is forced to admit that it would be long before a complete social and economic transformation would be achieved in India at the present rate.

Among the social institutions more resistant to change, he points out the caste system: "the age-old structure of hierarchical, adscriptive and custom-bound society" which "cannot be undone as long as there are artificial man-made divisions among ourselves." He is satisfied that "in this difficult field as in most others" India has made a beginning to bring about pervasive change such as steps to abolish untouchability. He does not explain why the bourgeois state has failed to abolish even the caste system, which is finding new aggressive manifestations in India.

He has also tried to "whitewash" the failures of the Congress government in other spheres. He said, for example, that the increasing investment of LIC funds and the entry of the Unit Trust in the "corporate sector" are also "bound to change the nature of decision-making in that sector over time." The growth of cooperatives also has introduced "another kind of decision-making in our agriculture and industry." The "Asakan socialism" does not stand for social ownership of the means of production or property relations; it aims only at influencing the "nature of decision-making" among capitalists through state regulations -- greater "social controls" as he himself puts it.

With the general elections only a year ahead, the Congress high command has assigned a difficult task to an ex-Socialist. He has to convince the masses of India that the Congress still means to build "socialism." In fact Palkhivala made a point when he said that talks of curbing the private-sector monopolies "may be politically useful in that it conveys to the ill-fed, ill-clothed and ill-housed citizen that his economic plight is due not to official incompetence but to the anti-social activities of a few business houses." Even the big bourgeois leaders know that the Mehta speech is only a pre-election stunt.

2,000 PICKET U.S. CONSULATE IN MONTREAL

Some 2,000 demonstrators picketed the U.S. consulate in Montreal February 18 after a march from a down-town hall where they heard Staughton Lynd denounce the escalation of the war in Vietnam. The demonstration was peaceful, the consulate coming out of it with all windows intact.