

LABOR ACTION

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FIVE CENTS

INDOCHINA AND THE WAR CRISIS

THE STORY BEHIND THE NEWS

Five pages, beginning on page 2

NO U.S. TROOPS TO INDOCHINA! Not a Drop of Blood, Not a Cent To Support French Colonialism in Asia!

One of the most significant events in the present Indochina war crisis in the United States is something which is *not* happening. It was brought home the other day when a commentator referred to "the great debate" on the Southeast Asian situation.

But there is no "great debate." There is scarcely anything which can be dignified by the name debate at all.

There are no clashing policies being aired before the American people. *There are virtually no policies to clash.*

Perhaps, and then only in part, can this be attributed to fear on the part of politicians, press or publicists to go out on the limb with an oppositionist view when—who knows?—a year from now this might "prove" their disloyalty, indeed "prove" their sabotage of war preparations against the Stalinist enemy . . . just as Robert Oppenheimer's views on the H-bomb program "proved" that he delayed its development.

Mainly, the explanation for the phenomenon—and it is a phenomenon—is a simple fact. Who has a policy that is an alternative to the present disastrous one?

The U. S. is drifting into a new war disaster which bids fair to be more hopeless than Korea. It is partly drifting and partly being pushed from above. Like a man on an ice slope with a bear behind him and a jump-off into a swamp before him, Washington is slipping down from one foothold to another, vainly looking for a piece to take a firm stand.

No, our rulers do not *want* this war.—Is that an "admission" for socialists, who, in the informed opinion of ignoramuses, always accuse capitalist governments of "wanting war"? On the contrary, it is this fact which underlines to the full the organic incapacity of our rulers to defend the interests of peace and the people in this dark day.

Official America—its government, its ruling class, its "thinkers," such as they are—do not want this war for an obvious reason: it is a war which they cannot win. It is a war which cannot defeat Stalinism in the jungle terrain held by the Vietminh guerrillas, not even with the blood of American GIs flowing like the water in the rice-paddies. It cannot be won with the H-bomb because there is nothing there worth blasting into radioactive ash. It cannot make the hearts of the Indochinese people beat more fondly for America as their country is covered with napalm and high explosive. It can engender the same moods of discontent and war-weariness among the American people themselves that proved so dangerous to the preceding Democratic administration with its war in Korea.

All that assuming even that the war can really remain a hopeless war in Indochina instead of turning into the dread catastrophe of the Third World War, in which the fate of whole ruling classes and their systems, if not the fate of civilization on the planet, will be the high stakes of the game.

Will They Invent a "Pearl Harbor"?

No, American capitalism does not *want* to be drawn into this war in Indochina in which it has everything to lose—and nothing to win except the feeling that it would have lost even more by staying out!

And yet . . . and yet . . . it can think of nothing to do but move closer and closer to war. It has found no way out. It has no other program to fight Stalinist expansion but threats of war, and its hesitations—the closest approach it finds possible to a "great debate"—shuttle between the sending of ground troops or the sending of air and sea forces only, between warlike bluffs or war-

like measures, flaunting the H-bomb and flouting its more reluctant allies.

It does not *want* this war, but it knows only war as a means of effectuating its policy. The war it does not want flows from its imperialist policy in the world just as the economic recession it does not want flows from its economic system.

This is its political bankruptcy.

Because there is so little that can be dignified by the name of an opposition in these United States—least of all the cowardly and idea-less official "opposition" of the Democratic Party—the Eisenhower administration has been able to get away with an astoundingly crude series of maneuvers and tricks to soften the American people up for the war which it fears as inevitable. Roosevelt needed his Pearl Harbor to pull off the game. Harry Truman had the use of the North Korean attack to declare his "police action" and overnight confront the country with an accomplished fact. This administration has been blunderingly trying to invent an ersatz "Pearl Harbor" of its own. While American uniformed personnel and officials and technicians of all sorts swarm over Vietnam in the wake of the French, Dulles makes a speech about Chinese technicians "intervening" in Indochina, and if they take one more step. . . .

Behind the Backs of the People

In Washington, the vice-president of the United States makes a "secret" statement—to only a thousand people. The administration, it proves, is contemplating the sending of ground forces into the "dirty war" of French colonialism. The fantastic episode is a costly mistake, for the administration. What it shows is, that whatever be the "Pearl Harbor" it finally finds, its plans are being made *now*, behind the backs of the people.

Dulles and Eisenhower will need their "Pearl Harbor" when the Geneva conference stands before the world as a flop (as scheduled), when push comes to shove, and the administration's line impels its fatal conclusion. Will it be the "murder" of some of the Americans who are already in the war in Indochina?

"HANOI, April 20 (AP)—. . . American-supplied Dakota and Flying Boxcars, piloted by American civilian flyers, swooped low through curtains of fire from rebel artillery and anti-aircraft batteries to parachute tons more ammunition, food and war material of all types into the long-beseiged French Union bastion."

What are they doing there, in this war which the U. S. has not entered—officially? They can draw blood; what else?

There is another way. We have no private plan to propose, no clever scheme to reveal. *The way out that exists is well known to everybody; it is given lip-service from Congress to the press. We did not merely think it up ourselves.*

It takes its start from the fact that the Vietminh can be defeated only by an Indochina that is free, independent, democratic and in control of its own destiny. The Indochinese people can defeat the Stalinists, for Ho Chi Minh's forces live and fight now because of the sympathy with their national-liberation slogans and social program of land reform which permeates the peasants.

French imperialism must get out of Indochina. In the nearest thing to a discussion that has occurred in Congress (see inside this issue), senators from the liberal Democratic wing and from the Republican right agreed

that the war is hopeless unless the Indochinese people can be convinced they will gain their freedom. The liberals of the Americans for Democratic Action say so too. Indeed, there is little compunction in America about sacrificing French imperialist interests in Asia in the interests of "democracy"!

Whose War Is It?

Seeing this, what is stopping any or all of them from proposing a program of action based on it which can stop Stalinism and the war? Because they can see nothing to do but *pleading* with France to see the light, or, behind the scenes, pressuring it to give up its clasp-hold on the country even without seeing the light. France answers: "If Vietnam is to be independent of us, we will have no further interest in the war there. We bow out; there's no percentage in it for us. You Americans, who are so anxious about Vietnamese independence, you do the fighting for a change. But as long as we can hold on to it, we hold on."

Is this government to go over France's head? Is it to break with its ally in the Western war bloc over this "notion" of Indochinese independence? Is it to sacrifice any hope for its already tenuous and sadly dilapidated European Army scheme? Is it to throw into jeopardy its whole system of war alliances?

That is what stands in the way.

What can defeat the Vietminh in Indochina is a revolutionary change in that country, and the U. S., as always, cannot but stand in the way of such change, even when its own colonial interests are not directly involved, because its whole policy is tied up with the rest of the Western imperialist world, and not with the freedom of the Asian peoples.

A revolutionary change in Indochina can unleash the energies of the people against the Stalinists—but that will not be done by a colonial regime even if, under pressure, it grants the people more second-rate rights or first-rate promises. Nor can it be done by an "independent" regime which has put off the yoke of French control only to accept the brand of the United States—as the "independent" regime of Syngman Rhee in South Korea has proved.

What Stands in the Way

No troops to Indochina for France's "dirty war" or for an "Americanized" version of it! No air forces or sea forces to involve the United States in this military adventure! Not a cent of aid to the French imperialists! Only a genuinely democratic foreign policy that is based on the freedom of Indochina, only a policy that helps that objective and encourages and stimulates it, above all one that does not stand in its way, can contribute to the defeat of Stalinism in Asia.

And if such a policy also means the defeat of Western imperialism in Asia, its ouster from that continent, who will refuse to fight for it on that account?

A truly democratic American government would not be calling on the French to "give" this freedom. It would call on, encourage and hearten the Indochinese people to take it themselves. It would aid them in the struggle against Stalinism. *It would depend on the explosive power of the Third Camp in the uncommitted world, the power which is straitjacketed and confined as long as the stage is dominated by either of the rival imperialist war blocs.*

This is not our war in Indochina as long as it is another Korea-type contest between foreign invading imperialisms—the Stalinists behind Vietminh and the Franco-American bloc behind Bao Dai. It is our war in Indochina only when it is a war of the Indochinese people themselves for freedom against tyranny—every brand of tyranny.

INDOCHINA AND THE WAR CRISIS

THE UNTOLD STORY BEHIND THE NEWS

By A. STEIN

*The statesman is an easy man,
He tells his lies by rote . . .*
—W. B. Yeats

We must admit that the moral standards of statesmen have not improved much since Yeats penned these acid lines. Witness the U. S. government's pronouncements on the situation in Indochina.

Witness particularly the opening paragraph of Secretary of State Dulles' speech before the Overseas Press Club of America in New York on March 29. Speaking on the subject of the war in Indochina, Dulles declared that the people of that country in French-held areas are "exercising a considerable measure of political authority within the French Union."

And further: "Their independence is not yet complete. But the French government last July declared its intention to complete that independence, and negotiations to consummate that pledge are actively under way." Let us see if there is even one grain of truth amid the abundant chaff of Dulles' imagination.

I Revelations in Congress

On April 15, the Democratic senator from Massachusetts, Kennedy, in an important and largely unreported speech, took to the Senate floor to raise some questions regarding administration policy on Indochina. Said Kennedy:

"Politically, French control was and is extensive and paramount. There is no popular assembly in Vietnam which represents the will of the people, and that can ratify the treaty relationship between Vietnam and the French.

"Although the Associated States [Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos] are said to be 'independent within the French Union,' the French always have a permanent control in the High Council and in the Assembly of the Union and the government guides its actions. . . . The French High Commissioner continues to exercise powers with respect to internal security of the Associated States, and will have a similar mission even after the restoration of peace. When Vietnamese taxes affect French Union subjects, there must be consultation with the representatives of the countries concerned before they are imposed. The foreign policy of Vietnam must be coordinated with that of France, and the French must give consent to the sending of diplomatic missions to foreign countries. Inasmuch as the French did not develop experienced governmental administrators before World War II, they have guided to some degree actions within the local governments by requiring the Vietnamese government to turn to them for foreign counselors and technicians."

"Militarily, French control is nearly complete. The United States has in the past dealt primarily with the French military authority, and these in turn deal with the Associated States. Our equipment and aid is turned over

to the French who will then arrange for its distribution according to their decision. The French are granted for a period of time without limit facilities for bases and garrisons."

"Economically, French control of the country's basic resources, transportation, trade and economic life in general is extensive. In Vietnam, estimated French control is nearly 100 per cent in the field of foreign commerce, international and coastal shipping, and rubber and other export products. The French control 66 per cent of the rice export trade. Moreover, possession of property belonging to the French cannot be changed without permission of the French. And France shares the veto right under the PAU agreement on matters affecting France's export and import trade."

Senator Kennedy's politely phrased but nevertheless devastating picture of the French death-grip on the political and economic life of Vietnam, the most important of the three Associated States under French control, was not at all contradicted by Senator Knowland, Republican floor leader, when he joined amicably in the discussion. As a matter of fact, Knowland agreed with Kennedy, saying:

"I think the distinguished senator from Massachusetts has put the finger on the most vulnerable spot, so far as concerns obtaining the complete support of the native population of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Even though on July 3 the government of the Republic of France went a long way toward granting what may be called a great degree of local autonomy [!], it did not go the whole way and give those people the right to determine whether they wished to remain in or out of the French Union."

Bipartisan Lies

In all fairness to Secretary of State Dulles and the present Republican administration, it must be said that the habit of misrepresenting the palpable fact of continued French colonial rule in Indochina is a carry-over from the Truman administration.

If the reader will read further in Senator Kennedy's illuminating speech, he will learn that "In February 1951, for example, the American minister to the Associated States, Donald Heath, told us that the French colonial regime had ended and that "all Indochinese government services were turned over to the Indochinese States." This is untrue. In November of 1951, Assistant Secretary of State Dean Rusk again assured us that "The peoples of the Associated States are free to assume the extensive responsibility for their own affairs that has been accorded them by treaties with France."

Without any breach in this sad history of misrepresentation and deception of the American people, Kennedy records the misinformation handed out by the State Department as faithfully under Dulles as under Acheson:

"Last year, the Department of State assured me that 'France had granted such a full measure of control to the three states over their own affairs that . . . these three countries became sovereign states.'"

LABOR ACTION is devoting an unusually large part of this issue—five pages—to the first installment of A. Stein's illuminating study of Indochina and the war crisis for obvious reasons. On the one hand, a new war disaster is being prepared by Washington. On the other hand, the American people have never been told what the true political situation is in Indochina.

In the material we are now publishing, you will find, brought together for the first time in an American periodical, information which is vitally needed by all those who wish to stand up against the war drive.

That information is still incomplete, of course. It will need further evaluation. There is a great deal more to learn of the picture. But we are glad to publish Comrade Stein's assemblage of this information, as well as those sections of his article in which he suggests his own interpretation of and views on the Indochinese situation, which will be valuable for discussion purposes.

The study will continue next week with a discussion of the development of the Vietminh from a national-independence movement to its present Stalinist-dominated character, and with a survey of the "third force" independent nationalist tendencies in Indochina.—Ed.

"In February of this year, Under-Secretary of State Smith stated that 'the representatives of Vietnam and of France would meet in Paris to draw up the treaty which will complete Vietnamese independence.' As I have said, these conversations began in July 1953 and broke off 10 days ago. And again Secretary Dulles stated last week that 'Their independence is not yet complete, but the French government last July declared its intention to complete that independence, and negotiations to consummate that pledge are under way.' They are under way nine months after the pledge was originally given."

Colonial Victims

Let us conclude with this final observation by Senator Kennedy:

"Every year we are given three sets of assurances: first, that the independence of the Associated States is now complete; second, that the independence of the Associated States will soon be completed under steps now being undertaken; and third, that military victory for the French Union forces in Indochina is assured, or is just around the corner, or lies 2 years off. But the stringent limitations upon the status of the Associated States as sovereign states remain; and the fact that military victory has not yet been achieved is largely the result of these limitations."

The picture drawn by Senator Kennedy is restrained, governed as he is both by rules of "courtesy" and his tribute to the "gallant French defenders of Dienbienphu." And yet the main outlines are unmistakable.

The Vietnamese people remain the victims of colonial oppression. They did not elect the Bao Dai regime, and to this day lack any form of popular representation. The Bao Dai regime was invented and installed by the French and has only shadow powers. (Only in suppressing the anti-Stalinist opposition which demands more democracy and genuine independence has the regime shown real energy.)

It controls neither its own army, its finances nor its relations with other countries. In brief, it lacks all the attributes of genuine sovereignty. It is a government which is not only not on the threshold of complete independence, it has yet to take the first step on the road to real freedom—a complete break with its French masters.

II America's Role

The moral to be drawn from Kennedy's revelations is not merely that Dulles, like his more sophisticated predecessor Acheson, has been misrepresenting the nature of Bao Dai's regime and French aims in the war, out of sheer native malice or congenital dishonesty. It is rather that so long as the slightest possibility exists that the French may defeat the Vietminh, the American bourgeoisie are ready to pay the price demanded by their mercenaries—underwriting French colonial rule.

American arms began to flow directly to Indochina in July 1950, and for these three and a half years Washington has directly shared

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Seven Years of Political and Military Bankruptcy...

(Continued from preceding page)

responsibility with the French for thwarting the national aspirations of the Vietnamese people. But then, Washington's view of the matter was and remains simple: Behind Vietminh stands Mao's China, behind Mao stands Moscow. The war in Indochina is an indivisible part of the world struggle between America and Russia.

Both Kennedy the Democrat and Knowland the Republican agree that the Indochinese people take a somewhat different view of the conflict.

This war was begun by the French in 1946, long before Mao's China appeared on the horizon, as a war of colonial reconquest. The Indochinese people did not then, do not now, and will not in the future, rally to the support of the French or any puppet regime they install, such as Bao Dai's. The alpha and omega of national independence, the primary condition of genuine sovereignty is the immediate and complete withdrawal of the French.

Earning Hatred

And to the degree that the Americans have bolstered up the French they have earned the hostility of the Vietnamese. In a despatch from Saigon, dated April 17, the New York Times reporter Tillman Durdin writes: "Insofar as there has been anti-French feeling among the Vietnamese, this has transmitted itself to the United States, since the United States has generally supported the French in Indochina." Such is the odious reputation the United States has already earned for itself in Indochina as the bulwark of a rapacious colonial power.

The independent Indochinese nationalists, those who support neither Bao Dai nor Ho Chi Minh, want first and foremost a withdrawal of the French. But this means that the war must stop and the French robbed of their last pretext: that they are fighting in Indochina to defend Western democracy and the independence of the Indochinese people from the imperialist threat of Chinese totalitarianism.

If the war comes to a halt, the French can be compelled to withdraw, the Bao Dai regime forced to call genuine elections or immediately fall, and the Vietminh will lose its most potent drawing power: its claim to represent the cause of national independence. Peace is the necessary condition for a successful political struggle against both the French-supported police regime of Bao Dai and the totalitarian power of Ho Chi Minh.

The Time Is Short

The possibility that a military truce may soon come has shaken the reactionary ruling circles of the Bao Dai government. Writing in the April 27 issue of *The Reporter* magazine, Peggy Durdin writes:

"The force and audacity of the 1953-54 Vietminh military campaign, the prospect that France may negotiate peace with Ho Chi Minh, and Chief of State Bao Dai's failure to give his countrymen strong leadership have caused considerable ferment here this winter. Many anti-Communist nationalists believe there is no time to lose in organizing a strong, energetic, honest government on the Vietnamese side that will be

able at least to hold its own against Vietminh if it cannot defeat it."

Durdin quotes a politician who has been a part of the corrupt Bao Dai government: "I figure we have about six months," said a Vietnamese who has been in several Bao Dai administrations. "We have about a half a year to set up a clean effective government that can win the support of the population and put a real backbone into the Vietnamese national army. Otherwise if the French negotiate with Ho Chi Minh and withdraw their armies, we will be lost. Six months is not a long time!"

III

France's Last Card

The French government of Laniel, it should be noted, is also in favor of peace. But it is not the kind of peace the Vietnamese people want.

With a hope born of desperation, the French believe they can negotiate with the Chinese Stalinists at the Geneva conference and thereby maintain their power in Indochina. The Laniel regime believes that the Chinese Stalinists want a period of peace in order to turn to the task of industrializing the economy at home; that in return for certain economic and diplomatic concessions they will abandon Ho Chi Minh altogether.

These concessions include: (a) Access to the port of Haiphong in Northern Indochina; (b) Diplomatic recognition and entry into the United Nations; (c) Lifting of the trade ban imposed by the United States.

Negotiations at Geneva represent the last card the French can play in their desperate game to hold on to Indochina. And a brief re-



view of the military situation will show why. The truth is that the tragic thunder of the guns at Dienbienphu is not only a warning and an invitation to the French to negotiate at Geneva; it is also a declaration of French military bankruptcy. For the French, Dienbienphu is the end of the road.

It is true that in itself Dienbienphu is not an important military objective, and that the assault on the fortress by Vietminh represents a costly move, prodigal in its waste of lives, to strengthen the Chinese bargaining position at Geneva. This has been much publicized in the American press. What is not so obvious, and has not been too well publicized, is the fact that Dienbienphu represents the final miscarriage and failure of the much-advertised Navarre Plan for victory, the strategy that promised to carry the war to the enemy and achieve a triumphant close to hostilities in a year.

This plan was conceived by, and bears the name of, the present supreme commander of the French armed forces in Indochina, General Navarre. His plan was approved, applauded and set in motion by the Eisenhower administration in the summer of 1953. The material premise for Navarre's plan was a great increase in American military aid and a rapid build-up of combat troops by transferring

twelve French battalions from France and West Germany, and forming 108 native Vietnamese battalions.

Fighting for Empire

The only part of the Navarre Plan ever completely realized was the enormous increase in American military aid, reflected in the fact that America's share in the cost of the war shot up in six months from 40 to 80 per cent. The French, however, failed to transfer the promised number of troops from West Europe and refused to build-up a large Vietnam army, above all an officer corps.

The military impotence and failure of the French is rooted in the political realities of their position in Europe and Indochina. It was and remains impossible for any French government, hypnotized as the French bourgeoisie are by the dynamic resurgence of German national power, to weaken France's military (and therefore political) position by withdrawing troops it cannot replace from Western Europe. France must at least maintain parity with the future twelve divisions of the West German armed forces inside the Europe Defense Community, should the latter come into being.

And as for training Vietnamese troops, and, most important, an officer cadre, at the rate demanded by the Navarre Plan, the French are not fighting in Indochina to destroy the basis of their privileges—the monopoly of military and police power. They are not exactly enthusiastic about creating a military force whose loyalty is doubtful, and which represents potentially a greater threat to French power than to Vietminh.

Despite the failure of the French to supply the needed manpower, the Navarre strategy was put into effect. And from a strictly military point of view, the French had and continue to have every advantage. They have roughly twice as many men under arms as the enemy, five times as much military equipment (American), and complete mastery of the skies. Vietminh has no air force.

The Beseiged

The French expanded the area under their control by pushing out from the large cities they occupied and constructing armed points on the expanding perimeter of the territory wrested from the enemy. These armed camps were then to serve as bases from which to push on still further, compelling the enemy to stand and give battle. Dienbienphu is the bitter fruit of this strategic conception.

But at Dienbienphu it is the French who are today besieged; the Vietminh are the beseigers. And at every other point, the same situation is repeated. About thirteen French battalions, nearly 15,000 men, are trapped at Dienbienphu. Twenty battalions are held down at Seno on the Thailand-Laos border, six at Luang Prabang, and seven in the Central Laos plateau between Pleikum and Anke.

Like invaders in a hostile land—and the French are exactly that—they are compelled to seek refuge and safety in this chain of armed camps and fortresses. And Dienbienphu in 1954 is only a repetition on a larger and more catastrophic scale of what happened in earlier years. As Graham Greene, the noted English writer, in an on-the-spot article in the April 5 issue of the *New Republic* ironically remarks, Dienbienphu is the Na-Sam of 1954. (Na-Sam was a fortified post abandoned by the French in 1952.)

Operation Salvage

At best the French can hope only to maintain their chain of fortified posts, that is, hold a posture of defense against an enemy who has never lost the initiative. And although the Vietminh is too weak to engage the French in a decisive test of arms, it can continue the war indefinitely, just so long as Mao's China continues to supply food and equipment and the Indochinese peasants do not betray their positions to the French.

After seven years of this hopeless, costly and

(Continued next page)

THE INVADERS

While Dulles speaks of Chinese "technicians" helping Vietminh and threatens "massive retaliation" if such help is increased, the foreigners whom the Indochinese see flooding into their country are the Americans:

"SAIGON.—There is a curious parallel between Saigon of 1954 and the London of 1941. More and more Americans in uniform are seen in the hotels and on the streets of this Indochinese capital city—a sure sign of growing U. S. concern and involvement in a war.

"The newcomers have ceased to be objects of curiosity. There are so many of them they have become commonplace—uniformed officers and men assigned to the U. S. military mission and aircraft crews here overnight after ferrying war equipment from U. S. bases in Japan and the Philippines. In addition, there are 400 or more American civilians, most of them attached to the Embassy or American agencies committed to helping win the war."

—U. S. News & World Report, Apr. 9.

American Policy Leads to Another Korea Disaster...

(Continued from preceding page)

dishonorable war of colonial reconquest, it is impossible for any French government to present such a bleak perspective to an already indignant French public opinion. And in the ruling circles of the French bourgeoisie, alarm has reached the point of crisis over the imminent creation of a West German army. *The French must negotiate a peace settlement of some kind and salvage what they can, or pull out of Indochina altogether.*

Are the French correct in assuming that Peiping wishes to negotiate a peace in Indochina? The answer lies in the fact that, ever since November, Ho Chi Minh, with the evident approval of Peiping, has been regularly broadcasting offers to negotiate a settlement. The most recent confirmation of Ho Chi Minh's readiness to end the fighting is contained in a Moscow radio broadcast on April 18, repeating Ho's November offer.

While there is no doubt that the main impulse for the truce comes from Moscow and Peiping, Ho Chi Minh also needs a breathing space.

The French neutralists, with Claude Bourdet at their head, attempt to depict the Vietminh as the sole and genuine embodiment of the national struggle for independence, as having complete and unconditional support of all genuine nationalist elements, and resting on the support of the broad masses of the peasantry. However, the picture is much more complex and qualified, and not at all so one-sided as Bourdet and his kind, who have a political axe to grind, would have it appear.

The People Want Peace

For one thing, in the course of the eight-year struggle against the French, the totalitarian methods of the hard Stalinist core of the Vietminh—who have gained the ascendancy of the movement—have alienated important groups and elements of the anti-French and anti-Bao Dai nationalists. And the people, while they do not support Bao Dai or the French, have grown weary of the endless war, the brutal exactions of Vietminh and the terror, and there is growing suspicion that the Chinese are using Vietminh to gain control of the country.

This fear of the Chinese has historic roots. And it is interesting to note that the same generals and political figures, who attempted to gain control of the Vietminh—in the early days of the struggle, in 1945—on behalf of Chiang Kai-shek, are now working for the Chinese Stalinists toward the same ends.

However, just so long as the French or any other foreign Western power supports Bao Dai with its troops, the Vietminh can hope to renew its political attractiveness under conditions of peaceful political struggle. The political advantages to be reaped by the Vietminh if peace comes are summed up in a despatch by the New York Times correspondent in Saigon, who wired on April 3 that "The majority of the Vietnamese people want peace at almost any price, and a large proportion now as in the past, seem to want the Vietminh to win." The continuation of the war and the presence of the French guarantee the political power of Ho Chi Minh.

IV

U.S. Solution: Korea-Plus

We have tried to show that all the articulate and organized political forces involved in the Indochinese conflict—the French, Ho Chi Minh's Vietminh, Mao's China, and the independent na-

U.S. BUYS MERCENARIES

"One high official of the Vietnam government, for example, was discussing the future the other day. 'Of course it will be hard on the masses if the Vietminh win,' he said, 'but some of us can always retire to Nice and live very well.'

"This cynicism is not confined entirely to the French and Vietnamese. An American officer in Indochina, discussing U. S. policy, said: 'We're buying an army of mercenaries. We want to keep the French fighting so American GIs will not die here.'"

—U. S. News & World Report, Apr. 9.

tionalist groupings—all are for peace now, though the political aims they pursue are by no means identical. All are for peace, that is, except the United States. Washington has other and diametrically opposed plans.

It is necessary to say openly and bluntly that the Eisenhower administration is preparing to hand the American people a time-bomb all set to go off, with disastrous consequences not only for the United States but for the entire world. Given the political and military impasse in which the French find themselves, the administration is preparing for what it considers the inevitable—direct and major participation in the conduct of the Indochinese war.

The idea that the Indochinese people have a right to peace, have the elementary and democratic right to settle their own affairs, is utterly alien to the Eisenhower administration. It believes that should a peace of any kind be negotiated, the Vietminh would be victorious in the ensuing political struggle and that Indochina would fall into the Stalinist orbit, opening up all Southeast Asia for conquest by Mao's China.

The American solution in Indochina is "a Korea"—but with one difference. And that difference means that Indochina can become the scene of the opening stages of the Third World War. As surely as night follows day, this flows from the plans outlined by Dulles in the last few weeks.

Washington's Scheme

The plans of the Eisenhower administration fall into four phases:

(1) To torpedo the Geneva conference and make a negotiated peace of any kind impossible;

(2) To "internationalize" the conflict by setting up a spurious Southeast Asia Security Bloc of "interested nations" to mask major

"WE CAN DEFEAT THEM..."

"WASHINGTON, March 7.—... According to [American] officials who have served in Indochina, the typical Vietnamese nationalist likes to say: 'If only the French would get out, we could take care of the Vietminh ourselves. The Vietminh are not at all Communists. If the French left, the Vietminh would no longer have a reason for existing.'"

—N. Y. Times, March 8.

The American officials quoted above are those in the U. S. information agency in Vietnam which has been propagandizing the Indochinese people to support the war.

American intervention and prove the war is one of "Asians against Asians."

(3) To use Vietnam troops on a large scale to prove the war is in its essence a civil war being fought for Indochinese independence, in which the United States is generously playing an auxiliary and supporting role.

(4) Restrain the Chinese from giving more aid to Vietminh, in the form of material and manpower to match American contributions, by threatening a massive blockade and attack on the Chinese mainland should the Chinese increase their aid beyond its present limits.

Road to Catastrophe

Let us pursue the logic of the Dulles strategy to its catastrophic conclusions:

(1) The Geneva conference may fail not only because the Americans desire a continuation of the war, but because the French have deluded themselves as to how much Russia and China will yield. They believe that Moscow and Peiping are prepared to liquidate the Vietminh in return for the secondary concessions outlined earlier. The Laniel regime and its Vietnam puppet, Bao Dai, have made quite clear they will under no circumstances negotiate with Ho Chi Minh.

However, it is not China or Vietminh who are on the defensive, but the French. Ho Chi Minh can present himself in the false guise of a genuine democrat by challenging the Bao Dai regime to participate in a national election, and there is no doubt as to who would win at the present time. Ho Chi Minh can also offer the

prospect of cutting Indochina in two at the 16th parallel, with the Vietminh taking the northern half.

Either or both of these offers would be received favorably by French public opinion and would probably be accepted in Vietnam as well. If the Laniel regime persists in seeking the liquidation of Vietminh—and this seems to be its aim if we judge by the terms it has laid down as acceptable for negotiations—then the Geneva conference will fail without any further disruptive diplomacy by Dulles.

International Storm

(2) The attempt of the United States to "internationalize" the war and present it to world opinion as a conflict of "Asians against Asians" has already failed. India's Nehru has sharply repudiated Dulles' counterfeit Southeast Asian bloc, and where Nehru leads, the other Asian countries involved, such as Ceylon and Burma, will follow.

The United States cannot even count on the support of its own satellite, the Philippines. A bitter conflict has broken out in the ranks of President Magsaysay's ruling Nationalist Party.

The Dulles proposal has already aroused another political storm in England over the possible inclusion of Formosa in the bloc and the use of Nationalist Chinese (Chiang Kai-shek) troops. And for the United States to permit Rhee to send South Korean troops to fight in Indochina is to prepare the stage for the resumption of the war in Korea.

Rhee has threatened time and again to renew the war with his own troops. If his troops are good enough to fight the Chinese Stalinists in Indochina, they have even more right to fight for the unity of their own country against the same enemy.

Lesson of Korea

(3) The United States has been demanding that France speed up the training of Vietnamese troops, and last week Bao Dai decreed a general mobilization of all men between the ages of 20 to 25. But so long as the French remain in Indochina, they will see to it that the Vietnamese army does not become a decisive or major fighting force. In addition, the Indochinese are weary of the eight-year-old war, a war they do not support.

In any case, what happened in Korea must repeat itself in Indochina if America intervenes with its own troops. In the Senate debate quoted earlier, Republican floor leader Knowland declared:

"As the distinguished senator from Massachusetts knows, only 17 of the 60 members of the United Nations contributed a single soldier, sailor, or airman to the resistance against aggression in Korea. All of them together contributed about 10 per cent of what the United States alone contributed. This nation supplied some 450,000 men at one time, although perhaps a million and a quarter of our men passed through Korea in the process of rotation. The little republic of Korea supplied 600,000, but all the remaining members of the United Nations supplied only about 45,000."

(4) It is clear that if the United States assumes responsibility for the war in Indochina, it will have to supply the main body of troops. This is the lesson of Korea. But it is highly unlikely that Mao's China will permit the Indo-

(Continued next page)



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There IS a Road to Defeat Stalinism and Stop War...

(Continued from preceding page)

chinese conflict to be "Americanized" without intervening. Geographically speaking, Indochina is to its southern flank what Korea was in the north. It cannot remain indifferent. And Secretary of State Dulles has already outlined the inevitable policy of "massive retaliation" which will follow if the Chinese merely increase the flow of materials they are now sending Ho Chi Minh's Vietminh.

We repeat: American entry into the Indochinese war can mean the first stages of the Third World War.

The Demo Opposition

The Democratic Party opposition in the Senate, led by Kennedy and Mansfield, has raised a hue and cry against the Eisenhower program of direct intervention in Indochina. But what is it they oppose? Kennedy and Mansfield do not object to sending American troops, and thus precipitating a struggle that must widen to include the Chinese. No, all they want in effect is a more democratic window-dressing.

In comparison with Kennedy and Mansfield, the Eisenhower administration, paradoxical as it may seem, is proceeding cautiously in its plans for intervention.

If the French will stay and fight, well and good so far, as far as Eisenhower and Dulles are concerned. Then they will not press the

EVEN SUCH AS THESE . . .

"MANILA, April 10 (AP) — Carlos Garcia, Philippine foreign secretary, said today that a United States proposal to warn Communist China to keep out of Indochina "could lead to a third world war." . . . Senator Claro M. Recto, a leader of President Magsaysay's Nacionalista party, has voiced opposition to Philippine participation because, he said, it would expose the country to direct Communist attack."

—N. Y. Times, April 11.

French to the breaking point of giving complete independence to Vietnam. Only if the French abandon the war and withdraw their troops will the Eisenhower administration proceed to purchase new mercenaries—the weak Vietnamese bourgeoisie represented by the Bao Dai regime—to fight the war.

The Democratic Party opposition, however, troubled by the lack of a "democratic" window-dressing, is generously prepared to give the Vietnamese their independence now as a means of continuing the war. But this means the French will immediately withdraw and the Americans will be compelled to enter the conflict, provoking a similar move by the Chinese. The Democrats Kennedy and Mansfield know that the cause of Indochinese national independence will be drowned in the international conflict that ensues. But then, the United States will have the needed "democratic" façade.

V

Is a Solution Possible?

There exists a more sophisticated type of political liberal who would agree with the general description we have given of the Indochinese situation. These champions of the Indochinese are all in favor of granting complete independence to Vietnam, but argue "realistically" that it is too late in the day to abandon the Vietnamese to the tentler mercies of the well-organized, hard-fighting Vietminh. Either the French or the Americans must guarantee the independence of Vietnam by maintaining their armed forces in the country.

Unfortunately for this breed of political "realist," even if the French were to promise complete independence in a few years, no one in Indochina would believe them. The French have cynically broken every agreement and promise they have made since 1945. And if the Americans come to Indochina, it will be to continue and widen the conflict. Under such conditions political independence becomes a cruel joke on the Indochinese people who have al-

ready suffered eight years of ravaging war.

Would the Vietminh immediately overrun all of Indochina if a peace were negotiated and the French forces withdrawn without American troops taking their place? Naturally, there is a risk involved in such a course, but it is the only road by which peace and independence can come to Indochina. And the realities of the Asian and Indochinese situation do not support the idea that Ho Chi Minh would flagrantly and without warning violate a truce or peace settlement. This can be said without holding any illusions about the nature of the Vietminh Stalinists.

The Risk to Run

Even if Ho Chi Minh should abide by the terms of a negotiated truce, there are political cynics who, remembering the fate of the East European countries in the immediate post-war period, believe that in the rough-and-tumble struggle for political supremacy that would follow, the Vietminh would be able to terrorize and club its political opponents into impotence and silence, and force its rule on a helpless population.

Leaving the question of the other political parties and forces on the side for a moment, it is a fact that the Indochinese peasants are capable of defending themselves against the Vietminh.

One of the significant facts about this war is that there exist large enclaves, extensive areas, in both Southern and Northern Indochina which owe allegiance to neither the Bao Dai nor the Vietminh regimes. In each case, these areas are under the protection and control of independent political-religious movements that have their own militias stationed in the villages to protect the peasants.

The Independent Militia

One of these ardently nationalist political-religious movements consists of the two million Catholics organized in the National Catholic Federation, and concentrated mainly in the northern Tonkin province. In the Northern Red River delta, for example, there are two large dioceses administered by Vietnamese bishops. One is Phat Diem, with 150,000 Catholics, and the other is Bui Chu, with 250,000.

In late 1945 when Vietminh assumed power as the government of an independent country and was recognized as such by France, the Catholics supported it together with all other nationalist groups. With the passage of time, the Catholics were repelled by the totalitarian methods of the Stalinist cadre in the leadership, and withdrew their support, adopting a neutral position. The Vietminh left these Catholic areas strictly alone until 1952 and then began to assault and try to take over control of these areas.

The Vietnamese troops sent in by the French to combat the Vietminh in 1952 and 1953 went over to the other side. But the independent Catholic militia, which had organized self-defense units in each village, have been able to fight off the Vietminh and win over the enemy!

Graham Greene, who visited the Bui Chu area in January, describes the effectiveness of the peasant militias in his article of April 12 for the *New Republic*. He writes of a village called Thui-Nui:

"This village guarded by its own militias defeated nine attacks between August and December 30th. The militia consisted of the whole population—from old men to girls of 12. They paraded before the church gay with Vietnamese flags—the small girls carried knives and wore hand grenades on their belts. A maze of mud walls, rifle emplacements in the church it-

UNITED AGAINST BAO DAI

"SAIGON, March 10— . . . A strong coalition of political groups presented demands last week to Chief of State Bao Dai for a National Assembly. . . .

"The petitioning groups, which call themselves the National Peace Coalition, represent an important cross-section of political opinion in non-Communist Vietnam. Their united opposition leaves the Buu Loc cabinet with little support in the country."

—N. Y. Times, March 11.

"VICTORY IS IMPOSSIBLE . . ."

Is there even a possibility of a definitive victory over the Vietminh in Indochina by military means?

"PARIS, Feb. 9—One of the milder comments [on Secretary Wilson's remarks about military victory in Indochina] came from Sen. Michel Debre, a supporter of Gen. Charles de Gaulle. . . . 'It all hinges on what Wilson means by military victory and a negotiated peace,' Sen. Debre said. 'If by victory he means the total defeat of the Vietminh, I must say that it will not be very easy under present conditions.'

"In fact, he added, total victory over the Communist-led rebels is an impossibility. . . .

"A former premier [of France] said the aim of his government—one of the several successive post-war regimes which have prosecuted the Indochina war—was only to convince the Communists in Indochina or in China that they cannot have a free hand in Indochina.

"The aim was never to exterminate the Indochinese Communists. That, he said, would be an absurdity.

"What is a military victory?" he demanded. "Was there military victory over Germany in the First World War, for instance? Just what is a military victory? . . ."

—N. Y. Herald Tribune, Feb. 10.

Yes, a victory over Stalinism in Indochina is meaningful only in POLITICAL terms and by political weapons. Years of futile war in Indochina have dinned this truth into the heads of even conservatives in France, though they haven't a notion of how to defeat Stalinism politically. But Washington hasn't even gotten to that stage. . . .

self; a mortar built out of any old junk, this was indeed total war."

Arm the People?

In Southern Indochina there exist similar political-religious movements, commanding large areas that are independent of both Vietminh and Bao Dai. One is the exotic Cao Dai sect, numbering about two and a half million, and having an organized militia of about 20,000 rifles. They control the Thaininh province. The Hoa Hao Buddhist sect has a militia of 6,000 soldiers and controls several provinces along the Mekong river.

The answer to the problem of potential Stalinist terror is given by these peasant militias. And it is not only Graham Greene who believes that they are the answer.

The present governor of Northern Vietnam, Nguven Huu Tri, a member of the ruling Bao Dai regime, has called for a universal arming of the peasantry by the United States and France. The governor, to be sure, is interested in continuing the war, but he points to the essential fact: Given arms, the Indochinese peasant will fight to defend his interests.

VI

Political Forces in Indochina

What political forces will engage in the political struggle to determine the future destinies of Indochina, if peace is established? Three main groupings exist today that must be taken into account, and the first of these is the pro-French native bourgeoisie and its representative, Bao Dai.

It can be said that so deeply tainted is Bao Dai and the regime he heads, by the stain of collaboration with the French, that if and when the latter withdraw, there is very little hope that Bao Dai can survive politically. The fact is that during the more than four years in which his regime has existed, the independent nationalist groupings have consistently refused to support it, and every self-respecting political figure has rejected Bao's invitation to enter the government.

The complete isolation of Bao's regime rests on his refusal to struggle seriously against the French for independence, his refusal to grant any form of popular representation to the people, and his complete lack of a social program. The only two branches of his government that have shown any energy have been the censorship and the police. The first engaged in suppressing any free expression of dissident opinion or unpleasant facts, and the second in jailing those who engage in such activities.

After bargaining with the French for four and a half years for more "independence," Bao achieved the following progressive measure in

(Continued next page)

Who Supports the Colonial Regime and Its Puppets?...

(Continued from preceding page)

January of this year: All government papers were to be written in the Vietnamese language instead of French, except for papers dealing with purely technical matters which could better be expressed in French. To appease the demand for popular representation, on September 1, 1952, Bao Dai appointed a provisional council of two hundred. By royal decree it was given advisory powers and was handpicked by Bao from the ranks of the pro-French native bourgeoisie.

No Social Program

The Bao Dai government has no program of social reform; above all it has done nothing to resolve the agrarian problem which is most acute in Southern Indochina, where the Vietnam dominates. Large holdings of land—those over 125 acres of land—comprise 45 per cent of the land. The absentee-landlord problem is typical. For more than 60 per cent of the land is leased out.

And with the existence of large landholdings and absentee landlordism goes the ever-present money-lender, who is usually the landowner, and who charges 100, 200 or 400 per cent interest a year.

But there is a good reason for Bao Dai not to touch the land problem in Vietnam. In return for leaving his pleasant exile in France to serve as head of a puppet regime, the French rewarded him with more than a thousand square miles of land in central Annam and Tonkin.

That intelligent and ever-restless world traveler, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, in his book *North to Malaya* reports a conversation he had on this question with the then current minister of agriculture, Cung Dinh Quy. An interesting sidelight on the Bao Dai regime is provided by Douglas who describes Cung Dinh Quy as an extremely able and highly cultured man, one of the non-Communist nationalists who served with Ho Chi Minh in the early days. Justice Douglas then remarks that Bao put him into his post on the threat that if he did not serve, he would go to jail!

Douglas then repeats Cung Dinh Quy's deep belief that the land problem lies at the heart of the social unrest that keeps Vietnam in turmoil. And at the end of the talk, the unwilling minister of agriculture remarks, "If we have land reform, I am positive we can take away from Ho Chi Minh at least 90 per cent of his popular following."

Such is a general picture of the regime which according to Secretary of State Dulles is guiding the Vietnamese people along the path of orderly evolution to independence and democratic government!

VII

Crisis in the Regime

The very real possibility that the French may soon withdraw from Indochina altogether has provoked a severe crisis in the ruling circles of the Bao Dai regime. Although a severe press censorship keeps us from gathering all the details that go to make up the picture, it is possible to discern the main features of the situation. At the present time, there exist two factions.

The first faction consists of Bao Dai and his immediate family and entourage, which is apparently in the process of switching loyalties from the French to the Americans. One of the most significant measures taken by the corrupt government which rules Vietnam was the order for a general mobilization of all men between the ages of 20 and 25 for military service. This decree was backed by statements from Bao Dai and his premier, Prince Buu Loc, who just happens to be his cousin. Both Bao Dai and Prince Buu Loc declared that the war must go on to the bitter end and denounced the Vietminh as traitors to the country.

The significance of this measure and the accompanying statement lies in this: that they are

calculated to please the Americans who have insisted that the French use Vietnamese troops on a larger scale. Furthermore, until now Bao Dai has never categorically repudiated the possibility of negotiations with Ho Chi Minh and his Chinese friends. But this happens to be the Dulles program.

Apparently, Bao Dai and the section of the Vietnamese bourgeoisie and politicians who support him, hope to play the same role and enjoy the same privileges in Vietnam under the Americans as Syngman Rhee does in Korea—and for the same price, by selling their people as mercenaries to the Americans.

The formation of another faction within the Bao Dai clique began to take shape as early as

THE CENSOR'S CURTAIN

It is little known that a rigorous press censorship is exercised over dispatches out of Indochina, both by the Bao Dai puppet government and by the French colonial regime.

The existence of this censorship has popped out in the press itself. On March 12 a dispatch from Saigon revealed it when it reported that the Vietnam minister of internal security had admitted that his government maintained secret control over news dispatches sent abroad from Saigon.

The French army also exercises a censorship on top of that of the puppet government. A Reuter's dispatch of April 14 from Hanoi disclosed it in a backhand fashion when it said: "The French army withdrew some restrictions on press cables from Hanoi tonight after foreign correspondents had formally protested that the world was receiving warped and misleading reports about the battle for Dienbienphu."

In France itself, on April 11 the French government seized 100,000 copies of the Sunday edition of the Stalinist central organ, *L'Humanité Dimanche*, on the ground that it contained an "inflammatory" article on the war. The headline had read: "THE BLOODSHED IN INDOCHINA RISES ON THE NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE." The action was taken under an article of the Criminal Code permitting seizure of any publication that threatens "internal or external security" of the state.

last July, when the French made the latest in their series of meaningless promises to give the Vietnamese more independence.

Under Pressure

The revolt of the Vietnam National Congress was only a passing mood. But this body of 200 native bourgeois and politicians was handpicked by the French and Bao Dai to represent French interests. Their attacks, and the rebellion of Nguyen Van Tam, were dictated by the obvious course of events, and reflected the attacks of the independent nationalist groups outside of and hostile to the regime.

Bao Dai's premier at the time, Nguyen Van Tam, suddenly attacked his former patrons, the French, came out in favor of a negotiated peace with Ho Chi Minh and the creation of a national union government, and attacked Bao Dai as "too conservative." He urged a radical program of political and social measures, such as the election of a genuine national assembly to which the regime would be responsible, agrarian reforms, and more freedom for the police-controlled trade unions. In December Bao Dai forced him to resign and installed his cousin, Prince Buu Loc, as premier.

One must know something of Nguyen Van Tam's political past to appreciate the astonishing nature of his sudden about-face. He is a landowner and politician who grew rich in the service of the French. He was head of the native police, a man who has vigorously persecuted all genuine anti-Stalinist bourgeois nationalist and left-wing groups, and established concentration camps for their benefit. He happens to be the man who, as head of the police, set up trade unions as a means of more easily controlling the workers. And most important of all, Tam until July insisted that the only way to deal with Ho Chi Minh's Vietminh was to annihilate it militarily.

Nguyen Van Tam has not been alone in his defiance of Bao Dai.

On March 25, another pro-French conservative politician, who had preceded Nguyen Van Tam as premier and had resigned in protest

against Bao's do-nothing attitude both with regard to demanding some concessions from the French and moderate internal reforms, came out in favor of peace. According to an AP dispatch from Saigon, Tran Van Huu declared: "It is time to stop this effusion of blood from the veins of innocent young men." The dispatch noted that Tran Van Huu had thus "aligned himself with a growing number of Nationalists" who favor an end to the fighting.

The "National Peace Coalition"

In October, the Vietnam National Congress, which had met in June to pick 20 representatives to accompany Bao Dai to Paris for negotiations with the French, refused to dissolve and demanded that Bao Dai be guided in his talks with the French by their directives.

In September of 1953, certain of the independent nationalist political groups which have not been banned by Bao's police held a congress in Saigon. Among the groups participating in the congress were the political-religious groups we have mentioned earlier, the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao religious sects, the Catholics, and one faction of the Dai Viet nationalist party which is centered in the north.

In its manifesto, this congress declared that while other peoples in Southeast Asia enjoy independence "Vietnam is the only state where patriots continue to be oppressed." It demanded genuine independence and the immediate formation of a provisional national assembly to control the government. This same bloc of anti-government groups, which now calls itself the National Peace Coalition, met again on March 10 to repeat their demands on the Bao Dai regime for independence from the French, a regime based on democratic elections and peace.

So hopeless and precarious is the position of the Bao Dai regime, that perhaps his only means of salvation lies in the arrival of the Americans. But even if the Americans do arrive in Indochina, the Bao Dai regime will prove a cruel disappointment as a recruiting agent for an army of mercenaries. The Indochinese have had eight years of this war and want peace. Nothing else explains the sudden and clean break by even Nguyen Van Tam with Bao Dai. Here is a skilled politician who wants to survive and knows that one swims easiest who swims with the tide.

(Next week: The Vietminh—from nationalism to Stalinist totalitarianism—and the independent nationalist "third force.")

The May 10 issue of Labor Action will be our annual special pamphlet-issue. This year it will be on the subject of "Stalinism—A Socialist Analysis."

Previous pamphlet-issues, still available, dealt with: (1) *The Principles and Program of Independent Socialism*; (2) *Independent Socialism and the Third World War*; (3) *The Fair Deal—A Socialist Analysis*; and (4) *Socialism and Democracy*.

CHICAGO

TUESDAY, APRIL 20
at 8 p.m.

A DEBATE

Is the Third Camp

The Road to Peace?

YES!—Saul Mendelson, former chairman, Politics Club.
NO!—Bert Deck, SWP.

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LONDON LETTER **As the Indochinese War Crisis Sharpens—** **Bevan Goes Over into Open Opposition**

By ALLAN VAUGHAN

LONDON, Apr. 14—News has just come through that Aneurin Bevan has resigned from the Front Bench of the Labor Party's group in Parliament. He has resigned as a result of deep divergence of opinion between himself and Attlee-Eden over the recent Eden-Dulles agreement on the Indo-Chinese question.

The agreement to form what is, in effect, a Far East NATO has kindled the most explosive situation inside the Labor Party since Bevan's resignation in April 1951. Bevan's resignation from the Parliamentary Policy Committee means that he is free to speak out on the floor in open opposition to the leadership.

As has been pointed out in the last two years or more in these London Letters, the Labor Party's official leadership has been forced, inch by inch and step by step, to take over important parts of what was in effect Bevan's "program"—reduction in arms expenditure, restoration of cuts in social service, a more independent foreign policy, etc. In a sense and to a degree, the Labor Party has become "Bevanite" without Bevan, as it were. At the same time, it was clearly emphasized that the Bevanites and their organ *Tribune* have not made any corresponding shift to the left themselves.

On the contrary, since the Margate conference of the party, they have been fumbling for a "New Look" Bevanite policy. The events in the Far East, the issue of West German rearmament, and the recession in the U. S. have brought things to a head once again. Bevan has resigned, and thus laid the basis for the next phase in the development of the Labor Party.

There can be no doubt that his position today in the Labor movement has never been stronger, and that he has nearly half of the Parliamentary Labor Party behind him on the questions he has raised.

BEVAN'S NEW DEMAND

This week's *Tribune* (April 16) contains the new Bevanite line. The weekly sets forth the new policy in a front-page article by Aneurin Bevan, headed: "AMERICA MUST BE TOLD: YOU GO IT ALONE." Bevan writes as follows:

"Even since the war, British diplomacy has been influenced by one dominant consideration—fear of American isolationism.

"Ernest Bevin [foreign minister in the Labor government] believed it was his main task to prevent America from withdrawing into its traditional aloofness. This was the mainspring of his diplomatic strategy, the source of its strengths and its weaknesses. In those days there was a lot to be said on both sides. But about one aspect of it there is no question. It lays us open to indefinite blackmail.

"If the United States is led to believe that, in the last resort, we shall always bow to her wishes, then from the outset we exert no leverage on her policy.

"In Washington they have become quite cynical about it. 'They'll tag along in the end,' they say.

"We have paid a heavy price for this

nightmare fear of American isolation. We succumbed to pressure from the United States and allowed the Ruhr industries to be restored to their former owners. We did this against the facts of history and in spite of our own instinctive distrust of the consequences. . . ."

This new revolt inside the party may well put "Paid" to the account of the present official leadership of the party. It is only a question of time before a vigorous middle-of-the-road leadership takes over.

It is only to be regretted that Bevan has only the crudest of conceptions about Stalinism. He seems to believe that the trouble with the Geneva Conference is that Dulles has torpedoes any possible concessions on the Western side for a "deal" in the Far East.

Bevanism in its new garb has potentialities. Unfortunately not all of them are entirely socialist ones. There are too many Popular-Frontist undertones in them.

Why Britain Hangs Back on Indochina

By DAVID ALEXANDER

LONDON, Apr. 14—John Foster Dulles came over to this country this past week to try to persuade the British to help the French in Indo-China against the Vietminh.

Both Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden would have liked to help their French colleagues in fighting their hapless war. But they are unable to do so.

The British Far East Command consists of 50,000 men, of whom 20,000 are tied up in Korea and another 20,000 in Malaya; likewise most of the 250 aircraft are busy fighting Malayan "bandits"—the pro-Stalinist guerrillas. The only force of any size still detached, is the British garrison of Hong Kong. Since this city is a listening post on the Chinese mainland, it is unlikely that the Foreign Office would leave it undefended against possible lightning Chinese attack.

There are other very important reasons why the Churchill government cannot aid the French. It is obvious that Vietminh obtains all its arms from China, and that any moment China could move in with full military support of Ho Chi Minh. If, then, the British were supporting the French, sooner or later they would be embroiled in a full-scale war with China.

Once China came out in open war with the West, nothing would stop it from occupying Indo-China, Malaya, perhaps Burma and Siam. It would threaten Indonesia and India, and cut off communications with Australia and New Zealand. This would render the Far East empire practically non-existent.

Dulles and Eden now want to salvage the Far Eastern situation as well as they can. At enormous cost to Britain, the Malayan Chinese Stalinist forces have

been for all intents and purposes defeated. But the danger of Chinese intervention is still ever present.

Dulles, "in the best series of talks in 48 hours that I have ever had," persuaded Britain to agree to a Far East NATO. Dulles has been known to put his foot in it before; this time it is really deep. The joint communiqué announcing the decision was made before he arrived in Paris. At present it is the French government which would be primarily affected by the creation of such an organization.

PRELUDE TO GENEVA

In Parliament Attlee rose to ask that such an organization should be essentially Asian, and not "designed as a defense of obsolete colonialism." Eden assured the House to its considerable relief that India and other Commonwealth countries had already been consulted about the proposal. Aneurin Bevan condemned Eden for giving in to the Americans, and incurred the Labor Party's wrath for speaking out of turn, against the majority view.

All these events are a prelude to the Geneva conference to discuss the situation in the Far East as well as in Indo-China. According to interpretations put on speeches by Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai, and published in Hong Kong, the Chinese might be willing to sell out Ho Chi Minh in exchange for concessions, including the Chinese seat in the UN. The Americans and French are now unwilling to negotiate a peace in Indo-China based on the military status quo, presently so unfavorable to them. American recognition of Mao would only come over a number of senators' dead bodies.

All in all, then, it is not surprising that Dulles is taking action on the assumption of the failure of the forthcoming Geneva conference.

The Hero-General Of Dienbienphu

The French general commanding in Indo-China, De Castries, has lately been getting the well-known buildup in the American press, as a part of the general process of softening the country up for deeper involvement in the war. But on April 18 the *Chicago Tribune*—which opposes Washington's foreign policy from the right and therefore doesn't always follow the "party line" laid down by the State Department—printed the following news item about the valiant general who is defending capitalist Civilization on the marches of the Orient:

"A transport plane parachuted four silver stars into the fortress for the shoulders of Gen. de Castries, who received word yesterday that the Paris government had boosted his rank from colonel after he threatened to resign if not promoted.

"It was to his wife that De Castries made his threat. She reported it in an interview a week ago and said she agreed with him. Mrs. De Castries talks with her husband daily by telephone, and it was after her conversation with him on April 10 that she reported his threat to resign.

"The French cabinet balked, however, in giving its final approval, maintaining the two stars should be withheld until the outcome of the battle was decided. Then President Eisenhower remarked that if he were in charge in Indo-China he would promote the French hero.

"Yesterday the French government reversed its decision. Today Mrs. De Castries went shopping for gold stars, but found none for sale.

"Gen. Rene Cogy, commanding French union land forces, came to the rescue. He gave two stars from each of his shoulder straps to Mrs. De Castries. She handed them to an air force pilot, who dropped them along with war supplies for besieged Dien Bien Phu."

ISL FUND DRIVE

Now for the Final Spurt!

By ALBERT GATES
Fund Drive Director

Our Fund Drive took the kind of spurt in the past week that should have been the weekly average throughout the campaign. \$949 was received, lifting the total sum of \$7155.50 or 70.1 per cent of our goal. This places us in a fairly good position to complete the over-all quota of \$10,200.

A number of areas are really within striking distance of turning in a perfect score. Chicago, which missed making a contribution in the past week, needs only \$69 to close the 3.9 percentage which separates it from the top position in the campaign, now held by St. Louis. Cleveland too, has a fairly easy job. Only a \$10 contribution will close its drive successfully.

Newark and Buffalo have worked themselves into a good position, and we are certain that the next two weeks will find them over the top. Buffalo came through with a contribution of \$105 in the recent days and jumped way up in the standings. Newark and Buffalo are two places which have done exceedingly well in this drive.

Not far behind them are the National Office, Bay Area and New York. We are not worried about the Bay Area. They are having a tough time of it, but we feel they will make it. The National Office and New York really have a tougher job ahead of them. With exceptionally large quotas, they still have a formidable job ahead of them. New York is in a good position to pass the N. O.

The N. O. seems to be standing still. What about our unaffiliated friends and readers? The N. O. depends in some measure on what they send in. So how about it, friends, sympathizers and readers? Can we count on your help?

New York had a good week. It sent in almost \$500 and jumped way up on the list, even though others moved up even faster. Moneywise, as the current saying goes, its contribution was tops for the week.

Los Angeles finally popped into the campaign with something more than a token. With a payment of \$120 it made a score worth noting. Having started so late in the drive, it has a lot to overcome. Maybe our comments had something to do with the new showing. We're quite willing to lay off if Los Angeles keeps its end of a bargain and jumps up to the top of the list by completing its quota.

There are three gooseeggs in the standings. They belong to Akron, Indiana and Oregon. Will they still be there next week? We are waiting!

There are two weeks left to the drive. These are the weeks that are decisive. To achieve our goal, we need \$3,044.50. Extraordinary efforts are needed to do this. We are counting on all the branches to give the drive the push it needs within the next couple of weeks. Hit it hard!

BOX SCORE

	Quota	Paid	%
TOTAL	\$10,200	\$7155.50	70.1
St. Louis	25	50	200
Reading	50	50	100
Streator	25	25	100
Chicago	1800	1731	96.1
Cleveland	150	140	93
Newark	400	345	86.3
Buffalo	300	250	83.3
Nat'l Office	1500	1108	73.8
Bay Area	500	354	70.9
New York	4000	2779	69.4
Pittsburgh	150	91	60.6
Detroit	300	155	51.6
Philadelphia	250	94	37.6
Los Angeles	600	145	24.1
Seattle	150	10	6
Indiana	50	0	0
Akron	50	0	0
Oregon	50	0	0

BOOKS RECEIVED

Received from New American Library, publishers of Mentor and Signet pocket books—publication date April 23:

W. B. Huie: *The Execution of Private Slovik*, Signet, 25¢. New World Writing #5, Mentor, 50¢. D. C. Peattie: *Lives of Destiny*, Signet Key, 25¢. D. P. Geddes, et.: *Analysis of the Kinsey Reports*, Mentor, 50¢. Morehead & Mott-Smith: *Hoyle's Rules of Games*, Signet Key, 25¢. Richard McKaye: *Portrait of the Damned*, Signet, 25¢. J. N. Michaelson: *Morning, Winter and Night*, Signet, 25¢. Catherine Hutter: *This Dear Encounter*, Signet Giant, 35¢. Leonard Bishop: *Days of My Love*, Signet Double, 50¢. Shelby Foote: *Shiloh*, Signet, 25¢.

NEW YORK

Celebrate
May Day

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SPECIAL FILM
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SATURDAY EVENING
MAY 1

Must Our Youth Die in Indochina?

American intervention in the Indochinese war, looming ever closer, is of direct concern to all students and youth. It is they after all who will have to pay the full price for intervention. It is they who will have to die in the rice-paddies of Indochina. It is they who are the most direct victims of the growing militarization of our country.

Thus it is proper that they should ask: Why is it necessary that we get into what is universally known as the "dirty war"? It is proper and necessary that they ask: "For whom are we going to be asked to fight in this war, in the name of what ideals, what principles? for what goals does this war continue?"

Even the French imperialists, stunned by the blood toll of this war, the toll which is decimating the officer cadres of the French army, want no further part of it. No one has even pretended that this war was in the interest of the French people—and the French trade-union movement has made its opposition clear. But if this war is not in the interest of the French people, even less can it be said to be in the interest of the Indochinese people, who have seen their land ravaged for seven years.

THE OUTCOME OF "REALISM"

LABOR ACTION, elsewhere in this issue, carries the story of the Indochinese war and we have no need to go into the details here. It is the near-classic story of the suppression of an independence movement by the "Western democracies" and the consequent taking over of the independence movement by the Stalinists. An important part of the Vietminh's following was pushed into its ranks because they saw no other way to fight for national freedom. Now, after they have forced a Stalinist leadership on an independence movement, which is now a pro-Stalinist movement, we are told that to leave Indochina would be to desert Indochina to Stalinism!

Now, seven years after an alternative existed—they ask you, the students and youth, to leave your schools and jobs because "there is no other alternative."

For several years now, the Young Socialist League—and its predecessor-organizations, the Socialist Youth League and Young People's Socialist League—have been the only anti-Stalinist youth groups calling attention to the imperialist nature of American foreign policy. During this period, we were told to be "realistic": politics is, after all, the art of the possible, and "utopian" ideas are of no concern to practical politics.

"HOPELESS SITUATION"

In the Congressional Record of April 6, 1954, the following remarks are recorded from a Senate debate. The speaker was Senator Kennedy (D., Mass.), who is certainly not a member of the Young Socialist League.

"I will say to the senator from Washington that I do not think Indochina can be saved unless the other Asiatic nations which are now maintaining a policy of

cold neutrality are willing to take their fair part in the struggle. After all, they are the ones who should do so. For the United States to intervene unilaterally and to send troops into the most difficult terrain in the world, with the Chinese able to pour in unlimited manpower, would mean that we would face a situation which would be far more difficult even than we encountered in Korea. It seems to me it would be a hopeless situation."

Such a stand, taken in the very forum of the "art of the possible," the United States Senate, offers a dramatic confirmation of some aspects of the YSL analysis—in terms of practical politics.

AMERICA'S FACE

We have long defined a democratic foreign policy as one which would orient toward the people, the workers and the colonials, and not toward the forces of the status quo, feudal or capitalist. We have insisted that only this kind of political and social offensive is capable of defeating Stalinism.

Now the youth of America are told that unless such a position is taken, that they may be asked to fight, and die, in a "hopeless situation."

Yet Kennedy's admission goes even further than that. He does not merely say that the Indochinese people must be given guarantees of independence. He notes that "the other Asiatic nations . . . [must be] willing to take their part in the struggle."

The thought is an obvious one. The battle in Indochina cannot be separated from the nationalist revolutions of the rest of Asia. To succeed, the "free world" must rally a continent. Yet, in precisely that area, what face does America present? It is the face of Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek, the visage of a nation which prefers arming Pakistan to dealing with India because it congenitally misinterprets the anti-imperialist and pro-peace sentiments of the Indian people as pro-Stalinism.

And finally, if the situation is "hopeless" unless America makes a complete change in its foreign policy, i.e., moves toward a genuinely democratic foreign policy, what will the politicians propose if America does not take that step? And this is said in the full consciousness that there is, tragically, little immediate possibility of such a basic reorientation. Will we then be confronted once more with that endless debate between the liberal and the reactionary, the former proposing death by poison and the latter death by fire, the poison representing a "lesser evil"?

WHAT WILL BLOOD BUY?

The point which Kennedy's words suggest is a very "practical" one. Unless American policy does change, the situation is hopeless. And the Young Socialist League rejects the notion that hopelessness requires the benevolent administration of liberals as a lesser evil to the malevolent hopelessness of the reactionaries.

What "alternative" can you buy with your blood in Indochina? Peace? Freedom? (Certainly not for the Indochinese people.) Will this help stem the Stalinist tide in Asia? Will the graphic illustration that the West almost invariably sides with colonial regimes against the independence movements make the landless peasantry of Asia less prone to turn to the Stalinists, who at least seem to offer a way out of the intolerable reality of their exploitation?

Even if one is "hard-headed," unlike "you socialists"—this war can make no practical sense. It makes no sense because the continued presence of the French troops in Indochina strengthens

rather than weakens the hold of the Stalinists on the Vietminh, since the Indochinese peasants fighting in the ragged bands of Ho Chi Minh understand little of Stalinism, while they know exploitation and colonialism at first hand.

But if "we," i.e., if the youth to be sent into this bloodbath by the administration, "win," what then? What will we have won? And at what cost?

THE REGIME THEY DEFEND

Here is what you are expected to defend:

"Life follows the same old pattern—hunger and poverty for most; luxury, wealth for the privileged. Nothing interferes with the city's [Saigon's] leisurely luncheons, the gay night life. Party talk is more about profits than about war." That is a description of Saigon, the capital of Vietnam, in *U. S. News & World Report*, April 9, 1954.

Hunger and poverty for most—luxury and wealth for the privileged!

But we are told that the puppet regime of Bao Dai in Indochina is independent, that after all "we" are to defend the independence of this regime from the troops of Ho Chi Minh. Let us see what *U. S. News & World Report* (a very conservative magazine indeed) has to say about this:

"An American walks into a government bureau on some business and a Frenchman asks all the questions and fills out the forms. All the Vietnamese official does is sign the papers."

"Even casual conversations are enough to convince a visitor that Bao Dai is unpopular, and probably knows it."

This is the regime you will be expected to defend.

NO TROOPS!

The Young Socialist League has no very easy solutions—no very simple alternatives. There is one demand we make of our government: *Get out of Indochina and stay out!* Get out of Indochina, and let the French get out, as so many Frenchmen want to do. End the useless slaughter that can only further weaken such independent forces as still exist in Southeast Asia. No guns, no aid to the French colonialists in Indochina, and above all no American troops to Indochina!

How often can we allow our policy-makers to bring us to the very brink of war without beginning to be aware that there is something very wrong with our social system, and with the foreign policy and alliances that are the consequence of that system? Will American youth remain a "silent generation" until World War III? Or will you begin to organize for a constructive alternative to that war, a socialist alternative?

And more concretely, will the American youth refuse to take those actions which he can take now?

Will we mobilize a clear youth voice against sending troops to Indochina?

Will we continue the struggle against militarism in the United States; against universal military training, against the repressive measures of the garrison state, the measures of witchhunt and repression?

Will we be FOR something and not merely against?

Will we be for the struggle of the workers of Europe, those of Spain whose chains are even now being forged with American money, and those of Italy and France who have seen their industrialists grow rich on aid programs while they have gained nothing? Will we be for all of the colonial revolutions throughout the war, the struggle of the South Africans against Malan's racism, the battle of the Moroccans against French imperialism?

In other words, will we be for the Third Camp?

LET US BE HEARD!

The Young Socialist League, and the groups which created it, have long believed that the Third Camp is the only alternative. It is not with a feeling of elation that we see this view confirmed in Indochina today, its premises admitted on the floor of the United States Senate, its date confirmed in a conservative magazine. It is with the feeling of the possible imminence of tragedy that we see the vindication of our analysis.

Yet it is precisely because of this feeling of tragedy that we believe that now, above all, is the time for the American youth to be heard. Twice in less than forty years the American youth has been mobilized in the name of keeping the world safe for democracy, of the anti-fascist crusade, of the free world against the slave, and twice the result has been the increase of hopelessness.

We of the Young Socialist League are dedicated to the struggle against the third—and perhaps last—hopeless situation confronting the American youth, to providing a positive answer to the problem. And that answer is the Third Camp of the workers and colonials against all imperialism.

Young Socialist CHALLENGE

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The YSL's Aim

The Young Socialist League is a democratic socialist organization striving to aid in the basic transformation of this society into one where the means of production and distribution shall be collectively owned and democratically managed. The YSL attempts to make the young workers and students, who form its arena of activity, conscious of the need for organization directed against capitalism and Stalinism.

The YSL rejects the concept that state ownership without democratic controls represents socialism; or that socialism can be achieved without political democracy, or through undemocratic means, or in short in any way other than the conscious active participation of the people themselves in the building of the new social order. The YSL orients toward the working class, as the class which is capable of leading society to the establishment of socialism.

—From the Constitution of the YSL

JOIN THE YSL NOW!

YOUNG SOCIALIST LEAGUE (Temporary address)
114 West 14 Street
New York 11, New York

- I want more information about the Young Socialist League.
 I want to join the Young Socialist League.

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