

INDOCHINA

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CAMBODIAN
MILITARY
SITUATION

C.S. GAS

THE WAR IN
THAILAND

'Of course I'm
with you, Uncle Sam

editorial-
TORY S. E. ASIA
POLICY

INDOCHINA

Journal of the Vietnam Solidarity Committee
Volume 1 Number 9 Summer 1970



editorial

Clearly the war is spreading. For a decade Vietnam has been at the heart of the storm. Since 1964 the United States Air Force has pounded Laos, in spite of which the Pathet Lao are now strategically stronger than ever. Cambodia has now entered the camp of the revolution and Thailand's guerrillas have established several base areas as we document in the following pages. Reports are now coming out that the Malayan Communist Party is strengthening its position in North Malaya and is beginning to recruit more effectively amongst the Muslim population. Links between the guerrillas either side of the Thai-Malay borders are said to be multiplying. There's one side of the equation.

Meanwhile, many thousands of miles away in Britain, the Tory Party, incredulously, has been returned to the high seats of office, with the kind assistance of its fairy godmothers, the national opinion polls. Within a few weeks Anthony Royal, the UK's Parliamentary Under Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, had pledged to the annual ministerial meeting of the South East Asia Treaty Organisation in Manila that Britain was determined to maintain a military presence in the Malaysia-Singapore area after 1971. It was reported that such a commitment would have a major effect in Asia. Doubts about SEATO's future were said to be erased.

The Conservative argument -

repeatedly challenged by Powell and the Labour Party - is that the cost of a few millions of pounds to keep our soldiers, sailors and airmen out there would be more than compensated by the fat repatriated profits and extensive investments, particularly in oil, rubber, tin and light manufacturing, which they would be protecting. That is, the State will use the Armed Forces to protect the income and wealth of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Now there's the other side of the equation.

We believe that such a policy if carried through will, sooner or later, bring British troops and pilots into combat with the revolutionary forces of South East

Asia. In fact, this may already have happened. It was reported last August that Britain's Special Air Services (who pride themselves on preceding and outmatching the Green Berets) had begun a "training exercise" in North Malaya. This could have been a tactical operation against the guerrillas in that area.

The British solidarity movement must anticipate the new situation.

We must first discover what precisely is the British military-economic commitment. We must publicise this as widely as possible, then a campaign can be built against British imperialism, the use of British troops in counter-insurgency operations and for the victory of the S.E. Asian Revolution.

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CHAOS IN CAMBODIA

by Steve Merrett
Jalna Hanmer
Stephanie Segall

The fighting in Cambodia during the last six weeks has been extremely confused. The tactics of the Khmer guerrillas and their Vietnamese allies seem to be to mount multiple strikes on the major towns outside Phnom Penh and on the communications network. An example: the partisans stop a train at a station between the capital and Battambang in the west. Ten thousand sacks of rice are seized, the train and the station are set ablaze, and then the rice moved off into the nearby forest on ox-drawn carts.

The Cambodian army has rushed continuously from one emergency to another, desperately trying "to balance an egg on a stick". The guerrillas, just like the Vietminh before them, are simulating an even greater numerical strength than they already possess. A further example: the mouths of toads are tied with string, the subsequent croaking sounds like men talking. Thrown into army camps a hail of fire is loosed on them, wasting ammunition and fraying nerves. The army's inexperience, the knowledge that it is waging an anti-nationalist struggle, the widespread peasant support for Sihanouk's National Army of Liberation with its superior political and military organisation, and now an appearance of invincibility has led to low combat morale amongst Lon Nol's forces, desertion on a very wide scale and many units have actually come over to the Revolution with their arms. Do Cao Tri, one of the leading Saigon generals in the invasion, has said that the Cambodian Army virtually no longer exists outside Phnom Penh.

Thus in June the battle resolved itself primarily into one against the United States' armed forces and the Saigon army. Several disputed towns, such as Memot and Snoul, have been razed to the ground and the ruins plundered. Looting, murder and rape are widespread. The air strikes by B 52s and light attack aircraft have been made on a massive scale - in a single four-week period US aircraft dropped 15,000 tons of bombs on Cambodia. The Americans are committed to maintaining their Air War - Cambodia on an unlimited area and for an indefinite duration. Saigon's ground forces are irrevocably committed to the ground war there: already they are constructing a huge logistic base within Phnom Penh airport. Indeed the Washington-Saigon axis has no other choice if the Phnom Penh clique is to retain its limited power.

REVOLUTIONARY GAINS

The original objective of the US ground attack was to destroy the Vietcong HQ. This has failed abjectly. A captured NLF officer expressed astonishment when he heard of this aim: he pointed out that the High Command is always dispersed. In any case, he went on, US combat forces have even failed to find any of the prisoner of war camps along the Vietnamese-Cambodian border. When the last of the regular American troops left the country on June 29th, a day before the deadline forced on Nixon by the monsoon and the enormous US

protest at the invasion, it was claimed that the enemy had lost over 11,000 dead and 2,000 captured. These statistics are completely absurd: a foreign military expert in Phnom Penh has called them futile, misleading and false. Over 9,000 individual arms and 1,000 collective arms, plus more than 5,000 tons of rice are claimed captured. This data may be more accurate. It represents approximately one month's supply down the Ho Chi Minh trails. US losses were 339 dead and 1,501 wounded - add 20 per cent for a more accurate estimate. ARVN losses were 799 dead and 3,410 wounded.

The military success of Sihanouk's National United Front of Kampuchea (NUFK), with the assistance of the NLF and possibly the North Vietnamese, has been astonishing. Fighting units have been set up in virtually all the towns and hamlets of the liberated zones equipped with captured arms and those supplied by the NLF. Local NUFK committees have been set up to give power to the people. According to *Le Monde*, at the end of June the Front controlled the North, the East, the West and was disputing the South-East with ARVN. The guerrillas also hold the temples of Angkor, seat of the ancient Khmer dynasties.

LAOTIAN BATTLES

The valley of the Mekong north of Phnom Penh to the Laotian border is in their hands. This is of immense importance since the Pathet Lao, in what seems to have been the first co-ordinated attack of the United Front of the Indo-Chinese People, has now seized the whole of southern Laos by capturing the towns of Attopeu and Saravane and the Bolovens Plateau. Supplies can now flow from North Vietnam into southern Laos, then down the Mekong and its tributary the Sekong right into the centre of Cambodia. This offsets the loss of the supply route from Sihanoukville which followed the coup and the US-Saigon blockade of the Cambodian coastline.



In Phnom Penh, General Lon Nol has recently visited Sihanouk's mother, Queen Kossamak. The Army, he says, was not responsible for the coup, but Parliament. He now realises he is an instrument in the hands of a group led by Prince Sirik Matak, the regime's second-in-command. The capital is encircled. Khmer Serei patrols in the city obey no-one. The economy has gone to the dogs. The price of rice has risen by 50% in a



few days. The NUFK controls most of the countryside. The peasants have joined the maquis. The extreme right is conspiring against him under Son Ngoc Thanh, ex-collaborator with the Japanese. Lon Nol is reported to have broken down and wept. A squeezed-out lemon, soon he will be forced to join his family in Singapore.

The past three months have been one of the major turning points in the Second Indo-Chinese War. Nixon has gained a threatened capital and thrown a nation into armed struggle. His invasion has won a mediocre military success and produced a political catastrophe.

Laos:

The opening up of new routes into Cambodia and South Vietnam through the capture by the Pathet Lao of Saravane and Attopeu in southern Laos is viewed as extremely serious by the Americans and their clients, the Laotian Royalists. The area, known as the Plain of Bolovens, contains several US airfields which are used for reconnaissance flights over the Ho Chi Minh trail. As with the battle for the Plain of Jars earlier this year, the Plain of Bolovens is being massively bombed, many villages have been destroyed, and the population is being evacuated, particularly the families of the Royalist military, police and administrators. The aim is to deprive the Pathet Lao of a sympathetic population and their crops, i.e. the water for the fish.

GUERRILLA ATTACKS

The Pathet Lao are also active to the north and south of the Plain of Jars, which they now occupy, and battles are being fought at this time against the American Special Forces and their US "advisors" at Bouamlong and Sam Thong. Paktha, five kilometers from the Thailand border, has also been the scene of fighting, and guerrilla attacks are reported to have taken place in the capital, Vientiane, for the first time.

Border raids by South Vietnamese troops and their US "advisors" have been greatly increased, although the Royalist Premier, Souvanna Phouma, has said he would oppose any invasion of Laos by these troops. At the

moment, in addition to approximately 12,000 American advisors and Special Forces, there are 13 battalions of Thais - about 10,000 men - fighting in Laos.

Vietnam upsurge:

The focus of fighting has been Cambodia, but the attack on the sanctuaries has not meant that the NLF has been forced to reduce the level of fighting in South Vietnam. Indeed since about March there has been a serious upsurge in small incidents: attacks on government outposts, ambushes, etc. The attacks in May have been far too widespread for Saigon to be happy about the withdrawal of too many American troops, when such large numbers of their own remain in Cambodia.

There is nothing to indicate that the "Vietnamised" Saigon troops can prevent the NLF's attacks on any front. They depend heavily on US logistical and air support.

URBAN FIGHTING IN DALAT

One outstanding feature of the military situation in recent weeks has been the attack on Dalat. Since the 1968 Tet offensive, the NLF has been perfecting a technique of attack with minimal losses. It has also been paying increasing attention to the towns, and has had no difficulty in showing up the inability of Saigon to defend them.

Dalat was poorly defended; the NLF attacked it twice in May. On the second occasion they were able to destroy radio and telephone communications, damage the airport and military installations, and regroup in the university and a church before disappearing the following night. The precision of the operation was such that few lives were lost; this was achieved by the improved tactic of co-operation between external troops and insurgents already in position inside the town.

ASIAN AGAINST ASIAN

Two Assistant Defence Secretaries of the Johnson era have stated clearly that Nixon's policy of withdrawal is really a plan for the continuation of a United States presence in Vietnam; and Averell Harriman has called "Vietnamisation" "a programme not for peace, but for the perpetuation of war". This assessment agrees with that made by the Vietnamese, who also add that a doctrine of "Asians fighting Asians" cannot save the US from eventual defeat.

THAI GUERRILLAS VERSUS U.S. ACADEMICS

by Neil Middleton from Paper Tiger

THE THAI PATRIOTIC FRONT

In January 1965 the Thai Patriotic Front (TPF), a merger of Communist and Nationalist forces, was founded. The Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) and the TPF jointly affirm that their country is an "out-and-out US imperialist colony of a new type. Our country has become an important strategic base for US imperialists to wage an aggressive war". In order to achieve this the USA has been compelled to lend weight to a series of dictatorial governments who have ruthlessly suppressed all opposition parties, have a history of complete corruption and savagery and who, in return for their pickings and power, have handed over economic and military control of their country to the US.

During 1967 the TPF confined itself very largely to an educational programme. Operating in teams of 50 they would enter villages and set up political cadres in which they explained the sources of the extreme poverty in which villagers were living, talked about the opposition to the central government and the Americans, encouraged people to recognise the injustice of the outrageous taxes and the arrogance of the Thai officials. It is believed that 237 such meetings were held in the course of the year.

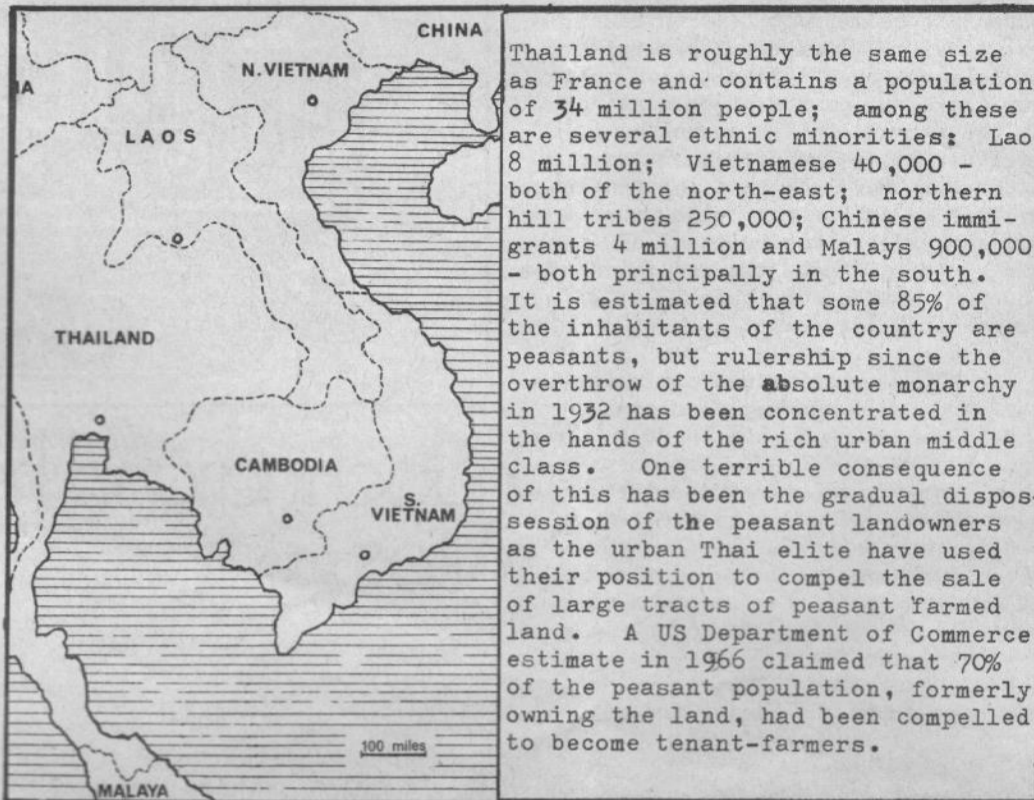
LEARN WARFARE THROUGH WARFARE

In July 1968 the TPF-CPT brought the struggle to a new phase when they invaded the US airbase at Udorn and severely damaged several aircraft - until that date the policy had been to avoid direct conflict with the Americans. Following each action the guerrillas appraise their work in a session of "military democracy".

The guerrillas get their food from the local population and from small plots they clear in the jungle. They are armed with US weapons supplied by the Pathet Lao who have seized them from US supported Laotian forces; there are also a few weapons supplied by the Chinese and eastern Europeans. On the whole, by Vietnamese standards, the guerrillas are poorly trained, but they are learning fast and have adopted Mao's slogan: "Learn warfare through warfare".

THE EARLY STRUGGLE

The struggle against the axis formed by the Thai urban elite and the US began in earnest in North East Thailand. It is an area separated from the rest of the country by a range of hills, a southern spur of the Doi Luang; it is dry, has poor soil and is principally inhabited by the Lao and the Vietnamese. The latter fled there during the French Indo-China wars and were virtually all supporters of Ho - they still keep very close contacts with the Vietnamese Workers Party. They, the Lao, the Puthai and the Khmer have provided the personnel and support for the guerrilla foci. Preparations for the struggle had begun well before 1965; indeed cadres had been sent for training at Hoa Binh in North Vietnam as early as 1962.



GUERRILLA ACTIONS

North Thailand: This area is ideal for guerrilla activity; it is almost entirely mountainous and is inhabited by hill tribes who originally came south from Yunnan and Kweichai. They have no written language and a primitive agriculture. The central Thai government first became aware of guerrilla activity in the North in the Nan province among the Meo tribesmen in 1967. Within six months there were 1,000 armed guerrillas in the hills. This incredible increase was almost entirely due to the Thai government, who decided that the best way to put down revolt was to napalm a dozen villages out of existence. At the time of writing roughly 40% of the population of the Nam province are refugees, either in the concentration camps of the South or in the guerrilla controlled territories. The early guerrilla strikes were extremely effective (in one the government lost 100 troops) and by 1968 the fighting had spread 150 miles south to three new provinces (Loei, Petchibun and Phitsanuloke). Counter-insurgency was stepped up by CSOC (the Communist Suppression Operations Command, a campaign launched in 1965 with massive aid from the US) and nearly 8,000 villages have been destroyed by US/Thai forces in the Nan and Chiangrai provinces. But CSOC have suffered considerable losses. Very little is known of the political organisation of the northern comrades; only a few Meo tribesmen have come to the Pathet Lao for training.

A New Front: In 1967 a new front came into being, and this a mere 175 miles south of Bangkok in the narrow strip in the western edge of the Gulf of Siam. So far only one major action is reported. In the Prachuab province 300 comrades distributed propaganda against the "corrupt Thanom Propas clique" and killed several government officials. They then defeated the 100 strong police detachment sent to attack them, killing 15 of the enemy. The 1st division of the Royal Thai Army now occupies the area; but despite violent repression the comrades are maintaining contact with the TPF

Thailand is roughly the same size as France and contains a population of 34 million people; among these are several ethnic minorities: Lao 8 million; Vietnamese 40,000 - both of the north-east; northern hill tribes 250,000; Chinese immigrants 4 million and Malays 900,000 - both principally in the south. It is estimated that some 85% of the inhabitants of the country are peasants, but rulership since the overthrow of the absolute monarchy in 1932 has been concentrated in the hands of the rich urban middle class. One terrible consequence of this has been the gradual dispossession of the peasant landowners as the urban Thai elite have used their position to compel the sale of large tracts of peasant farmed land. A US Department of Commerce estimate in 1966 claimed that 70% of the peasant population, formerly owning the land, had been compelled to become tenant-farmers.

in the north-east and with the CPT in Bangkok.

South Thailand: This is the only area that can be called a genuine guerrilla base, i.e. an area in which the guerrillas have an indisputable superiority over the government troops. Again it is a mountainous area, covered in jungle and rich in tin and rubber. Of its population of about 3½ million, nearly one third are either of Malayan or Chinese origin and in the four southern provinces 90% of the population is Muslim. Of these (probably 900,000) the main political programme is not allied to the TPF but is seeking a separate Muslim state in alliance with their brethren in Malaya. However, the guerrillas are TPF and have the support of the majority. These foci grew out of the Malayan Races Liberation Army which fought the Japanese first and then after the war, fought the British for so long. They are now called the National Liberation Army, numbering about 1,000 fighting men and they have mass support from the rubber and tin workers. Working closely with the Muslim separatist groups they have organised local farming communes. The Thai government was unable to contemplate military action against them until 1966 by which time the revolution had spread as far north as Trang province. For the authorities it was by then too late and they are now fighting a rearguard action aimed at containing the revolt.

In south Thailand Malaysia and Thailand are co-operating through the creation of a joint Thai-Malay command of 2,000 border police (trained by the US Green Berets), to fight the guerrillas. On the other hand, the resurgence of Malaysian guerrilla activity has reinforced the hold of the Thai guerrillas in the south. These joint efforts raise the question of how involved Britain is prepared to become in the Indo-Chinese war should there be a major escalation in Malaya.

INTO CAMBODIA?

Thailand has not been over-eager to give military aid to Lon Nol. To date it appears that the military aid Thailand is prepared to offer consists of military training for Cambodians, a total of 12,000 men according to the *Times*. A request for one division to protect Phnom Penh was refused, although there is a possibility that the "Black Panthers", a Thai division stationed north of Saigon may be transferred to Cambodia, thereby helping Cambodia without committing any new troops. *Le Monde* suggests that Thailand sees the commitment of Thai troops in Cambodia as marking a new phase in the engagement of their country in the Indo-China war; an informed spokesman was quoted as saying that to send troops to Cambodia implies that the Thais are prepared to fight the North Vietnamese and the NLF anywhere. Their hesitation is interpreted as a lack of certainty in the US's ability indefinitely to guarantee the position of the present ruling group.

Furthermore, their reluctance may be a way of forcing up the price the US is prepared to pay for their "loyalty". For instance, the Senate has confirmed that in the past four years the US has paid 200 million dollars to maintain the "Black Panthers" in South Vietnam - a division of 10,000 men. As a mercenary in Vietnam each private soldier received the basic pay of \$26 a month plus an extra \$39 a month mustering out and death benefits and entertainment allowances. Higher ranks of course received more.

CLOSER AMERICAN TIES

Since the 2nd World War Thai leadership has maintained very close links with the USA - remember that SEATO headquarters are in Bangkok. The Thai government sent troops to Korea to support the US in 1950 and it is estimated that there are 12,000 Thai troops assisting the US in Vietnam and 10,000 in Laos. At present the US have six air bases and 45,000 American soldiers in Thailand. Since 1965 they have poured \$2 billion into the country, most of it spent on military installations. Since 1964 Thailand has been used as a base from which the US can attack both North Vietnam and the Pathet Lao. 80% of the bombing missions to North Vietnam were launched from Thai soil and, according to one US AID official in 1967, the largest part of US aid not given over to military purposes went on rebuilding and re-equipping the police forces. Since the illegal radical movements and the peasants' armies have begun their struggle for freedom the US Airforce has begun to supply helicopters, planes and pilots to ferry Thai counter-insurgents to the battle zones. Currently US army has taken over the training of Thai army and police in counter-insurgency tactics.

AID FOR COUNTER-REVOLUTION

While the Thais may be questioning the feasibility of greater involvement in the Indo-China war, the US

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P.R.G.'s First Anniversary

by Stephanie Segall

On June 6th 1969 the Congress of Peoples Representatives met in a liberated area of South Vietnam to elect a Provisional Revolutionary Government.

This was no empty gesture but reflected the success the NLF had had since the Tet offensive of 1968 in building an administrative structure of village revolutionary councils.

The US has tried hard to present the NLF as simply a terrorist organisation. At the same time it finds itself admitting to the capture in Cambodia of such things as a central post office of the PRG, and even the Rand Corporation recognises the strength of the NLF infrastructure.

For a long time the US refused to listen to the NLF and talked only of the DRV. It still refuses to listen to what they are saying, and has systematically distorted their negotiating position.

VIETNAMESE AIMS

The Vietnamese have not changed their aims - the independence of their country and the complete withdrawal of US and allied troops. In this they are inflexible. But they are not inflexible about the way in which this is achieved and are willing to allow the Americans to save face.

The PRG aims at a withdrawal of US troops, the formation of a provisional coalition, and the holding of general elections for a national assembly where the Vietnamese would decide their own future.

The NLF would participate in this process on the basis of its declared 10-point programme. This calls for the end to the puppet government, withdrawal of the US invaders, for peace, independence and a neutral Vietnam, to be reunited through peaceful negotiation.

The United States has misrepresented the PRG's position in a number of ways in order to lay the blame for the continuation of the war on the Vietnamese. This misrepresentation has centred on two points:

The US has claimed that the PRG demands the total withdrawal of troops before negotiations. This is false. The Vietnamese insist on a credible commitment to withdrawal, instead of the limited withdrawals and reliance on "Vietnamisation" which they see as a commitment to continuing the war and the Thieu regime indefinitely. The vast bases such as Cam Ranh Bay look like a permanent involvement in Vietnam, with wider aims such as the encirclement of China, against which the reduction of troops by little more than 100,000 appears trivial.

The US has also refused to understand the PRG's proposals on coalition and has clung to the corrupt Thieu regime. The PRG, not surprisingly, refuses to negotiate with Thieu and Ky and men like them who consider any peace call as treason, but it has never insisted on excluding any member of the Saigon administrations. What it does demand is that those who form a coalition or peace cabinet have their own political base among the Vietnamese and are not dependent on the US.

NO WITHDRAWAL

The US has never committed itself to total withdrawal and insists on maintaining the Thieu regime which represents nobody but itself and a few who profit from the war.

Nixon's speeches make it ever clearer that his "honourable solution" is really a military one. The appointment of a new negotiator to Paris makes no difference unless Nixon is prepared to consider a coalition. The anti-war movement should expose Nixon's policy for what it is and demand the acceptance of the PRG's real negotiating position.

ON THE CAMBODIAN FRONT

The press has devoted a lot of space to the fighting in Cambodia but none at all to the political position adopted by Sihanouk and his supporters who, since the Lon Nol coup, have set up, together with the Red Khmers, the National United Front of Kampuchea. (Kampuchea is Cambodian for Cambodia.) On May 3-6 this Front held a congress in Peking and endorsed a political programme, which we summarise here.

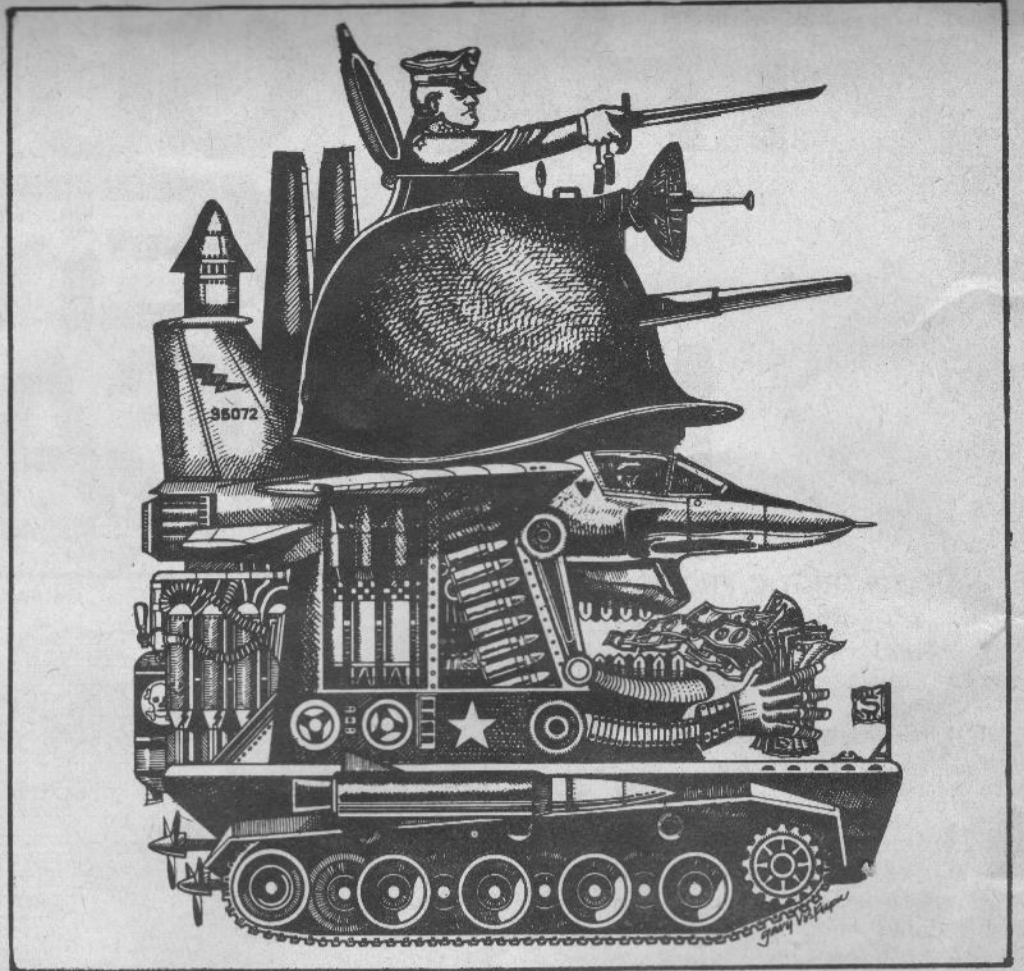
The aim of the NUFK is to create the broadest possible national union against the United States imperialists and Lon Nol and to struggle for the establishment of an independent, neutral and prosperous Cambodia. All social classes, political parties and religious organisations, all those who oppose the Lon Nol government, will be welcomed into the Front.

One of its foremost tasks is to build and strengthen the National Liberation Army, guerrillas and regional troops. The second part of the programme deals with the building of a new democratic, prosperous Cambodian state, in which power will be in the hands of the working people. Democratisation of society is to be carried out in the liberated areas.

Measures are to be taken to develop the country, promoting education and the national culture, and the development of the national economy. While banks and foreign trade are to be nationalised, the national bourgeoisie are to be encouraged to set up enterprises and ownership rights are guaranteed. On the land, the state will enforce fair rents and grant the peasant the right to own the land he cultivates.

The third part of the programme states that the foreign policy of the NUFK is one of independence, peace, neutrality and non-alignment. No foreign military bases or troops will be permitted on Cambodian soil, nor alliances entered into; but, during the struggle against United States aggression, the NUFK will pursue a policy of solidarity and co-operation with the people of Laos and Vietnam. The NUFK also affirms its support for the struggles of the oppressed peoples of the world.

The NUFK, like the NLF in Vietnam, aims to unite all patriotic forces in the fight for national independence. As such its programme, particularly in its economic aspects, is designed to appeal to the broadest possible section of the people.



Indochina and her Allies

by Steve Merrett

The Cambodian coup and the events which succeeded it have met with very different responses in Peking and Moscow. It was in China, possibly Canton, that the leaders of the NLF, the Pathet Lao, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the National United Front of Kampuchea (NUFK) met to form the United Front of the Indo-Chinese People, dedicated to the joint struggle for total victory over the United States. Chou En Lai, the Chinese Prime Minister, attended this historic meeting and immediately gave his country's unreserved support for the conference's common declaration.

MAO'S THESIS

These countries' united opposition to a recall of the Geneva Conference, based in part on the intransigence of the puppet regimes and the two-year long sterility of the Paris talks, has put in a more favourable light China's opposition to peace talks as long as they are not founded on some deeper shift in the politico-military balance of power which would make a negotiated settlement possible. Chou En Lai pledged that China would act as the great rear to Indo-China, which of course it already is in a geographic sense.

The extension of the guerrilla war will mean the increased importance of the light arms which are supplied predominantly by the Chinese. And China is already aiding all three countries: Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. These arms are supplied free of cost. The Sihanouk government, recognised by China and almost 30 other countries, is based in Peking and has requested and received an interest-free loan to finance all its activities outside Cambodia. The slow but ineluctable defeat of the United States confirms Mao Tse Tung's thesis that all reactionaries are paper tigers, that is

that the people through armed struggle can defeat even the most powerful of the imperialist nations. One month after the formation of the United Front of the Indo-Chinese People, Chairman Mao made one of his infrequent pronouncements on the international situation. Warmly greeting Sihanouk, the Royal Government of National Union (RGNU) and the NUFK, and the common declaration of the Indo-China summit conference, he stated that through a protracted people's war they will gain complete victory.

The response of the Soviet Union has been quite different. From the very beginning it has maintained a very ambivalent attitude towards Sihanouk's government in exile. Whilst in a telegram on May 13th it saluted the formation of the NUFK, it nevertheless continues to recognise diplomatically the Lon Nol regime and in spite of Sihanouk's explicit request for recognition on May 11th, this has not been given. In the Soviet press Sihanouk is rarely mentioned and the constitution of the RGNU and the widespread recognition it received has never been explicitly announced.

A COMMON CAUSE

After the summit conference of the Indo-Chinese revolutionaries it was left only to "Soviet Industry" to refer to the meeting and in prudent terms at that. In fact it was at that conference that Sihanouk attacked "certain great powers" which were dreaming of a compromise solution in the peninsula. This was intended for Russian ears. With the intensification of the activities of the US Armed Forces, the Korean, the Chinese and the Indo-Chinese people have taken up a common cause. By the time of Kosygin's press conference in early May there had still

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The Next Step

A group of anti-war activists who have been doing some extremely valuable work in centralising the anti-war movement among American forces in Germany have recently begun production of a publication which they call *The Next Step*.

The importance of this group and their publication, and the support they enjoy among GIs is testified by the ease with which the 5,000

copies of their first issue were distributed. They have an immediate prospect of doubling their circulation, but to do this they desperately need money. As Germany is a staging post for GIs before they see actual combat in Vietnam, the importance of this group cannot be emphasised enough. Please send donations towards a fund to help them to the following address: *The Next Step*, c/o VSC, 182 Pentonville Rd, London N1.

N. VIETNAM'S ECONOMY

by Stephanie Segall

North Vietnam is a predominantly peasant country. Since independence it has begun to build an industrial base upon which the development of the whole country could rest. In 1954 there were apparently only 41 industrial enterprises; ten years later there were 1,100.

The development of the economy has been impeded by US bombing which prevented the completion of the first 5-year plan of 1961-65. But the bombing, while it destroyed the towns and cities of North Vietnam, did not halt its industrial development. This was due to the evacuation and decentralisation of industry, as of educational and medical institutions, and the government encouraged local industry to develop according to local resources.

Since the end of the bombing, the question has arisen of the transference from a war to a peace-time economy, and there have been a number of major speeches and articles in North Vietnam as to the direction which the economy should now take.

STATE PLAN

The 1970 State Plan for the economy provides for central development of selected heavy industries - engineering, electric energy, metallurgy, construction and others. Soviet aid to the DRV for 1970 apparently includes several complete factories "necessary to the national economy".

A great deal of emphasis has been placed by Le Duan, the First Secretary of the Workers' Party, on the need to rationalise the economy and develop technical skills, particularly among the cadres of the party. This has led to speculation in the west as to whether the emphasis on internal economic development does not imply decreased attention to the war.

BASE

Apart from the fact that political events refute this interpretation, economic arguments do not bear it out either. North Vietnam has never supplied the arms or industrially made goods used in the South. It has been a base and a supply route but not a producer. Any improvement in its economy now will merely make this base stronger, more independent and enable the living standards of the people, hit by the war, to rise a little.

In the main, North Vietnam has not started on the process of major reconstruction. Instead the 1970 economic plan provides for further development on the local level, other than the heavy industries mentioned above, all development being closely linked to agriculture.

The merits of the decentralisation brought about by the war seem to have impressed the North Vietnamese leadership. There is, of course,

the military argument in favour of continued decentralisation. Though the bombing has in large part ceased, the threat of its resumption still exists, and local self-sufficiency presumably plays a big role in any contingency planning for an invasion by US ground forces. General Giap has explained the importance of a strong regional basis - both military and economic - for the waging of an effective people's war.

But regionalisation seems to have entered the philosophy of the North Vietnamese more extensively than for purely military reasons. The decentralised enterprises are to remain as the basis for local development. Consumer production of limited items - sleeping mats, thermos flasks, knitwear - is encouraged on this basis. The leadership is aware

MOBILISATION

of the sacrifices made by the population for the war effort, and it hopes by local mobilisation of artisans and craftsmen to adapt the economy as well as possible to these conditions. While adhering to the classical socialist priority of the development of state-owned heavy industry, the North Vietnamese recognise that the construction of socialism is a long-term task and that regional development can have a big role to play.

Truong Chinh in his Forward Along the Path Charted by Karl Marx (1969) expands upon this idea, saying that they have undertaken the development of the economy by regions with the aim that each shall be able to cope with its own food, accommodation, health and if necessary defence. The most notable achievement to date has been in food production.

PROGRESS IN NAM HA

In the Vietnam Courier for 19th January 1970 a long article is devoted to the progress of one particular province, Nam Ha. It describes how equipment for the cooperatives is made locally in response to need and how numerous co-operatives have embarked upon limited industrial production. The province is congratulated on its success. In view of the difficulties the Soviet Union has experienced with its centralised economy, this policy seems a wise one.

The emphasis on regions furthermore suggests an increased influence for the intermediate levels of the administration. Le Duan also emphasises the need for more attention to collective direction and responsibility, and the concrete, knowledgeable involvement of party officials in economic affairs - revolutionary ardour is not sufficient.

Thai Struggle

(continued from p.3)

appear to have no doubts. Sensational documents revealing the extent of US involvement in fighting in Thailand have come into the possession of the American antiwar movement. The documents show that far from attempting to disengage from military involvements the US government has been making and continues to make elaborate preparations for expanded US involvements in South-East Asia up to and including agreements for the use of massive numbers of US combat troops in Thailand should that be "necessary" to maintain a Thai regime compliant with US "interests".

The American "counter-insurgency" operation in Thailand is run largely under the American "aid" programme, administered through AID (Agency for International Development).

COUNTER-INSURGENCY RESEARCH

How the US military role is backed up by the academic community: Among the items is proof that academic figures at a dozen major universities are under contract at high salaries to the US Defense Department or its subsidiary agencies to collect intelligence in northern Thailand to aid in crushing insurgent forces. Research into counter-insurgency techniques has been undertaken for the Thai government by the following: University of California, Rice University, Indiana University, The Stanford Research Institute, Cornell Aeronautics Laboratories, Cornell University, University of Michigan, the RAND Corporation and Philco-Ford (the last of these is a company with a powerful British interest).

Allen Myers, editor of the SMC's GI PRESS SERVICE, summarised the material on academic involvement in

this "aid" programme.

"On September 6, 1966," he wrote, "a contract was signed between the US government, 'as represented by AID' and the Regents of the University of California. We have not been able to obtain a copy of this agreement, but we do have in our possession Amendment No. 3 to the contract, dated September 1, 1968 ... Para. B-1 of the Amendment states that the 'Contractor' (University of California) will 'identify research that is being, has been, or will be conducted in universities, foundations and other institutions that may relate to the developmental and counterinsurgency activities in Thailand; evaluate, index and make such research available to AID; suggest and solicit research proposals relevant to AID activity in Thailand for consideration by AID/W (the W stands for Washington) and USOM/Thailand' (USOM is United States Operations Mission, a subdivision of AID)".

The amendment required the university to "provide support to facilitate the effective functioning of the Academic Advisory Committee for Thailand (AACT)", another AID subsidiary. The first AACT meeting following the signing of the amendment was held at the State Department. The minutes of the meeting, summarised by Allen Myers, show that in addition to government officials, professors attended from the University of California at Los Angeles, Cornell University, Rice University, the University of Michigan, and Indiana University. The minutes report:

"In discussing topics for conferences to be organised under AACT auspices, it was agreed that the subject of local authority in Thai-

land, including the implications for village security, should be first priority ..." (Emphasis in Student Mobilizer). A conference on this subject was held at UCLA July 24-27, 1969. A number of Thai government officials attended, including the under-secretary of state and the Thai minister of the interior, to learn from the American social scientists how to suppress their unruly subjects.

AGENTS

At a July 23-24 meeting of AACT just preceding the UCLA conference, plans were made to intervene at a meeting of the Association of Asian Studies April 3-6 of this year in San Francisco to try to pick the brains of scholars who would have no idea their researches were being appropriated by these academic "government agents".

There is no indication in the minutes whether it is patriotism or some other motive that inspires professors to help the Pentagon to kill Thai peasants. The minutes for a January 24-25, 1969, meeting of AACT do indicate that participants are paid "travel, per diem, and consulting fees."

"We have no figures on the consultation fees which AACT members receive", Allen Myers writes, "but the American Institutes for Research (a private agency under contract to the government for a similar study of counter-insurgency in Thailand) paid Michael Moerman (a professor of anthropology at UCLA and a member of AACT) \$150 per day plus \$18 a day for expenses - aside from travel - for five days consultation in Bangkok."

The USA in Thailand is fast reaching an impasse of the kind it faces in Vietnam. American strategy demands the security of Thailand as a base from which to operate against China, Vietnam and the Pathet Lao - it has also found the country a very prof-

itable part of its economic empire (so indeed has Britain). On the other hand the US military and economic presence is generating vast numbers of landless peasants and an unskilled urban working class bitterly hostile to the US controlled and supported set-up. Strong-arm methods of government aided and abetted by US militarists are provoking increasing hostility. As a result guerrilla activity is increasing both in effectiveness and in scale.

Here is another if as yet smaller Vietnam. Victory to the Thai Patriotic Front.

Additional sources: Intercontinental Times, Le Monde, The Times.

H-Bombs Next?

From informed sources we have learned that Nixon has sponsored a secret survey into American views on the use of nuclear tactical weapons in Indo-China. A favourable response may well mean a nuclear escalation.

Tiger Cages

The reports of "tiger cages" on Con Son prison island are no revelation. The Saigon government has many other prisons where the inmates are tortured. Why don't the Congressmen expose them also?

Big Deal

February 1969:	542,800
(peak)	US troops in Vietnam
July 1970 :	413,900
	US troops in Vietnam

C.S.-COMPLICITY IN SCIENCE

by Steve Merrett

Since before the Second World War governments have stocked "harassing agents" for use against their own urban populations. These were designed to temporarily incapacitate their victim by releasing an agent that irritates the eye causing crying or temporary blindness; irritates the mucous membranes of the nose, windpipe or lungs, causing coughing; irritates the throat and stomach, inducing vomiting and possibly diarrhoea; or irritates the skin, provoking scratching. These pre-war agents had certain disadvantages including unsuitability to tropical climates and led in the early fifties to a search for alternatives by British scientists at the Chemical Defence Experimental Establishment (CDEE), Porton. CS, o-chlorobenzal malononitrite, was one of the results. "In addition to causing pain in the eyes, tears and spasms of the eyelids, (it) also produces a sharp burning pain in the nose, throat and chest which becomes worse and causes a choking sensation as exposure continues. Profuse salivation and running of the nose occurs at the same time. Although breathing is not actually interfered with, it is rendered extremely painful, the more so if the breathing rate increases as the result of exertion. When CS is experienced in high concentrations the violent coughing which is set up may induce vomiting. Stinging occurs on the shaved areas and on any exposed abrasions and there may also be irritation around the neck ... The irritation passes off rapidly as do the other effects ... no permanent harm is caused". (UK patent specification 1960). In accordance with practice, Porton sent copies of its development to the US, Australian and Canadian governments.

GRENADERS

The subsequent developments were rapid. In the seven years since its introduction, CS has for many purposes virtually replaced the pre-war agents. In Britain, it is manufactured in quantities of around four to six tons a year at Nancekuke in Cornwall, and is transported by rail to the factory of Schemurly Ltd, a Charterhouse subsidiary, near Dorking in Surrey, where it is packed into dispensers or grenades. It is exported to about 60 foreign countries, where it is sold at a price of 35/- a pound, bringing in some £250,000 annually. It is also supplied to some 36 of the 80 police forces in England and Wales, to some in Scotland in relatively small quantities, and, as we now know, in much larger ones to the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

The US scale of manufacture and use is, of course, much vaster. The 1969 Army Training Circular, in its section on riot control agents, now refers only to CS gas - suggesting that other agents are perhaps being phased out. It describes no fewer than 18 different dispersing methods, varying from small pocket grenades, through the "Mighty Mite" (a device like a continual mechanical fly-spray which can dispense up to 80 lb of CS and is particularly designed for use in cave or tunnel systems), to the 130 lb cluster bombs which are designed to be dropped from helicopters or low flying planes. Many thousands of pounds of CS have been dispersed in this way in Vietnam, and the helicopter CS dispensers have also been used in an attempt to quell student demonstrations in Berkeley.

Although initially described as used for control of situations in which mixed NLF and civilian groups were present - a classical "riot" situation - reports from Vietnam ever since 1965 have referred to its use in tunnels and caves for "flushing out" purposes. From the time of its first use North Vietnamese and NLF sources claim that its use in this way has resulted in severe injury or death. Thus between January 1965 and July 1966, according to the NLF, some 300 deaths resulted from gases used in caves and tunnel systems. Each of these incidents is reasonably well documented. The scale of reported deaths has increased in subsequent years with increased use of the agent. Thus an NLF communique of November 19th 1969 claims that in Tay Ninh Province in the last ten days of September 1969, "helicopters and other kinds of airplanes were used over 200 times to drop thousands of pounds of CS and other chemicals on two communes. They even used cannons to fire 5,000 bullets containing toxic mixtures. More than 1,000 people belonging to the Cao Dai sect were affected.... In Thang Binh district in a raid on February 12th 1969 they caught ten elderly men between 64 and 77 years of age and one pregnant woman, forced them into a trench and sprayed them with toxic gas, killing them all".



Sgt. C.S. Pig of Chicago

The first report from Western journalists concerning the lethal effects of CS in Vietnam was the now famous Bowtell case; "Non-toxic gas and smoke being used against Vietcong guerrillas in tunnels northwest of Saigon have killed one Australian soldier, sent six others to hospital, officials said today. Corporal Robert Bowtell, 21, of Sydney, died of asphyxiation although he was wearing a gas mask."

There have been a series of other eye-witness reports of the agent, by journalists and GIs, e.g. "I have seen unconscious women and children dragged out of tunnels and bunkers into which tear gas bombs had been thrown. The effect on the peasants was frightful. Several times peasants who had been brought under control in this way tried to flee, screaming. They believed the troops wanted to gas them to death".

Since 1966 a wholly new tactic has been employed. CS gas is used to drive people from their shelters prior to B.52 bombings. The first time we know this to have happened was in February 1966 when helicopters dropped hundreds of gas grenades on a small area of forest, 265 miles north-east of Saigon. Then the B.52s came and saturated the area with anti-personnel fragmentation bombs. At least 400 people, according to official estimates, were affected. In its account the NY Times has explained that former B.52 bombings had been inefficient

against people sheltered in underground hide-outs. "The aim of the gas attack," said the Times, "was to compel the Vietcong to go on the surface and expose themselves to the bombs."

Recently the whole affair has taken on a new dimension. Horrified by the results of the use of poison gas in World War 1, the nations of the world attempted between the wars to ensure that it would never again be used in war.

U.K.-U.S. AGREEMENT

In 1925, agreement was reached at Geneva on a Protocol to re-state the international law which prohibits the use in war of gas and other chemical weapons and also to prohibit germ warfare. The British government, one of the parties to the Protocol, made it clear in documents before the Disarmament Conference and its Preparatory Commission, and in the House of Commons, that it believed that the ban covered the use in war of lachrymatory (tear) gas and other gases, both lethal and non-lethal, as well as more dangerous chemical and bacteriological agents.

Successive British governments have upheld this view for 40 years. On 2nd February 1970, that model of wisdom, cautious reserve and humanitarianism, that immensely sincere Social Democrat, Michael Stewart, at the time Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, announced a change in policy. He said that CS and other such gases were, in Britain's view, not within the scope of the Protocol, because "modern technology has developed CS smoke, which unlike the tear gases available in 1930, is considered to be not significantly harmful to man in other than wholly exceptional circumstances...." Read that again. Modern technology develops, not British scientists at the Government establishment of Porton. CS is a smoke, not a gas. It is not harmful save in exceptional circumstances.

Why this change of tack? We don't know, but we can be fairly sure that it is a favour to the Americans who, as far as we know, are the only ones using CS in war on a large scale. The US is not a party to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, but in November last President Nixon asked the US Senate to consent to the US becoming a party. Three months later Britain re-interprets the Protocol in such a way which if accepted would allow the US to sign the Protocol and continue gassing the Vietnamese to death. As I.F. Stone has put it: "Some day we may know what price or pressure enabled Nixon to win Harold Wilson's approval for this US position."

(Prepared from material supplied by Steve and Hilary Rose, "South Vietnam In Struggle" and the British Council of Churches.)

Indochina's Allies

(continued from p.4)

been no reaction to the formation of the Front and after his prepared statement it was only in response to a journalist's question that he deigned to recognise its existence. Le Monde has stated that Russia supplies only Vietnam with military equipment at present.

The Indo-Chinese, who at present regard talk of reconvening the Geneva Conference as a diplomatic trap, must have been dumbstruck (in public) to hear Jacob Malik, chief of the Soviet delegation at the UN, express "a keen interest" in the French proposal to do precisely that. The following day Moscow denied any such interest - but who can believe Malik was expressing a personal view? This was a bad mistake.

In May the Jakarta conference was held of all reactionary powers in the Far East: Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Malaya, Singapore, Thailand, South Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia. Incidentally, this was the first time since the Second World War that Japan had attended a conference of a purely political character. Hanoi and the NLF condemned it as "orchestrated by US imperialism to cover up its aggression against Cambodia". In the middle of June the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs granted an interview to three representatives from that conference, although Tass later condemned them as US accomplices.

In a statement to the Lon Nol clique on May 24th, the Russian Ambassador presented the most grotesque image of the war: he suggested that a Khmer civil war was a possibility if Saigon and US troops did not withdraw from Cambodian territory. He gave no indication that at that very time it was the Phnom Penh regime who were fighting the "Red Khmers" in the closest collaboration with those invasion forces.

U.S. WAR AIMS

In an excellent pamphlet which appeared recently*, Boramy and Caldwell have discussed Soviet policy in Asia. "Professor Kolko has shown conclusively the degree of Soviet complicity, basically stemming from a sense of their weakness viz-a-viz the United States, in easing American achievement of their set post-war aims. Specifically, the Russian leaders, while gratefully embracing (like their American counterparts) the mythology of the Cold War, have consistently smoothed the way for stabilisation of a status quo favorable to the US in particular, but to the USSR as well. One need go no further than the Korean War to see how this operated in practice: a specific question which requires a more satisfactory answer than has yet been forthcoming concerns the absence of the Russian representative from the Security Council during the fateful session that saw America assuming a "United Nations" guise for her aggression in Korea." They say that despite the rhetoric of the leadership in Moscow, it is transparently clear that they are seeking to adjust their long-standing "co-existence" and "detente" policies to the new situation.

NUCLEAR STRIKE?

For Russia, then, the situation genuinely deteriorates as long as the Asian people's armies continue to win victories whilst the US suffers defeats in pursuing their present military strategy. For this may meet eventually with a response by the US - the Pentagon in fact - with tactical nuclear weapons. This is a very real possibility. And clearly one which the Russians fear above all and are willing to concede all to avoid. The other possible outcome, I would say the only other outcome, is total withdrawal, within the next decade, and it is this which the Indo-Chinese, with Chinese support, are seeking. Even at the risk of a nuclear attack.

Perhaps in 50 years time the historians will say that the greatest achievement of the peace and solidarity movements on the five continents, above all in the United States, was to make a nuclear strike politically impossible.

LONG LIVE THE INDO-CHINESE REVOLUTION!
*Leon Boramy and Malcolm Caldwell, Cambodia, Peace Press, March-April 1970

THE U.S.

by Feiling Blackburn

As the revolution broadens and deepens in Indo-China, so also the new civil war at home. The war of resistance to imperialism is being extended deeper every day in the ghettos, campuses and streets of almost every city in the US itself.

This war, like a powerful virus, is eating into all the tissues of American society, linking the disinherited (Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, workers); the disillusioned (students and old-fashioned liberal democrats); the economically disheartened (small businessmen and industrialists) into one vast national epidemic revolt.

Within the colleges and universities, students are absorbing and discussing the lessons of the recent events, notably the first national student strike in American history sparked off by the Kent State massacre, and are replacing or supplementing regular courses of study with political meetings and study groups.

The Jackson shootings of Black students have done the Left the favour of uniting Black workers with students and Black students with White students in common militant opposition to the government.

DISORDER AND DISSENT

Although the lines of battle are still confused outside the boundary of the Indo-Chinese war, unmistakable signs of radical political change are becoming visible in the day-to-day events, the apparently sporadic and isolated clashes between the forces of Law and Order and the forces of militant disorder and peaceful dissent.

Even more significant, the following day, May 22nd, trade unions joined with students in a "Stop the War" rally, attended by over 25,000 people and sponsored by the following unions: The Amalgamated Clothing Workers; United Auto Workers; Drug and Hospital; Electrical; Bakery and Confectionary; Hotel and Restaurant; Furniture; State, County and Municipal Employees; Jewelry; Store Workers; Teamsters; Distributive; and Motion Picture Operators unions.

Far from isolating themselves by their violent protest, students are now being joined in protest by businessmen (though not in violent protest yet, of course) and by workers.

In the first two weeks of May (see NY Post, May 13th) businessmen walked in peaceful protest against the spreading of the Cambodian war in Broad Street, New York, after which they were reviled by hired "hard hats", the new working class instrument of an old political gangsterism, who sang "God Bless America", shouted "Commie bastards", and spat on those who resisted their crude chauvinism.

On March 21st, over 60,000 people assembled in front of New York City Hall and demonstrated, with the open participation of the police. (NY Times, 22nd May)

Meanwhile, frantic and futile committees within the liberal orthodoxy are formed one after another in an attempt to salvage what might

have remained of American democracy's credibility. A group of "Distinguished Americans", including New York Mayor Lindsay, reported the NY Post on May 14th, have formed a "Save Our Constitution Committee", the basic idea of which: "is to force a real test of the constitutionality of this war, before the supreme court ... saving the country by demanding that the law prevail. The most lawless man in the country right now is the President, and this movement might bring him under control, without destroying everything with him." (my emphasis)

But a very discouraging event occurred:

"Newton Mass., May 9th, State Representative H. James Shea Jr, sponsor of the Massachusetts legislation designed to test the constitutionality of the war in Vietnam died of a gunshot wound at his home early today". (NY Times, May 10th). Note the ambiguity of the news item: was the man murdered? ... or did he commit suicide out of sheer despair?

At the same time, Congressmen in Washington, faced with the prospect of autumn elections, are jumping on the peace bandwagon with a kind of shameless and futile frenzy. They began by "repealing" the Tonkin Resolution, the effect of which was to leave the President as free, if not freer than before, to carry out his ghoulissh operations anywhere and anytime he wishes, for he remains legally and unquestionably the "Commander-in-Chief" of the American nation. Next, these fair-weather doves tried to launch what has come to be known as the "Church-Cooper Amendment":

"In its final form, the amendment denies the Administration funds to pay foreign troops in Cambodia and to conduct air strikes in direct support of Cambodian forces. The measure could, however, be weakened or even killed when Senate and House committees meet to reconcile their versions of the military sales bill. And while the Senate doves will stoutly resist any significant changes, it is questionable even if they prevail, whether Cooper-Church will have much practical effect, for Mr Nixon has maintained all along that he has ample legal authority to conduct the war as he sees fit." (Newsweek, July 13th)

A less exhibitionist but equally farcical side-show was produced by the US Supreme Court, which ruled on June 15th that "conscientious objectors may be excused military service for reasons other than religious beliefs." However, exemption could not be granted to those whose beliefs are not "deeply held", and whose objections, to war, Justice Hugo Black adds, rest solely upon "considerations of policy, pragmatism or expediency".

MILITARY AID

Robbed of their political dividends and threatened by "disaster" at home, the White House hawks have "withdrawn" American troops from Cambodia, but leaving behind heavy military aid to the tune of \$7.9 million, with the promise of \$50 million to come in the next year. This has provoked Senator Mike Mansfield to make a very telling protest:

"I believe it is time that we stop making mercenaries out of allies and allies out of mercenaries".

As proof of this, Senator Fulbright pointed out that a Thai lieutenant-general serving in Cambodia received an annual "overseas" allowance of \$5,400, while an American officer of the same rank only \$780. (Newsweek, July 13th)

The old-time slave entrepreneur is not dead: the immortal principle of American foreign policy seems to be, if you can't beat them, buy them; if you can't buy them, buy their enemies. God Bless America.

AUST. & N.Z.

by Lee Patterson

A second national Vietnam Moratorium is scheduled for mid-September following the success of the three-day assault on "business as usual" held in Australia last May.

The organisation and administration of this second non-violent mass national protest against Australian participation in the Indo-Chinese war, will be almost identical to that built for the May Moratorium, which was led by the Federal Labour M.P., Dr Jim Cairns. Public support for the second Moratorium is expected to be far greater than it was for the first. This is principally because of the spectacular failure of the Gorton administration's attempts to smear and discredit the anti-war peace workers involved in the complex organisation of Australia's first Moratorium.

THE TIDE TURNS

It is anticipated that this sudden disappearance of gullibility on the part of Australians will bring big numbers to the Moratorium demonstrations in capital cities and country centres.

A pre-Moratorium poll last May showed 75% of those polled across Australia to be in favour of an immediate withdrawal of Australian troops. Only 19% desired a continued Australian and Allied presence in Indo-China.

Even the right-wing Bulletin had to contradict the Attorney-General when he tried to label the AICD, key organisers of the Moratorium, as "a well known Communist front-organisation". The Australian, Rupert Murdoch's national daily, has adopted a strong anti-war editorial stance - it praised Dr Cairns for his part in the May Moratorium, saying: "The Government and Mr Hughes succeeded only in discrediting themselves."

VIETNAM HYSTERIA

"Mr Hughes' speech was an extraordinary tissue of conjecture, smear, insinuation and double thinking. From a Government which has abdicated its responsibility for formulating a policy on Vietnam, the hysteria of his attack on Dr Cairns may not be as artificial as it sounded. The Government has no effective answers left for its critics. It has locked itself into an American policy which it finds increasingly defined against its previously defined interests. But the certainty of being embarrassed by demonstrations gives the Government no valid grounds for opposing them."

"Mr Hughes was hard-pressed to find even a red smear to frighten away possible supporters of the campaign. It is a Moratorium on "business as usual" at home while a disastrous war continues in Vietnam; a harsh reminder of facts the Australian Government would prefer forgotten; an exercise of democratic freedoms to express strongly held convictions with due force."

"This is what the Government is attempting to deny its opponents."

"In the abject state of Australian policy on Vietnam the Moratorium campaign deserves support. Dr Cairns

deserves support for leading it. If these activities help to hasten withdrawal of Australian forces and to end the war in Vietnam they will be a signal achievement for the democratic process."

The fevered anti-Moratorium campaign led by the Attorney-General, Tom Hughes, and another senior minister promised Australians that the demonstration would be a violent, Communist-infested, blood-stained debacle. It was of course the biggest and most peaceful demonstration in Australia's history. Police admitted that they would have found more violence at a first-grade Sydney football match than they found anywhere in Australia at Moratorium demonstrations.

The collapse of the Liberal Party's favorite and most cherished technique for crippling and gagging public criticism of the policies has done two things:

1. It tore another strip off the Gorton government's already threadbare credibility - revealing vast political immaturity and transparent panic at the public's growing opposition to the war.

2. This public embarrassment appears to have lifted the scales off a good many eyes. Offers of help from members of the public anxious to assist the Moratorium, now in its run-up stages, and pledges to march at the big demonstrations are flooding in from Australians of all political persuasions and varying backgrounds.

The headmaster of one of Australia's most famous public schools, Mr D.A. Trathen of Newington College Sydney, sparked off furious public debate when he sent a letter to the Sydney Morning Herald encouraging young men "of conscience" not to register for National Service. The Board of Governors of the Methodist college sacked him the next day but were forced to reinstate him since it was found that what they had done was illegal.

Mr Trathen has since been reinstated by 48 votes to 3

Trathen's letter read, in part: "The Government is degrading the dignity of 'authority'.... The Government is proving it can't govern.... As an ex-serviceman, a private citizen and a man of law and Law, I publicly encourage 20-year-olds in good conscience and in loyalty to God rather than Caesar to defy the National Service Act.... Mr Gorton and members of Cabinet, for Christ's sake stop."

In New Zealand, the amazing Sir Keith Holyoake attended a rally of returned servicemen and told them that he would not be deterred from his policies in Vietnam by demonstrations or protests. New Zealand had a responsibility to deal with Communist aggression.

Holyoake however said he recognised the right of peaceful dissent. "But I would remind protestors and anti-protestors too that freedom to dissent is one of the freedoms for which New Zealanders are fighting and dying in Vietnam", he said.

Sir Keith, like so many other New Zealanders and Australians, suffers from the dreaded mental aberration called the Sampan Syndrome. These people believe that hordes (approximately 4,629 million) of inscrutable orientals are float-

ing inexorably southwards to occupy Australia and New Zealand, at which time all decent Aussies and Kiwis will have their footballs and wives confiscated and will be forced to work as waiters in state Chinese restaurants. Sufferers from the Sampan Syndrome think the only way they can cure their condition is to murder vast numbers of innocent Vietnamese, support and maintain corrupt and tyrannical governments and make idiotic speeches in vain attempts at justifying an immoral, atrocious and indefensible mistake.

V.S.C. MEETING

Dr. MALCOLM SEGALL
recently returned from Vietnam & Cambodia
talks about the war and the people of Indochina

at

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CAMBODIAN
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SITUATION

C.S. GAS

THE WAR IN
THAILAND

'Of course I'm
with you, Uncle Sam'

editorial—
TORY S.E. ASIA
POLICY