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far east

Reporter

The Rising
NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLES
OF THE PEOPLES
IN A KEY AREA OF SOUTHEAST ASIA
Coming Events Cast Their Shadows!

Maud Russell



**THE RISING NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLES
OF THE PEOPLES
IN A KEY AREA OF SOUTHEAST ASIA
Coming Events Cast Their Shadows!**



All over the world there is a peoples' struggle for national liberation. Colonialism, neocolonialism, imperialism are facing defeat. In Asia the revolutionary peoples in four countries - China, Outer Mongolia, in north Korea, in north Vietnam - have already ended the old order of feudalism and colonialism and have established the new, the socialist, order. The current struggle of all the people of Vietnam, north and south, adds decisive proof that successful revolution is the order of the day. The shadow of further defeat for the counter-revolutionary forces of the world daily grows larger and darker.

One major section of this world-wide lengthening shadow is the liberation struggles of the peoples of Burma, Cambodia, India, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. They are learning from their successful Asian brothers the way out of the oppressive, exploiting old order. These peoples in a key area of Southeast Asia are already marching on the revolutionary path to the new order.

In every one of these six countries in Southeast Asia - Burma, Cambodia, India, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam there are revolutionary movements to liberate their peoples from the limitations and oppressions of the old society and from exploitation whether by colonialism, neocolonialism, or the collaboration of their native rulers with the alien exploiters. These peoples want liberation from the old society, they want to be free of any imposition of Western patterns of society, they want to build their own new societies; they want national liberation.

These revolutionary movements struggle against the reactionary leaders and regimes of their countries. But these regimes could not continue to exist were it not for their dependence on the United States. The United States is the major force against which the revolutionaries struggle - for the United States is the counter-revol-

ionary in today's world; not one of these native reactionary regimes would last were the United States to withdraw its support.

The United States is quite explicit about its role as a counter-revolutionary: "A top-secret directive issued July 18th 1949 by Secretary of State Acheson stated, in part, 'It is a fundamental decision of American policy that the United States does not intend to permit further extension of Communist domination on the continent of Asia or in the Southeast Asia area. Will you please draw up for me possible programs of action relating to various specific areas not now under Communist control in Asia under which the United States will have the best chance of achieving this purpose? These programs should contain proposed courses of action, steps to be taken in implementing such programs, should estimate the cost to the United States and the extent to which the United States forces would or would not be involved'." (Richard E Ward CSM* 3/23/63) The Christian Science Monitor goes on, in a subsequent article, to make quite explicit this counter-revolutionary policy of the United States: "United States' actions in Vietnam have been and remain an intrinsic part of a global counter-revolutionary program whose tactics have remained the same...The United States was determined to keep Indo-China within the world capitalist arena...The Chinese revolution shattered American plans for establishing an investor's paradise in China.. and resulted in redoubled determination to keep the rest of Asia within the orbit of the United States or its imperialist partners. This motive, not any Chinese threat, was behind the 'fundamental decision' of July 1949." (CSM Ward 3/30/68)

One of the tactics used by the spokesmen for United States policy is to present these struggles of the people as "insurgencies" - as mere insubordination, mere revolt against the dictatorial cliques that the United States would like to present as "the legal authorities", trying to hide the fact that it is revolution, peoples' struggle to get a new society, that the United States is trying to stop. So, watch out for the use of "insurgent", of "insurgencies" in the news reports in the American press. What the United States is really up against is revolution!

* CSM - Christian Science Monitor

Some Southeast Asian Revolutionary Peoples

United States counter-revolution has already suffered a serious ideological setback in that the revolutionary movements of the peoples of Indo-China (what was Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam) Burma, India and Thailand are learning from China, Korea and now Vietnam the way out of the old order. Their ideological advance is the precursor to eventual defeat of imperialism. They already have their own organizations, their own armed forces, their policies, programs and actions. The military and political defeat of the counter-revolutionary policy and posture of the United States in Southeast Asia is only a matter of time - and protracted struggle!

Burma

For over twenty eight years there has been a Communist Party in Burma; for nearly twenty of these years it has been engaged in revolutionary civil war; by 1967 its guerrillas were active in 67% of the country, in 31 of Burma's 50 counties. It has worked at consolidating its class basis in the rural areas chiefly by relying on the poor peasants and farm laborers and on this basis uniting with the middle peasants - having learned the process of "protracted struggle" from the Chinese experience. That civil war does exist in Burma is indicated in an article in Eastern World a British business journal: "Altogether 4147 multi-colored insurgents surrendered during the last eleven months of 1965, with 1672 pieces of firearms and 34,400 rounds of ammunition." (Jan/Feb 1966). In addition, "There are three ethnic groups that have been in more or less open revolt against the Burmese Government for the last two decades." (NYT* 3/30/68) "There are the Kachins and Shans, non-Burmese people, almost all of whom have thrown up some form of insurgency against whatever authority happened to be in Rangoon." (NYT 1/30/68) The Chicago Daily News says that these groups "have been alive for many years, some of them clear back to Burma's independence in 1948." (5/18/68) A third ethnic group is the Karens. "These three groups make up 20 to 30 percent of Burma's population of twenty five million." (NYT 1/20/69)

*NYT - New York Times

One of the worries of the regime in Rangoon is the fact that the leadership of the revolutionary peasants and the revolutionary ethnic peoples - each of which has been pursuing its independent opposition to Rangoon - have formed an alliance. The Working Peoples Daily, Burma's foremost newspaper, expresses its worry that "there may be some sort of headquarters giving, or trying to give, a centralized command to lawless forces operating in the Kachin and Shan states." (NYT 3/20/68) The Chinese press mentions "The National Democratic Front". (NCNA* 5/17/68)

Hunger is one of the causes of revolt. According to Rangoon reports, 500 people, because of unbearable hunger, "in an area which has produced surplus rice but where the people were on the verge of starvation" began stealing rice from government mills and craft in the port of Akyab. Rangoon mobilized troops for the suppression of these people. "Col Maung Kyaw, vice-chairman of the Security Administrative Committee, disclosed at a press conference on August 14th that 18 people were killed and 49 wounded by the government troops; he also disclosed that in two other incidents people, led by the peoples' armed forces, had seized 500 bags of rice in Kawa township in Pegu District, as well as attacking a train loaded with rice in Paung area of Prome District." (NCNA 8/17/67)

The revolutionaries do have their own armed forces, with their "guerrillas active in many of the administrative areas, such as Pegu, Irrawaddy, Tenasserim, Akyab and Upper Burma", according to the Chinese press (5/17/68); and this press goes on to quote from the Rangoon press - "Armed forces of the different nationalities repeatedly broke into towns and cities..attacking police stations and depots; on March 3rd 30 men of the armed forces of the National Democratic Front raided Phato in Pegu; early on the morning of March 4th 200 men of the armed forces of the Karen nationality took a police station in Toungoo District in the Pegu area; and on March 5th 30 men of the Peoples Armed Forces assaulted a police post in a rubber plantation and burned down a chemical fertilizer depot and other buildings; in late March the Peoples Armed Forces of the Communist Party of Burma raided a police station in Prome District, capturing all the arms in the station." These people's armed forces have "made attacks

*NCNA - New China News Agency

on the Rangoon-Prome railway; they have blown up armoured trains, capturing arms and ammunition; they have burned down bridges on the Pintebu-Benmauk highway in north Burma and have set fire to a government ship in the Delta of Pantanaw." The listings of "attacks", "capturing arms and ammunition", "ambushing police units and troops", "raiding towns", "burning government granaries" "executing reactionary police officers, local despots and other reactionaries" goes on and on - all giving evidence of organized and growing revolutionary action in Burma.

Cambodia

Cambodia too has its rebellious people, in spite of the usual picture of a people ruled by a genial, popular, accomplished Prince who takes a neutralist stand, at times criticising American policy, and refusing to take an out-and-out stand against China.

The New York Times of March 24th 1968 reports that the worry for Prince Sihanouk is "insurgency among his own people" - that "after years of blaming South Vietnam and the United States for harboring all sorts of aggressive designs on Cambodian territorial integrity, the Head of State now sees himself confronted with another danger closer at home." "Prince Sihanouk said today that a Cambodian 'Vietminh' movement was trying to gain control of areas in the country; he said the Cambodian 'Vietminh' had recently forced inhabitants of several villages in the northwestern province of Battambang to leave their homes and and take to the forest." (NYT 2/16/68)

"The Communist-led rebellion in Cambodia is reported to have increased in intensity and to have spread to new areas. In recent days Prince Norodom Sihanouk has stepped up his public attacks against the rebels...According to Western analysts who follow Cambodian affairs, the Government-controlled Cambodian press reports almost every day of skirmishes, raids, bomb incidents, minings, and shootings in the western provinces along the border with Thailand, especially in the province of Battambang. Experienced Western diplomatic observers estimate that a thous-

and or more men may be involved in the rebellion, including three former Deputies in the Cambodian National Assembly." (NYT 3/14/68)

This Cambodian rebellion first flared up in Battambang Province, about 150 miles northwest of the capital of Phompenh during the first Indo-China war against French rule in the nineteen fifties. But in the last two months knowledgeable analysts have seen indications that the rebellion has been spreading into the provinces of Kompong Speu, Kong and Kampot, along Cambodia's western frontier and touching the border of Thailand." (NYT 3/14/68) "Western observers note that not only have the number of reported skirmishes increased but also that the Government reports on the size of the rebel bands now run up to fifty men in an ambush." (NYT 3/14/68)

India

India's image as a bulwark of democracy in Asia has fast been fading as revolutionary movements among the masses - the peasants, the national minorities, the workers - have exposed the reactionary nature of the ruling authorities; also exposed is their dependence for food, not on the Indian people, but on the United States. These revolutionary movements have increased in numbers, have spread over wide areas and have gained strength through organization and experience. And, most fundamentally, learning from the Chinese experience, they have found an ideology that maps the road to victory over the old society and leads to a people's society.

The Indian revolutionaries have their own journal - "Liberation". Its first issue, in December 1967, states: "In India an unprecedented revolutionary situation is fast developing" and sees the process of revolution: "The first task of the Indian revolutionaries is to propagate and disseminate revolutionary theory. India's revolution must put in practice Chairman Mao's theory on people's war. India is a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country" and the only path of the people's democratic revolution is "to build up revolutionary bases in the rural areas through agrarian revolution under proletarian leadership and subsequently to encircle the urban centers by expanding

these revolutionary bases; to organize people's liberation forces among the peasants' guerrilla forces and to lead the revolution to victory by capturing the cities." They also see that "revolution can be brought to its successful culmination only through long-drawn and hard struggles."

And "Liberation" goes on: "The brave peasants in Naxalbari, armed with Mao Tse-tung's thought, have raised the banner of revolt against feudal oppression, against the rule of the reactionary classes. Naxalbari marks the beginning of a new era in India's history - the beginning of the end of the old regime of exploitation by imperialism and its parasites."

"Naxalbari" has become the symbol, the rallying slogan of revolutionary movements in India. It comes from a small peasant revolt in Naxalbari, an area in Darjeeling where in June 1967 "landless peasants were encouraged to seize farms; though later they were forced by the police to give up the land 'Naxalbari' has become a sort of 'Remember the Alamo' for Marxist Communists in India." (CSM 4/3/68). A play very popular among students in Calcutta, called "Teer" which means "arrow" draws its inspiration from that peasant revolt in Naxalbari. The play "shows the peasant uprising based on the teachings of Mao Tse-tung.... 'Chairman Mao's thoughts are arrows.'" (NYT 4/7/68) The example of Naxalbari has spread widely an ideology that shows the way out, the way to vanquish oppressors, the road to genuine independence and a better society. Indian revolutionaries gain from the experience of China. "Naxalbari" may well be "the single spark that will start a prairie fire". The prairies of India are wide, providing ample space for revolutionary bases, revolutionary manoeuvring and the build up of a people's force that, with their already correct ideology, will defeat all counter-revolution, domestic and foreign.

The main base of revolution in India is the mass of impoverished peasantry. They represent the classic picture of semi-feudalism. 150,000,000 of India's 400,000,000 peasants are completely landless; eight months of the year they live in a state of starvation or near starvation, eating tree roots and leaves. Another 150,000,000 peasants own such little plots of land that they cannot afford fert-

ilizer, irrigation or insecticide to increase production; they often must eat the seeds needed for next year's planting thus becoming the victims of usurers from whom they must borrow for the purchase of seeds. Then the landlords collect half the crop and the usurers' loans take most of the rest; hundreds of millions of peasants starve. This fertile ground of revolution produces peasant revolts which go on despite the Indian Government's deals for American wheat - wheat which largely enriches Indian speculators and officials profiteering from the needs of their own people.

Inspired by the Naxalbari peoples' armed struggle and seizure of land, the peasants in many places are developing struggles against the exploiting landlords and are using force to take the land. The Times of India revealed on August 14th 1967 that Naxalbari movements are emerging in a number of mountainous regions in the Darjeeling District. On August 9th the Indian Statesman said "A Naxalbari is emerging" at Kurupam in Srikakulam District. In Assam some 5000 peasants recently staged a joint demonstration in Karmiganj.

"The Indian papers disclosed that in Tripura, south of Assam State, the revolutionaries in the Indian Communist Party have gone all out to arouse the peasants to wage a struggle to seize land in the past eight months or so, especially after the armed struggle in the Naxalbari area. They are particularly active in the heavily forested hilly areas. The Indian Home Minister in a recent speech in Parliament admitted that the peasants' struggle is developing in some districts in the northern part of Bihar State." (NCNA 12/16/67)

"Landless peasant in some areas of Assam State and the Union territory of Tripura, east India, recently launched a struggle to seize land. The Indian press reported that in North Lakhimpur and Nowgong Districts of Assam State militant landless peasants, following the example of the revolutionary peasants of Naxalbari in West Bengal, have risen up to seize land from the landlords and the reactionary government. In some places the peasants seized land by force of arms. The reactionary Hindustani Standard said 'These are not isolated cases and appear to

to be directed by some organized agency - that the revolutionaries who have led the Naxalbari peasants' armed struggle might be supporting these struggles." (NCNA 12/16/67)

"Revolutionary Indian peasants in certain areas of India are rising up vigorously in the current harvesting season to take by force the land and the crops from the landlords and distribute them to the people. They are following the example of the revolutionary peasants in the Naxalbari area, according to a New Delhi report. In Bahraich District, Uttar Pradesh, the revolutionary peasants took back several thousand acres of land from the landlords and distributed them to the people. A number of panic-stricken landlords have run away. The local peasants are organizing themselves in preparation for a Naxalbari struggle." (NCNA 12/23/67)

In Bihar Province in northwest India the peasants have taken up arms to regain land. The Hindustani Times (2/5/68) reported that "large tracts of land in and around Mandanpur forests have been forcibly taken back by several thousand landless laborers" and that "some of the Indian Communist Party revolutionaries who have led the struggle in Naxalbari were carrying on organizational and mobilizational work there, coming there to plan and guide a Naxalbari type of struggle in the entire border region." Among the 50 million people in the state of Bihar at least 40 million, mostly peasants, have not had enough food. The armed struggle for land of the north Bihar peasants shows that the masses of the rural population are rising to fight against the reactionary regime. The brutal suppression by the government can never put them down but will only make them take the revolutionary path with more resolution.

Hindustani Times revealed that revolutionary peasants in Srikakulam District in Andhra State and the adjoining area of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh have unfolded Naxalbari type of struggle; that in these areas an alarming increase in the clandestine manufacture of crude muzzle guns is causing concern to local officials. In Katihar in Bihar State the revolutionary peasants have waged many struggles

earlier this year to reap the harvests for their own consumption. Hundreds of peasants harvested the spring crops over thousands of acres shouting "Harvests to the tillers". (NCNA 3/9/68)

Indian national minority groups are also a part of the revolutionary forces struggling against the reactionary rulers of India. "The whole eastern border of Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and the Mizo Hills is now a hot-bed of unrest." (London Times 3/24/68). The three major rebelling national minorities are the Nagas, the Mizos, the Kukis. "Many government officials in New Delhi feel that the country's real danger comes from their eastern frontier in Assam, which borders on Burma. India is already engaged in a draining guerrilla war in the remote Mizo Hills with tribes who insist on their independence. Further to the north is the newly created State of Nagaland, where the tribes earlier fought the Indian army for over a decade in a war of independence." (CSM 4/3/68). "The State of Nagaland was proclaimed the 16th state in the Indian Union five years ago" but still as a part of India; "Now the underground Nagaland leaders who, proclaiming themselves representatives of the Federal Government of Nagaland, are demanding an independent Nagaland. The Indian authorities refuse further negotiations with these underground leaders until they acknowledge that their state belongs to India. Ten years of fighting between the Indian army and the Naga rebels, starting in 1954, failed to elicit such an acknowledgement." (NYT 4/28/68)

"Now the Indian authorities are stepping up their pressures against the Nagaland underground to abandon their demand for an independent state" which "covers 6000 square miles and has a population of 400,000." (NYT 4/28/67)

"Increased government pressure has been backed by sending fresh detachments of armed police to Nagaland to patrol the villages and to prevent the hostiles, the militant members of the Naga movement, from collecting taxes." (NYT 4/28/68) Official Indian sources say that more than 200 Naga insurgents were killed on the India-Burma border by Indian security forces in the last week..The skirmishes on the border are regarded as the most serious incidents in the renewed conflict in Nagaland." (NYT 5/28/68)

"On April 3rd and May 1st armed Naga forces attacked Indian government patrol units in Ukhrul and Saddar hilly area. Last week the Indian authorities disclosed that they had arrested 14 groups of saboteurs in the State of Assam who had received their training from the Nagas." (NYT 4/4/68)

"The Mizo tribesmen began their armed uprising on February 28th 1966 to oppose national oppression." (NCNA 11/23/67). "In March and April, according to a Reuter report, the Mizo forces killed and wounded more than 40 Indian officers and men. In an engagement on March 20th the armed Mizo forces killed 20 Indian troops and wounded 7 others in a jungle area near the capital of Manipur." (NCNA 5/13/68)

The armed forces of the Nagas, Mizos and other national minorities are united in their struggle for independence. The newspaper Hindustani Standard (5/3/68) revealed that contacts between the armed forces of the Nagas, Mizos and Kukis had been officially confirmed in New Delhi. Mizo and Kuki armed forces had made joint raids on Indian troops in Manipur. The newspaper Indian Express reported on May 8th that Naga, Mizo and Kuki forces had moved to the Mizo Hills to help the local people in their struggle. "The Nagas and the Mizos have united with the armed forces of the other tribes for guerrilla actions over a large area. According to the Hindustani Standard, they are now equipped with automatic weapons and mortars and are seeking battle on their own initiative, pressing down on Union territory of Manipur from Assam State, striking at troops and police; they have grown strong in battle. The Kukis, Zeliangs and Manipur tribes in northeast India have also taken part in the armed struggle of the Nagas and Mizos...The Nagas and the Mizos are reported to be carrying on intensive work in arousing and organizing the masses." (NCNA 8/22/67)

Then there are the workers in the cities - expressing themselves through strikes against conditions of work, against shortage of food, against rising taxes, and on political issues. In November 1967 a general strike stilled the normal life of Calcutta. The people armed with bricks and firecrackers fought battles with the police from behind street barricades; the demonstrators burned busses and

and buildings and attacked police stations. The actions of the police, unusually brutal, not only indicate the authorities rising fears of the workers, but serve to bring increasing unity into the people's ranks. The strike spread throughout the whole province of West Bengal; and even in upstate areas, which usually don't respond to general strikes, support was widespread. "In a nation subject to separatist tendencies, where the identity of the people is first with their province and then with their country, the intensification of such tendencies is highly significant," observed the National Guardian's Indian correspondent, Bteh Roy. (12/2/67)

"At Siguri town which is situated in the peasants' armed struggle area, the workers went on strike to militarily oppose government atrocities against the peasants. The revolutionary peoples of West Bengal have realized that all reactionary ruling classes always hold a tight grip over major cities; therefor the revolutionaries are sending their major forces into the rural areas to mobilize the peasants and strive to build up revolutionary bases." (NCNA 12/2/67)

In May 1967 there were armed uprisings of the workers at the Kamanga Dam Project in Uttar Pradesh, and the government there called out troops and police to suppress them. On July 11th striking workers in the Dhanbad District in Bihar Province were fired upon by the police.

The advanced character of the upsurge of revolutionary peasants, national minorities and workers is already reflected in the Communists' success in one of India's main income-producing states, Kerala. "Since India achieved independence Kerala has been in a state of political turmoil... The Communists won their first election in the state in 1957. When this Communist rule caused a civil disobedience movement that threatened to blow up into civil war, New Delhi stepped in and took over the state in what the Indian constitution calls 'President's rule' (which provides for dissolving a state government and calling for new elections). In 1967 the victors in the election were a united front government, dominated by the pro-Peking Communists.... The secretary of the Kerala Marxist Party has announced that he is going to turn Kerala into another Yenan, the Chinese

province where Mao Tse-tung trained his followers for the day when they would take over China. (CSM 5/4/68) As a part of that "take over process" a "land rush is going on in the south India state of Kerala... The Marxists and their allies have moved in not only on privately-held land but also on government forest preserves and areas set aside for dams and other projects. All over Kerala little huts with fast growing banana plantations are appearing in the suburbs of towns, along highways and canals - anywhere the squatter can find space. This 'agrarian revolution' closely follows the thoughts of Mao Tse-tung." (CSM 5/3/68)

The Congress Party government of India is less and less able to fool the people with "parliamentary democracy" or "Gandhism" - the people are learning through their own experience how worthless is that path. They are in the process of casting aside any spell of "peaceful transition to socialism (also less stressed by the Indian authorities) and are steadily implementing their new revolutionary ideology.

Laos

Laos, originally a part of French Indo-China, now an "independent" state, is subject not only to internal political division but also has a "government" that serves as a pawn for United States counter-revolutionary plans. The Geneva Accord recognized the existence of a Communist bloc, along with the neutralist and conservative blocs, and set up a "coalition government". This arrangement laid the foundation for subsequent intrusion of American support and use of both the conservative bloc and the neutralist bloc. Now, as Newsweek points out, "Laos and Thailand have insurgencies of their own." (4/22/68)

"Heavy fighting was reported today between government troops and the pro-Communist forces. A Royal Laotian officer, Captain Civilas, said the enemy still controlled roads leading to Thakhek, a key town on the Mekong river, across the river from the big United States airforce base in Nakhon Province. Thakhek was the target of a three-pronged drive by enemy forces that drove within three miles of the town earlier this week." (NYT 3/17/68) "Pathet Lao guerrillas

this week continued to surround the southern Laotian capitals of Saravana and Attoupeu and the district town of Lao Ngam, shelling them with up to 100 mortar rounds daily, according to the New York Times of March 4th." (Guardian 4/20/68) "The increasing pace of the fighting is underscored by the number of government casualties since January. The official count is three thousand dead, the highest figure for a similar period in this confusing, sporadic war. At the same time the civilians have withdrawn as fields and roads have turned increasingly insecure near this quiet somnolent capital of Vientiane." (NYT 4/14/68) "Pathet Lao guerrillas put out of action more than 11000 Laotian government troops in the first five months of this dry season, from November 1967 to March 1968 according to Pathet Lao radio. During the period guerrillas engaged the enemy in nearly 600 actions, shot down or destroyed 96 enemy aircraft, sank 24 motor boats, blew up several bridges, captured or destroyed 35 military vehicles and captured more than 3000 weapons. In addition they recovered territory and liberated about 10000 people." (Guardian 5/11/68)

"Pathet Lao guerrillas put more than 140 Laotian government troops out of action in a series of battles in Kieng Khou province, northern Laos, the first week of April. And in southern Laos guerrillas wiped out more than 600 enemy troops during the month of March. In one action guerrillas repeatedly shelled a United States air base in Attoupeu province, according to the Chinese press." (Guardian 4/27/68)

"The war in the north is only one of those currently raging in Laos. The other equally ferocious struggle is in the southern part of the country. It moved into high gear toward the end of February... 'They, the Pathet Lao, can take any towns anytime they want' admitted one senior Laotian commander in the south." (Newsweek 4/22/68)

"In the past, the end of the rainy season has meant the end of the annual offensive staged by the Pathet Lao, the indigenous Communist insurgents. The Chief of Staff of the Royal Laotian Army in an interview said, 'The arrival of the rainy season meant nothing this year. The Communists are not going to stop this year. They have better equip-

ment, more troops, and better supplies. Since last fall the insurgents have conducted the most intensive and punishing military campaign of recent years. They have overrun government outposts at will, killed upwards of 3000 government soldiers in bitter fighting in the north, southern and central sections of the country'. Observers estimate that the enemy exercises some control over 75% of the land, though three fourths of the population live in areas still held by the government. It is estimated that 13 insurgent battalions, about 6500 men, remain poised around the strategic capitals of Saravana and Attoupeu. The commander of the southern region, General Phasouk Somly, acknowledged in an interview in a Laotian paper, May 7th, that the enemy could take the towns with little effort." (NYT 5/12/68)

Thailand

Thailand is the one Southeast Asian country that has maintained its independence through the years, never having been a colonial area. But today the ruling regime has lined up with the counter-revolutionary West, being a member of SEATO and providing the United States with bases in the war against the Vietnamese (and other peoples). On numerous occasions the Thai leaders have urged stepped up bombing of Vietnam, "have opposed any suspension of the bombing of north Vietnam" but at the same time "The Thais face a persistent threat by a slowly growing band of insurgents variously estimated at from 1300 to 2450 men in the impoverished northeast." (NYT 2/20/67)

"The struggle for Thailand, far from waiting the outcome of the Vietnam war, is already under way... The Communist offensive is a serious one. And the time is long past when assassinations and ambushes and gunfights in the provinces remote from Bangkok's rule could be dismissed as the work of 'bandits' or 'trigger-happy delinquents'." (CSM 4/26/68)

In December 1966 the New York Times was reporting "Pre-occupied with 'Communist suppression' most top Thai officials in the troubled northeast have given low priority to civic-action programs... The problem of security has taken precedence. Guerrillas of the two year old Thailand Patriot-

ic Front have been particularly active in this key province of Nakhon Phanom; four of the province's nine districts are regarded as 'sensitive'. The province embraces part of the guerrillas' Phuban Mountain refuge...The Front has focused on building a following in the poorer and more remote villages of Sakon-Nakhon and five other northeastern provinces; its chief technique has been meetings; a guerrilla band cordons off a village and makes a soft-sell appeal for support. Speakers promise villagers an end to police abuse, official corruption, poverty and 'the American takeover' of Thailand. According to Thai sources Sajonakhon Province, with a population of 426,000 and 600 scattered villages, in a virtually roadless and telephone-less area of rice paddies and forest, the size of Long Island, is still short of adequate security. There are said to be 300 full-time armed guerrillas in the province, on the northern edge of the main guerrilla refuge in the Phuban Mountains. Last July three of the province's eight districts were rated as 'sensitive' - the southern districts bordering on the mountains. Now, the Thai sources said, the Communists, without increasing their numbers, are operating in parts of all eight districts."(NYT12/25/66)

By the end of 1967 the Washington Post was reporting about Communist pressures rising in parts of the Southeast Asian Kingdom(of Thailand..ed), with the drab villages of the northeast considered the ripest rebel region" and that "to a lesser extent similar problems nag the mountainous northwest, an area of remote ethnic tribes, and the southern provinces where local Communist guerrillas left over from the Malayan insurrection cooperate with the Moslem separatists." (12/7/67)

My March 1967 the New York Times was reporting "For the first time in more than a year guerrilla bands have sought rather than avoided conflict with the Thai security patrols. Moreover, guerrilla bands have been seen in new areas close to the Cambodian border. Communist bands have left their strongholds in the northeastern provinces, Sakonakhon and Nakhon and sought head-on combat with the Thai security units in Ubon Province."(3/12/67)

By 1968 the Christian Science Monitor was noting the widening spread of revolutionary action in Thailand: "in

the country's southern panhandle", in "the poor and neglected provinces of the northeast", and in "the remote mountainous country of northern Thailand. Trouble started in November. Initially most of the trouble was in Nan Province. But now the major action appears to be in the eastern part of Chiang Rai Province along the mountainous border with Laos." (4/10/68)

The National Observer too tells of the spread of revolutionary action and some of the causes which lead to revolt. "Communist-led guerrillas have opened a third front in the simmering and stubborn insurgency in Thailand. It might be the most serious threat yet to the strongly pro-American Bangkok Government....Communist insurgency in Thailand isn't new. Chinese guerrillas chased out of Malay a decade ago have operated in the wild hot jungles of the Thai-Malay border. Millions of dollars, most of it supplied by the United States, have been poured into the northeast of Thailand over the past five years to combat guerrillas there. But the trouble in the north, along the Burma border and not far from China, is indeed quite new. Since last fall hardened Communists have been working in the barren hills of northern Thailand whose residents still speak the dialect of their ancestors and who have never cared much for the rest of their countrymen. These northerners have virtually been outcasts in their adopted land.. Only about a third of the 140 tribal villages in Nan Province, where the trouble is centered, have schools, and even here the best a child can hope to learn is a few Thai phrases and rudimentary arithmetic....."

The National Observer goes on to detail some of the grievances of the people. In one case the farmers were not paid for their produce; but still the officials sent soldiers to collect the bribes from the farmers; they refused and the soldiers, angered at having to return empty handed fired over the heads of the villagers who in turn ambushed the soldiers. Then when the villagers went in to the provincial town they were ambushed by the police and some were killed. "How the army reacted was typical - the capital, Bangkok, moved Royal Army troops to Nan; air force planes swooped low over hill villages suspected of harboring guerrillas, strafing huts and lobbing canisters of napalm onto the thatched roofs.....nearly 20,000 Nan

tribesmen were turned into refugees." Even tribesmen loyal to the government had grievances: for instance, - urged to register their guns at the provincial town they did so, having to walk 15 miles across the backland trails to police headquarters where the police promptly confiscated their guns. When guerrillas kill border patrol men the villagers are made to suffer - the government retaliating by bombing and burning the villages. Commented the National Observer, "Thereby accomplishing more for the terrorist cause than the terrorists could have achieved by themselves. This tragedy has been repeated dozens of times in the last five months...More often than not the government has met the challenge with a heavy-handed conventional response that has caused more problems than it has solved". (4/15/68) Newsweek reports how the government reacts to the reactions of the aggrieved tribes peoples: "Bangkok acted with brute force. Entire mountain villages were evacuated and then destroyed in napalm strikes designed to overawe the tribesmen watching from the next ridgeline. This tactic simply plays into the hands of the Communists who tell the tribesmen, 'Now see who your friends are'." (4/22/68)

"Guerrilla operations have now spread over 2,500 square miles in the north." (National Observer 4/15/68). The revolutionaries themselves "assert they are waging 'revolutionary armed struggle' in 29 of Thailand's 71 provinces." (CSM 3/24/68)

Vietnam

Vietnam is the six of these nations in Southeast Asia with revolutionary people. The northern part of Vietnam is already an established socialist-oriented state. The revolution in the southern part of the country has reached a new stage of military, administrative and political maturity.

Militarily, the Tet offensive of January 1968 marked an advanced stage. The Christian Science Monitor writes: of "three waves of activity; the first was the Tet in January with dramatic military battles in cities and towns; the second began in April, with pin-pointed artillery and

mortar and rocket attacks against key installations and urban centers; the third, in May, with small ground attacks, some mortar and artillery attacks on urban centers." (5/7/68) "Vietnamese sources see a growing actuality- that the Communists have broken down their larger units into roving bands of three to six men capable of carrying on sniping, harrasing and, if equipped, high-impact mortaring on selected targets at will, for long duration; the sniper teams have been rather successful in picking off Vietnam police officers and military officers riding around in their jeeps." (CSM 5/4/68) "American intelligence specialists have concluded that the assaults on the cities and towns were mounted from bases within South Vietnam. Preparations for the offensive involved massing as many as 60,000 troops and stocking hundreds of tons of ammunition." (NYT 3/30/68)

The military prowess of the revolutionaries in the southern part of the country reveals a high degree of administrative sophistication. "Since the surprise Tet offensive American commanders and officials have been both appalled and mystified by the Communist supply system. 'The Communists have performed the outstanding logistical feat of all time', one informed source explained; it's the most amazing thing I've seen. It will be fascinating to dig into this after the war - how the Communists maintained their guerrilla and main force units dispersed in enemy territory. It would make a fabulous book'. For controlling the war in the southern one third of the country, the logistical command structure is controlled directly by COSVN (Central Office, South Vietnam). This supreme headquarters has an 'economic and finance' section which controls the whole net-work of supply, transport, taxation of the people, and production in areas that are Communist dominated." (CSM 4/20/68)

"The supreme Viet Cong command has taken direct charge of the political activities and military operations in the capital of Saigon and surrounding provinces. A United States documentary analysis released by the American mission in March notes that 'the total reorganization around Saigon in late 1967 is revealing of the Viet Cong's capability to change to meet the current situation - for here we have not

a single series of mergers but a completely new design that abrogates all historical precedent'. The details of the recent intelligence report indicates that in November of last year 'all military and political forces around Saigon were ordered to be integrated into one big zone under the direct command of COSVN'." (CSM 4/26/68)

Not only are the revolutionaries in this southern part of Vietnam unbeaten but they already have well-established political foundations. The Viet Cong's National Liberation Front is a political organization with a well-rounded Political Program of 14 points issued in August 1967 and based on years of experience of rule in wide areas of the country. Though not having formal diplomatic representation, the Front has its missions in various countries abroad.

The latest political development in the southern part of the country is the openly announced Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces - "A South Vietnamese anti-government group, meeting near Saigon April 20th and which elected a leadership and adopted an action program." (NYT 4/28/68) This is "a new anti-government political front that appeals to writers, intellectuals and business men, and has apparently joined the Viet Cong in fighting allied troops around Saigon; its aims are to unite all patriotic forces, to resolutely fight against foreign aggression, to completely overthrow the Thieu-Ky puppet regime and set up a national union (coalition) government to win independence, democracy and peace." (NYT 5/9/68)

Even in early March the Christian Science Monitor had written of the "reported set-up of an Underground Government in South Vietnam; its future popular base will probably be the Resistance Committee set up during the Tet offensive by the Viet Cong including members from religious groups and political tendencies." (CSM 3/8/68) Then in May came the "Announcement of ten national-level committee members of a new peace group considered as a significant step toward an all-out Communist drive to topple the government of President Thieu. Reliable Vietnamese sources believe the announcement of the peace group's leadership marks a crucial turning-point for the United States backed anti-Communist

units government here. It represents an acceleration in the erosion of the political strength of the government-controlled areas. This is the first known migration of as many as ten persons of what amounts to the upper-crust, snob-set Vietnamese to the pro-Communist side since 1960 when the National Liberation Front was established." (CSM 5/8/68)

"The Alliance declares itself for joint action with the Front for the purpose of striving together to regain national independence, restore peace, and build up the country and bring about a free and happy life for the entire people." (CSM 5/7/68) "United States officials have become convinced that the Alliance is now playing a military role against the allies around Saigon." (NYT 5/9/68)

Even were this openly announced Alliance, with its Saigon leaders identified, to turn out to be largely a manoeuvre by the United States (to ease a change in its support of the generals?) it indicates a further maturing of opposition to the puppet regime in the southern part of the country.

That the revolution in the southern part of the country has reached a new stage is obvious. "The political impact of this third Communist attack is to further demoralize the Saigonese, to shift confidence in the military and political effectiveness of the Thieu-Ky government and to build up the prestige of the pro-Communist Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces." (CSM 5/7/68)

The New York Times, editorially, sees the political impact: "The new Communist attack should not succeed in upsetting the military balance" (shades of Westmoreland!... ed) "but the current assaults could have a seriously upsetting effect on the allied political position which will be of at least equal political importance in the forthcoming negotiations. The siege of Saigon in particular aimed at weakening the Thieu-Ky Government and bolstering the new anti-Government Alliance." (NT 5/8/68)

About "North" and "South" Vietnam

In writing about Vietnam I have deliberately written "the northern part of the country" and "the southern part of the country"- for Vietnam is one country, one people.

The New York Times writes: "One of the fantasies that have undermined the United States policy in Vietnam has been the persisting official illusion that Vietnam is two countries, inhabited by separate peoples...Yet the United States negotiators in Paris have endorsed the 'essential elements' of the 1954 Geneva Accords which specifically rule out a political division of the country; and they have allowed for the possibility of reunification by common consent of the two regimes. Furthermore, the preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of (South) Vietnam, which General Westmoreland's troops have defended with their lives, deplors the 'partition of the national territory' and calls for 'uniting the nation'. South Vietnam's Vice President, Nguyen Cao Ky, a Northerner himself and cheering civil-defense cadres only last week, 'The entire world admires and reveres Ho Chi Minh and Ho Nguyen Giap. Who are they, if not Vietnamese like you and me?' The refusal of the American officials to recognize the potent reality of Vietnamese nationalism can be an obstacle to peace just as it has been a barrier to realization of the dream of a victorious war."(Editorial NYT 5/31/68)

The Christian Science Monitor writes: "In Vietnam, during World War II an independent movement was preparing for a revolutionary seizure of power. The Vietminh, a broad national front founded in 1941 under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, gained the adherence of the overwhelming majority of the people to its program of independence and peoples' power for Vietnam. The Vietminh organized military units which fought the Japanese and wholly liberated a number of provinces. From March to mid-August 1945, the Vietminh were engaged in intensive pre-insurrectionary activity....While the rulers of the United States and Britain thought they had settled the Indo-China question, the peoples of these countries rebelled, overthrew the Japanese puppet governments and swept out the reactionary repressive administrators. The process was most thorough in Vietnam, where the revolution began in mid-August.

Revolutionary power was established in northern Vietnam by August 20th, in Saigon by August 25th, and throughout the country before the end of the month. Vietnam was the first colonial country to establish a popular revolutionary government." (CSM 3/23/68) (emphasis added....ed)

Is United States Counter-Revolution To Continue?

Meanwhile, what about the policy and posture of the United States? The policy on the use of counter-revolutionary force in Asia, outlined in the July 1949 directive of Secretary Acheson, remains a guide-line. Plans call for an increase, not a diminution, in the use of military force against Asian nationalism.

"All Americans are not going home when the Vietnam war ends. In fact, the United States role in Southeast Asia will then be 'just beginning' says Edwin M Cronk, American Charge d'Affaires in Australia. 'It will not mean the end of our interest or responsibility in Southeast Asia; our job will not be over; in a sense it will just be beginning. There will still be hostile forces present in the area, ready to take advantage of any situation of weakness that may develop -ready to destroy all that we and others have tried to support and develop at such great cost'. The American official noted that the chief factors ensuring stability in the Western Pacific and Southeast Asia were two networks of military alliances."(CSM 5/8/68)

The American military build up in Laos and Thailand indicates no cessation of American counter-revolutionary action.

"The number of Americans in Laos is unclear. Officially there are 1750 civilian and military, but the figure appears to be low. An American flying into Vientiane from Saigon sees dozens of American cargo and transport planes on the airstrips at Pakse and Savannakhet. Crates of American ammunition are sprawled across the jade-colored fields, American trucks and jeeps abound and signs in English are everywhere." (NYT 4/14/68)

"Four miles north of this dusty, tumble-down capital of Laos, Vientiane, there is an almost perfect replica of a Long Island suburb. The neat regular streets are lined with ranch-style look-alikes separated by fences. The drive-ways are filled with big American cars and the lawns are littered with over-turned bicycles. It could pass for Levittown except for the brown-skinned Laotian girls pushing baby carriages filled with blond, blue-eyed children. The development is the home for 1752 Americans officially listed by the Embassy as resident in Laos....There an American community association with a clubhouse that includes a swimming pool, restaurant, bar and air-conditioned movie theater. As the American involvement in Laos has grown, a number of one-story extensions have been built off the American Embassy in several directions. Land has been appropriated and plans drawn for a new Embassy. There are also about 240 unofficial or technically private residents most of whom are pilots or other personnel employed by Air America; this is a private airline, under contract to the United States government, that carries out supply and paramilitary missions for Laotian forces. Continental Airlines which serves much the same purpose has 53 persons resident in Laos. The Embassy list does not however include the Americans who live in Thailand and come across the border, the Mekong river, each day to assist in advising Laotians on military matters. The United States has 72 military attaches assigned to the mission."(NYT 5/17/68)

And Thailand: "American commercial investment in Thailand began, for all practical purposes, in 1956 when executives of ten American-owned businesses in the country formed the American Chamber of Commerce. There are 101 members of the Chamber, representing 75 companies."(CSM 1/17/66)

"The United States has now invested close to one billion dollars in Thailand the biggest and most embattled country in Southeast Asia...We now have five major US Airforce bases and a sixth that is half-built...We have installed one of the most elaborate communications networks in the world, which links the new port of Sattahip, a hundred miles south of Bangkok, the airbases, Saigon, Bangkok, Manila and the United States in a \$150,000,000 system. We have completed the most extensive highway network ever built in Asia, giving Bangkok in the south easy access to the Communist-

threatened northeast provinces. All bridges on this strategic highway are being strengthened with reinforced concrete to take loads up to fifty tons (enough to handle US tanks). At a secret location in the central portion of Thailand the United States, with Thailand's knowledge, has stockpiled enough military equipment to arm a full United States brigade for immediate action."(Columnists Evans & Novak 10/20/67)

"According to official figures there are 43,000 American military men in Thailand. Some American Special Forces are training Thai special forces...Within the country are stockpiles of equipment and weapons to supply a considerably larger number of American fighting men."(CSM 4/26/68)

Indeed the Americans are there in Southeast Asia in increasing numbers but their very presence helps to create the forces that will defeat them. What the Americans did in China, in Korea and now in Southeast Asia makes more clear, more sharply felt to more people the nature of the United States as an imperialist power. "Imperialism" is not a book word to Asians; for generations they have experienced on their own bodies and in their daily life the wounds, the deprivations, the indignities of colonialism; to those years and experience of bitterness inflicted by foreign invaders the United States has, since 1949 added the horrors of modern firepower, napalm, indiscriminate killing of men, women, children and livestock in the devastation of crops, of urban and rural areas, and the intrusion into Asian society not the fine and lasting qualities of our American culture, but the worst and most degrading aspects of our culture.

"Largely as the result of the presence of 46,000 American military personnel, the capital, Bangkok, has been transformed from a graceful, languorous city of enormous charm into a sprawling asphalt-covered Los Angeles. On the outskirts of the airbases grotesque honky-tonk towns have grown...In Thailand the war and the American troops that are here to help fight it have a profound effect on the country's culture."(NYT 4/16/68) "The Thai Government has approved of plans to uproot places of entertainment around American military bases;

the places to be removed include brothels, massage parlors, and night clubs; the existence of hundreds of entertainment places near air and naval bases caused a decline in public morality." (Reuters NYT 4/18/68)

"A South Vietnamese Cabinet Minister has termed the American impact on Vietnamese culture, religion and politics as 'devastating' and 'disintegrating'. Information Minister Ton That Thien said, 'Since 1954 a new element has come into play: the intrusion of America whose culture is still further removed (than the French) from the Vietnamese and still more devastating in its disintegrating effects on Vietnamese society'; that the ordinary Vietnamese would continue 'to be horrified and embittered at the way the Americans are fighting their war. Our peasants will remember their cratered rice fields and defoliated forests, devastated by an alien air force that seems at war with the very land of Vietnam. Villagers will remember their hamlets uprooted from the earth, all to no purpose. And our city dwellers and our intellectuals will mark how saving Vietnam, a half a million American soldiers are suffocating it with their fantastic wealth, their gadgetry their promiscuous virility and their destructive innocence!.

"Mr Thien's views appeared to reflect the opinions of a growing number of Vietnamese intellectuals, teachers, students and government officials." (NYT 6/11/68)

This "cultural" impact of United States presence in Southeast Asia gives the Asian peoples one more motive for resistance - for the defense and preservation of their own rich culture.

Coming Events: Liberation For The Peoples

Reactionaries will not give liberation. Their "Gandhiism", their "parliamentary procedures", their "coalition governments", their "reforms" - none of these lead to freedom for the people. When the people reject these phoney avenues the reactionaries intensify their use of brutal armed force against the people.

For these peoples of Southeast Asia Mao Tse-tung's conclusion that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" is already proven in every revolutionary struggle throughout the world.

These revolutionary developments in the six Southeast Asian countries indicate the futility of the United States' efforts to suppress national liberation movements and the correctness of Mao Tse-tung's "A nation, big or small, can defeat an enemy so long as it fully arouses the people, firmly relies on them and wages a people's war.

From protests, demonstrations, demands, organization, alliances and ideological understanding of their struggle and its role in the nation, to armed defense (including getting arms from the enemy), to armed attack, to eventual lining up with the urban revolutionary forces - this is the process that is characterizing these peasant-based national liberation movements.

The establishment of rural bases, increasingly encircling the cities where the "authorities" hole up, afraid of the people and depending on troops (who themselves largely belong with the people) - this is the process now going on in Southeast Asia. For people imbued with revolutionary ideology the final defeat - military and political - of the counter-revolutionaries is assured.

The maturity and success of the national liberation struggle of the Vietnamese people plus the already fully successful Chinese people's struggle are beacon lights for all these neighboring Asian liberation movements. In the Chinese and Vietnamese experience there is a

proven pattern of revolutionary procedure. The fact the Chinese could defeat and the Vietnamese hold at bay the militarily mighty United States and at the same time build a political foundation for their new societies gives these revolutionary peoples of Southeast Asia a basis of sureness about the outcome of their liberation struggles.

The revolutionaries of Southeast Asia will continue with increasing strength, improved organization, sharpening ideological understanding and growing political maturity until the day when they - like the Chinese and the Vietnamese - defeat the policies and posture of the arch counter-revolutionary, the United States.

The American People?

Surely it should not be lost on Americans who oppose the war in Vietnam and Americans who struggle against the poverty and degradation here at home that we have a common enemy. This enemy is those who now control and implement the reactionary policies of the United States.

And, it should be seriously realized that in the struggle against a criminal war and in the struggle against poverty and degradation here at home that we have world-wide allies - those revolutionaries who are standing up to, resisting and defeating the United States neocolonial and counter-revolutionary policies.

These Asian allies demonstrate that the common enemy must be faced and can be defeated. This is a common struggle against a common and vulnerable enemy.

American Soldiers and American Business Men
It is the United States that has "agents"
Hundreds of thousands of them
Planted in Southeast Asia
WHY?
The cartoon tells the story



"THE SURVIVAL OF THE FREE WORLD DEPENDS ON
DEFENDING OUR LOW WAGE ASIAN ALLIES!"

Cheap Labor
BUT
The Southeast Asian Peoples
Are Saying "NO"!