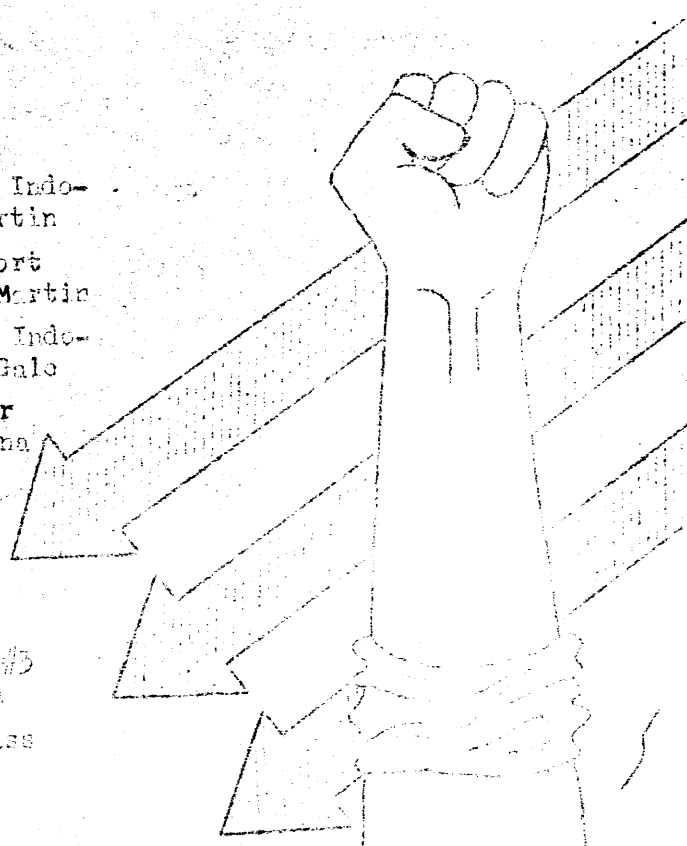


# YOUNG SOCIALIST

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1954

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION  
BULLETIN OF THE

YOUNG SOCIALIST LEAGUE

EDITOR'S NOTES.....

1

WHAT THE YSR IS

The Young Socialist Review is the information and discussion bulletin of the Young Socialist League. The YSR is prepared by the YSL National Office and is edited by Scott Arden, YSL National Secretary.

The aim of the YSR is to constitute a forum for the expression of all points of view within the YSL. It is, therefore, completely open to any member (or group of members) who may wish to contribute his views. Contributions from non-members will be accepted, if of sufficiently high interest. (The editor reserves the right to decide in the case of each such article.)

For obvious reasons it should be understood that articles signed by individuals do not necessarily represent the views of the YSL. Any material that is "official" will be clearly labeled as such.

Copy should be submitted to the YSL National Office, Third Floor, 114 W. 14th Street, New York 11, N.Y. If at all possible submit copy already stenciled, single-spaced. If this is not possible, then submit material type-written, double-spaced. Non-typewritten copy will not be accepted.

It should be clear that the YSR is not restricted to members of the YSL. Though issued primarily for our members it is open to all friends and other interested individuals. Members should make every effort to get copies into the hands of this wider audience. Send in your bundle orders now.

Unless otherwise stated, all labor expended in the production of the YSR is donated.

THIS ISSUE

This, the first discussion issue of the YSR, suffers only in one respect, and not an unusual one. That is, all of the various articles and resolutions contained were written on the East Coast.... We hope that the next issue (early June) will correct this situation and that future issues will, in general, reflect the thinking of the YSL nationally.

Suggestions are always in order. Cartoons are needed, and comment of a technical nature will be appreciated..... i.e., cover design, mimeo suggestions, etc.

In any case, discussion articles are first on the agenda. The tentative copy deadline for the next issue is June 5th. Send your article in now.

The Editor,

May 22nd, 1954

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON INDO-CHINA

By Max Martin

2.

The government of the United States is threatening to plunge the country into the war in Indo-China. At best, this policy would lead to a senseless, futile and tragic adventure, with its consequent destruction, misery and loss of life - an adventure of futility as the Korean War. At worst, moreover, the policy of entering the Indo-China war opens the road to the possibility of the immediate beginning of World War III. Should Stalinist China also directly enter the Indo Chinese War in response to American intervention and should the American government then carry out its plans for "massive retaliation" the horrors of a total, Hydrogen-bomb, holocaust would be upon us.

The Young Socialist League calls upon the government to put a halt to whatever plans it has for intervention into the war. We urge the withdrawal of all American military personnel already in Indo-China and an end to all military aid to the French forces there. We favor, furthermore, the cessation of all American aid to France since such aid necessarily serves to help the French imperialist struggle. The government of the United States can be swayed from embarking on this program only by an outspoken cry by the American people for an end to the intervention policy. We call upon the American people, particularly upon the trade unions, intellectuals, liberals and youth, to raise their voice now, before it becomes too late.

1. The Nature of the War

A.) On the part of France, the war is a struggle to maintain its imperialist possession, Indo-China. Its tenacity in this struggle is bolstered by 3 elements: 1. Its imperialist needs and ambitions which operate in regard to this colony in the same fashion as they do elsewhere. 2. Its recognition that the loss of Indo-China will hasten the day of the loss of the rest of the empire, particularly the African sections thereof, where independence movements are already struggling for freedom. 3. The pressure of Washington for them to continue the fight. Despite these elements, the war-weariness of the French people and the recognition by the French government that it cannot win has made France increasingly ready to look for a settlement. It hopes that it will be able to make a deal with Stalinism which will allow it to retain a foothold in Indo-China, in return for concession which it will make in regard to EDC, or elsewhere.

Indeed, France may be ready to recognize that it eventually must be forced out of the country. To date, it is the third factor of American pressure which has kept France continuing its hopeless fight. One thing is clear: France will not give the country its independence and at the same time continue the struggle against the Viet-Minh - the sanguinity of the liberals about such a program to the contrary notwithstanding. Nor can it be too happy about full-scale American intervention, for that would ultimately mean its loss of the colony anyway, a loss not to Stalinism but to America.

B.) The Bao Dai regime is a puppet regime of French imperialism and is totally discredited in the eyes of the Vietnamese people. While there may be persons or even elements within the framework of the Bao Dai "group" who genuinely desire independence, it is excluded that this regime can play a liberation or progressive role. That the regime asks for concessions from France from time to time does not at all vitiate the basic nature of it.

C.) The interest of the United States in Indo-China is based upon its overall international considerations vis-a-vis Stalinism. The loss of Indo-China to the Stalinists would be a blow to its military and strategic needs as well as in a larger sense, a blow to its entire world position.

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D.) Despite the fact that that in its origins the Viet-Minh was a genuine Indo-Chinese liberation movement in which the Stalinists were only one element and despite the fact that the overwhelming bulk of those Indo-Chinese who support the Viet-Minh movement are not Stalinists and despite the fact that there may even exist some elements in this movement who are consciously non-Stalinist or even anti-Stalinist, the Viet-Minh is totally controlled by the Stalinist party and as such is an agency of international Stalinism. Its aims in the war, insofar as these are independent from the aims of Peiping and Moscow, vis a vis American imperialism, is the setting up of a totalitarian Stalinist state in Indo-China. Its first action after its victory would be the totalitarianization of the country and the brutal elimination of all opposition and potential opposition. The victory of Ho Chi Minh would not result in an independent Vietnam but rather in the creation of a typical Stalinist satellite state. The experience of Stalinism in China presents the model which Indo-China would follow in the event of a Stalinist victory there. For these reasons it is absolutely excluded that socialists can give any support to Viet-Minh.

E.) The aims of international Stalinism in the Indo-Chinese war are the same as their aims everywhere else in the world. This aim is the growth of Stalinist power vis a vis American imperialist power. The conquest of another nation by Stalinism is clearly desirable for it as part of its program for world domination. This does not, of course preclude the possibility of Moscow and Peiping being willing to sacrifice Ho's ambition for gains elsewhere, the scrapping of EDC or the admission of China to the UN for example.

F.) The Vietnamese people desire and have the basic democratic right to complete independence; for this reason they are the enemies of France and of the Bao Dai regime. They also, in their overwhelming majority either support Viet-Minh or else are neutral toward it, that is, do not oppose it. They are also vitally interested in a solution to the land problem which is another consideration impelling their attitude towards Viet-Minh. In addition, they are undoubtedly weary of the war and seek its end.

## 2. Socialist Policy Towards Indo-China

A.) The Vietnamese people have a basic democratic right to national independence. Socialists demand the immediate withdrawal of all French forces from Indo-China and the assumption of full sovereignty by the Indo-Chinese people. They call upon the Vietnamese people to take their country back from France. The French have no right in Indo-China.

B.) The Young Socialist League calls upon the United States government to reverse its plans for sending troops to Indo-China and to withdraw all forces already there; to stop all aid to French imperialism.

C.) We apply our basic Third Camp policy to Indo-China, declaring that we are for the victory of the Third Camp of the Indo-Chinese people against both Capitalism imperialism, represented in Indo-China by France and Washington, and against Stalinism, represented in Indo-China by the Viet-Minh. We call upon the independent nationalists in Vietnam to raise the banner of a genuine democratic liberation movement to struggle against both French and Stalinist imperialism. Such a movement would, if coupled with a progressive social program be able to attract the support of the bulk of the people including those who now support the Viet-Minh. It would thus be able to end French control of the country and at the same time prevent Stalinist conquest.

Were there a democratic government in Washington, it would raise such a slogan,

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It is, however, precluded that a capitalist government can engage in such a campaign, for a genuinely independent Indo-China would be a thorn in the side of America's world plans. It is by no means excluded that the labor movement and the liberals can raise such demands; indeed, it is to their interests to do so. We call upon the unions and upon all democrats and liberals to raise their voices in behalf of this program.

D.) In Indo-China, unlike Korea, the Third Camp program may indeed have immediate practical consequences. We know that there exist in Indo-China organizations and groups which, to one degree or another, are independent of the two forces of capitalist imperialism and Stalinist imperialism. Such groups exist in territories now under the control of both. Indeed, they may even exist in groups which are now part of or allied with both Bao Dai and Ho Chi Minh. Whether they are or can become genuine democratic independence forces is not, however, certain at this time. Our lack of knowledge about these groups is partially a result of military conditions and partially due to the censorship and other anti-democratic restrictions of the French and its puppet, Bao Dai.

Should such forces come forth in response to this program, they would rally the Indo-Chinese people to their banners. The further development of Indo-China as well as its defense against the encroachments of Stalinist imperialism and the possible return of French imperialism would best be conducted as part of a federation of south eastern Asian countries.

E.) Should it turn out that there are not sufficient genuine nationalist forces in Vietnam for such a movement, the victory of the Stalinist forces would very likely be assured. The socialists would not be responsible for such an eventuality, since they gave no support to French imperialism nor to its American backers. The responsibility would rest squarely on the shoulders of the French and American imperialism who, by their policies, led to the victory of Stalinism. French colonialism would have then led to this Stalinist conquest through its general colonial policies, resulting in support to the Vietminh by the Vietnamese people and because of their decimation and liquidation of genuine democratic independence elements.

F.) In any event, we call for the end of French imperialism in Indo-China and for non-intervention by the United States. The continuation of French colonial rule is an anti-democratic outrage. Moreover, it does not hinder Stalinism; it helps it to gain support from the anti-imperialist masses of the colonial world.

G.) The duty of all Indo-Chinese socialists, democrats, and genuine nationalists is to fight for the creation of a Third Camp movement -- a movement dedicated to a free, united, democratic, and independent Indo-China.

end

The resolution which I submitted to the National Action Committee, and whose general line the NAC adopted, is far from being a finished document. It contains careless language ( in some places where "all" appears, "most" would be more appropriate ) and several sloppy formulations. Some sections require revision or expansion or refinement. The analysis of the role of international Stalinism and of the special roles of Moscow and Peiping need elaboration. The section on Washington's role is particularly weak. Above all the document lacks any discussion of social classes and forces in Vietnam.

I do not propose to deal with these matters in this article however. Instead the article will concentrate on the decisive and important difference between the viewpoint of the NAC and the viewpoint of comrade Gale on a socialist attitude towards the Vietminh. Comrade Gale, in the resolution which he proposed to the NAC and which it rejected, together with Comrade Barnes of Newark, present the view that socialists should give military support to the Vietminh. The NAC rejects this proposition and on this question the Martin resolution is correct.

Posing the Third Camp position for Indochina, saying that the war between French imperialism and Vietminh is not our war, does not necessarily imply that there is a Third Camp movement now in existence in Indochina. In Korea, for example, socialists had to unhappily acknowledge that there existed no Third Camp movement and that none could be created in time to intervene in the war so as to influence its outcome. Thus the Third Camp idea offered no immediate solution to the Korean tragedy. Socialists had to say that for the time being Korea had to be "written off".

Nevertheless socialists were for the Third Camp idea for Korea. First because the two main camps were each waging a reactionary, imperialist struggle in Korea, and socialists could support neither side. Secondly, because the road of the Third Camp was a road for building towards a "practical" solution in the future. The same situation applies to Indochina.

The discussion of practical Third Camp prospects in Indochina with which this article ends is included in it because it deals with a matter of vital interest and importance to the socialist movement and because the question is in dispute, not because our being against the victory of Vietminh depends upon the present existence of a Third Camp movement or possibilities of its imminent creation.

1. The propositions that socialists give military support to the Vietminh, that they should urge Vietnamese socialists and workers to enter the ranks of Vietminh, that they should call for the victory of Vietminh and rejoice in its successes, can only be based on one of a limited number of assumptions - all of them false.
2. These proposals could be based on the view that the Stalinists, while being the leadership of Vietminh, do not actually control it. That some other force, the mass of peasants, for example, does exercise control.
3. Or, while admitting that the Indochinese Communist Party is the core of and controls and dominates the Vietminh, these proposals can proceed from the idea that Ho and his cohorts are not authentic Stalinists; that they are something else, "agrarian reformers", for instance.
4. The evidence against both of these theories is overwhelming and clear; in any event, they do not form the basis for Gale's point of view. He rests his proposals on a misunderstanding of Stalinism, on his own peculiar version of the "Cannonite" view of Stalinism. Or so it seems to me.

( more )

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5. His argument is that the Vietminh movement, that is to say, the Indochinese Stalinists - for he agrees that they control and dominate Vietminh - are fighting for Vietnamese national independence, that is to say for a progressive solution to the national question in Indochina. Furthermore that they are solving the land problem in Indochina progressively, i.e., dividing the land among the peasantry, and are therefore making the bourgeois revolution.

6. These ideas mean that as far as Comrade Gale is concerned Stalinism plays a progressive role in backward countries and is reactionary only in relation to the working class.

7. Now in contradistinction to these ideas we characterize Stalinism as a phenomena which has the same nature in backward countries as in advanced industrial nations. Stalinism, we say, has two features: it is an arm of the Russian foreign office, serving the interests of Russian Stalinist imperialism, and it is also a contender for social power, in some countries in an immediate sense and in others in long-range terms. Its aim is the creation of a totalitarian bureaucratic - collectivist society in which the Stalinist leadership will be the central bureaucracy.

8. If this characterizes Stalinism generally, and it does, then what are we to say about Gale's notion that in backward countries in general and in Indochina in particular Stalinism makes or can make the national and bourgeois revolutions. Although they are related, let us consider them one at a time.

9. If the Stalinists are fighting for the national independence of Vietnam, their struggle should, if they are victorious, result in the creation of an independent Vietnam. To assert that this will occur is to ignore the whole history of the past nine years. During this time many Stalinist states have been created but none has been created as an independent state: all have been created, rather, as satellites of Russia. To be sure, Yugoslavia did become an independent Stalinist state later. Moreover, it is clear that whatever the exact degree of "independence" enjoyed by Peiping from Moscow may be, its relationship to Moscow is not the same as Bucharest's or Prague's. To be sure furthermore, all of the native Stalinist rulers may desire further independence from Moscow - some may even dream of a Titoist development.

10. Nevertheless it is obvious that no such development has yet taken place in Ho's movement - its history proves conclusively that it operates as an arm of Moscow and as part of Moscow's struggle in the world. Moreover all indications (its proximity to China, its being an extremely backward country, its being a small country, etc.) point to the improbability of a future Titoist development. Whether it would be Moscow's satellite or Peiping's, or Moscow's through Peiping is obscured at the moment - just as the exact relationships of Russia and China to North Korea are now obscured.

11. Of course a Titoist development in a Stalinist Vietnam or a Stalinist Indochina is not precluded - nor can one make predictions about it. We can only speak in probabilities and the probabilities are against such a development. On the other hand Gale's assertion that the Vietminh is fighting for the national independence of Vietnam can only mean, if it means anything, that there is a possibility of a future Titoist development.

12. Even if such a development comes about it in no way negates the fact that in the same sense as in Korea the war today is a struggle between two imperialisms - capitalist and Stalinist. Today the Vietminh is an arm of Stalinist imperialism.

13. But, we may hear, there are no Russian or Chinese armies in Indochina and the armies of these countries were not present there at any time during or since World War II. This objection does not strike at the fact of Vietminh's subservience to Stalinist imperialism. There can be no doubt that from the point of view of Russia, the presence of its army would be desirable to prevent a possible Titoist development.

(It would be undesirable from other points of view.) Nevertheless the presence of such armies are not necessary for the native Stalinist movements to play Moscow's game, to be the agency of Russian imperialism.

14. Even if we could definitely say that the Indochinese Stalinists were fighting for the creation of an independent Stalinist state, even if we were certain that the victory of the Vietminh would result in the creation, in the future, of a national-Stalinist state, the fact is that at present the military struggles of Vietminh are subordinated to the needs and interests of Russian imperialism. The war in Indochina is an imperialist war on both sides.

15. But what if the Indochinese Stalinists had broken with Moscow, what if they were fighting for the creation of an Independent Stalinist state? Should socialists be obligated under these conditions to support them? We must remind ourselves at this point of the reasons for socialist support to national independence movements. We support them because the right of national self-determination and the right to national independence are fundamental democratic rights of peoples, because their victories strike blows at imperialism, and because the national revolution opens the road for the further development of the class struggle, for the struggle for socialism.

16. But the victory of the Stalinists means the creation of a totalitarian state, the crushing of all opposition and potential opposition, the crushing of all working class organizations - and a huge defeat for the workers. This means that the victory of the Stalinist "national" revolution eliminates one of the gains expected from the national revolution - the possibility for the intensification of the class struggle.

17. Moreover, the victory of the Stalinists means the victory of a social force; it, at the same time as the winning of "independence", brings a new class to power, a reactionary class. The victory of the Vietminh is thus more than a national "revolution", it is also a social "revolution" - or to be more accurate, of a counter-revolution. We live in a world today in which three social systems are contending with each other for social power, decaying capitalism, socialism, and the reactionary barbarism of Bureaucratic collectivism. The victory of the Stalinists and therefore the victory of the Vietminh means the defeat of the working class and of socialism. This defeat moreover is not an ordinary one of the kind experienced by the proletariat so many times in the past in its efforts to overthrow the existing social system. For in this defeat the system is overthrown and is replaced by Stalinism, the system which is vying with socialism for the replacement of capitalism. This defeat is not for eternity, to be sure, for the conditions of life under Bureaucratic Collectivism determine the struggle of the masses for overthrowing it. But because we are dealing with the victory of a new social class and because this class must establish a totalitarian society for its class rule, it is an extremely serious and far-reaching defeat.

18. That Comrade Gale calls for the workers to rise and establish their own power at the same time does not vitiate this defeat. They, in effect, are calling for both the victory of the workers and the enemies of the workers. Thus I would say that even if we were dealing with an independent Stalinist movement - and not, as we are, with an arm of Stalinist imperialism - socialists should not be for giving military support to the Vietminh and not wish it success.

19. Do the Stalinists make the bourgeois revolution? The bourgeois revolution in backward countries today would involve four elements; the winning of national independence and the unification of the nation, that is the progressive solution to the national question, the establishment of democracy, the solution of the land question and industrialization of the country. I have already commented on the nation questions; what the Vietminh would do in regard to fulfilling the democratic aspect of the bourgeois revolution need not even be referred to. They would fulfil this aspect of the bourgeois revolution to the extreme - to the extreme of not fulfilling



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it, i.e. they would eliminate those few features of democracy which exist in Indo-China and fasten a monstrous totalitarian rule on the necks of the people.

20. Only a word is necessary on the land question and on industrialization. That the Stalinists divide the land among the peasantry, lower rents, and eliminate usury as part of their rise to power is well known. We know also what happens to the peasantry afterwards: its conversion into state serfs. A moment's thought about the Stalinist solution to the land question in Eastern Europe should dispel any illusions about what the victory of the Stalinists will mean for the peasants in Indochina, whether or not the land is collectivized. As for industrialization, we have no way of knowing whether or not the Stalinists would industrialize Indochina; this would depend upon its relations to China and Russia. But even if they would, we cannot worship the fetish of "industrialization" just as we cannot worship the fetish of "nationalization". In a certain abstract sense, all industrialization may be considered as "progressive" - in the concrete reality of the context of social relations in which Stalinist industrialization would occur, its program of industrialization would be reactionary.

21. Socialists therefore cannot give military support to the Vietminh; they cannot call for its victory or rejoice in or wish for its successes. Nor can we urge the Indochinese workers and peasants to enter its ranks or desire its victory. We must declare that this is a reactionary war on both sides, this war between French imperialism and the Vietminh. While concentrating most of our propaganda and agitation against American intervention and aid to the French, while using the Indochina situation to educate for the need for an American democratic foreign policy we must also pose the Third Camp idea for Indochina.

22. This means that we urge Indochinese socialists and independent nationalists, and above all the workers, to fight for the creation of a genuine revolutionary independence movement - a movement opposed to both the French, and its puppet Bao Dai, and the Vietminh. Such a movement would naturally attempt to win away the support that Ho now receives from the peasantry, and rally it to its banner. The fact that the overwhelming support comes from those who are not Stalinists indicates that certain tactics would have to be used in trying to win the masses; the peasant masses would have to be spoken to in certain ways. But it does not change anything about our characterization of Vietminh or about the question of supporting it.

22. And finally, can an independent Third Camp movement be created? And if yes, can it win the masses? We cannot be sure. One thing seems clear: We need not "write" Indochina "off" the way we "wrote" Korea "off". We know that there are groups and movements with degrees of independence from both sides, the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao, for instance. These groups have played a revolutionary role in the past - in the revolution of August, 1945. Above all there is the Indochinese proletariat, small but socially weighty. Despite its militant and revolutionary traditions, despite the fact that the bulk of the workers have in the past split their support between the Stalinists and the Trotskyists, the proletariat seems to be so far totally uncommitted and completely passive. Groups and forces for a genuine independence movement clearly exist therefore. Can they be welded together into such a movement and can they win the masses in time? Nobody can predict. But it is certainly the task of Indochinese socialists, democrats and genuine nationalists to make the attempt. It is certainly our task to urge them to make it.

end

## I. THE CHARACTER OF THE WAR

For the French it is an imperialist war; an effort to retain their richest colony. For the Vietmanese people, the Vietminh is conducting a war of national liberation. There are two notable aspects to this war. One is the defense of the Vietmanese nation against a foreign aggressor. (Vietminh, by the way, is the legal government of Vietman, so recognized by the French in 1946.) The other is the continuous mass participation of the Vietmanese people in the struggle, making it highly similar to that of the Resistance movement in World War II.

## II. FORCES IN THE WAR

## (A) FOREIGN

1. The French are becoming steadily more reconciled to the inevitability of their withdrawal from the country. The war has been frightfully expensive for them in terms of skilled military manpower as well as in money, and is deeply unpopular in France. Their political objective is to hold on to as much as they can as long as they can, meanwhile continuing to milk the country for the benefit of the Banque de l'Indo-China, the colonists, and the financial speculators.

2. The USA is interested in its own domination of this rich land to an extent second only to its desire to maintain imperialist rule over the country. It supports France in the absence of any viable alternative, while moving steadily closer to open intervention in its own right. Its political goal (eventual) is complete French withdrawal and the establishment of an "independent" native state a la Korea, Formosa, the Phillipines, etc.

3. China has helped the Vietminh, though to a much lesser extent than the US has backed the French. China's internal problems (collectivization of agriculture, industrialization), vast enough to take up its entire energies for decades, absolutely preclude any imperialist adventures. She is mainly interested in the security of her southern frontier, international recognition, and a seat in the U.N. This last factor makes China a highly unreliable ally for Vietman.

## (B) NATIONAL-POLITICAL

1. The Bao-Dai "government" represents a quisling group, corrupt, and lacking any mass support. Its members have so little confidence in it that most are unwilling to give up their French citizenship.

2. The Viet-Minh continues to represent the majority of the Vietmanese. Its top leadership is unquestionably Stalinist, but, as a movement, it is far from Stalinized, and contains numerous independent nationalists.

3. "Third Force" groups have existed throughout the war in the form of independent armies, occupying positions in the mountains and allying themselves opportunistically with either side. These are semi-bandit elements and present no real political alternatives.

## (C) SOCIAL

1. The bourgeoisie has never been strong. Today it is almost entirely backs the French, although at one time large elements of it were in Viet-Minh.

2. The peasantry is the overwhelming majority of the population and largely backs the Viet-Minh. It provides regular and irregular soldiers and is invaluable

in the maintenance of the Viet-Minh armies, but as elsewhere in Asia, it has no pretensions to social power as a class.

3. The Stalinists are a strong and self-conscious contender for social power. They have a tradition of independence from the Kremlin, and possess strong roots in Vietnam which enable them to maintain that independence from both Moscow and Peiping. However, they are as inherently totalitarian as other such movements, and their coming to power would seriously distort the development of the Indo-Chinese revolution. In the present phase, their ties to Peiping may prove dangerous to the revolution, in the event of a deal between the Chinese and French.

4. The Vietnamese proletariat, which though small, has a long tradition of militant class struggle, although it has been fairly quiescent, under the French Iron Heel, during recent years. Yet to it belongs the entire responsibility for averting a bureaucratic-collectivist development after the final achievement of independence. As in other backward countries, its decisive social character belies its surface smallness.

### III. SOCIALIST POLICY

1. Indo-Chinese socialists should recognize that their decisive problem today is to achieve independence and that their place is definitely within the armed national liberation movement. At the same time, they should maintain strict working class independence, constantly opposing the Stalinists' undemocratic practices and ties to Peiping and warning against the likelihood of a sellout. It is of the highest importance that they find a solid proletarian base, and that they should lead the workers back into the center of the political arena.

2. A negotiated peace must be admitted to be desirable, but only if it will genuinely provide national independence. If French troops are permitted to reconquer in Vietnam, there will always be a threat that they will attempt to reconquer the country. Further, such a peace must be based on the real situation in Vietnam, disregarding Chinese desires. Chinese U.N. membership should not be permitted to be bought by Vietnamese blood.

The following are vital conditions for a democratic peace in Indo-China:

- (a) Unconditional withdrawal of all foreign troops.
- (b) Immediate free elections to a constituent assembly.
- (c) Guarantee of the nation's independence and neutrality by India, Burma, and Indonesia, the neutral Asian states.

3. Foreign socialists should unconditionally oppose any further imperialist aggression and seek to end that which is now taking place. They should seek to aid the emerging Republic of Vietnam and to achieve its integration into a federal union of democratic Asian states.

end.

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SOCIALIST POLICY FOR THE WAR IN INDO-CHINA

by Jake BARNES & Henry GALE

1. NATIONAL LIBERATION vs. IMPERIALIST RE-CONQUEST: THE "NATIONAL QUESTION"

Our attitude toward any military struggle must be based upon our analysis of the historical character and war aims of the conflicting sides. In Viet-Nam we define them as follows: On the Franco-American side, it is a war of imperialist retention and re-conquest. On the Viet-Minh side, it is a war of national defense and national liberation. We characterize it as a war of national liberation from the Viet-Minh side in spite of those who, like Comrade Martin, maintain that the Viet-Minh is an agency of Stalinist imperialism, which would make the war an imperialist one from both sides. Since his position appears to be widely held in our movement, we shall mainly concern ourselves in this document with its refutation and the implementation of our own position. The difference is a major one, and the source is undoubtedly to be found in the respective historical evaluations of stalinism. We assume in passing that no reader of YSR is going to maintain that the presence of some thousands of native coolies in the forces of the "French Union" make it a civil war.

The revolutionary socialist attitude toward wars of imperialist conquest has always been uncompromising opposition, both because of their reactionary aims (i.e., preventing colonial countries from freely developing themselves) and because of the historic role of imperialism as the last resort of the ruling classes in the advanced countries to maintain their economies on a capitalist basis, and therefore as a bulwark against the achievement of socialism.

Similarly, revolutionary socialists have invariably supported wars of national liberation and national defense, irrespective of the social nature of the nations involved. The reasons for this attitude have changed their order of importance somewhat with the increasing decadence of world capitalism, but remain generally valid today. In the first place, national self-determination is a primary and basic democratic right of any people, and must be achieved as a prerequisite for further democratic and socialist developments. Secondly, though decidedly less important when world capitalist degeneration has gone to such a point that it is seriously doubtful whether it can play a progressive historical role under any circumstances whatever, national independence provides the opportunity for a nation-state to enter into the main stream of international economic and technological development. Thirdly, defeat of the ruling class in an advanced industrial country in a colonial war weakens it seriously at home, and thus materially aids the struggle of its working class to replace capitalism with socialism. For these reasons, socialists have given military support (to be carefully distinguished from political or any other kind of support) even to such viciously reactionary regimes as that of Chiang Kai-Shek and his Kuomintang. To cite cases which are, if possible, even more extreme, consider the military support we gave the feudal (!) and slaveholding (!! ) Haile Selassie against Mussolini and Badoglio-- or fascist (but undubitably imperialist) Nazi Germany.

A category of wars in which the question of national independence is not the decisive criterion for military support is, of course, that of revolutionary (& counter-revolutionary) wars. Analysis of this category is relevant primarily to civil wars, such as the Russian and Spanish, in which there is a decisive social cleavage between the sides.

The questions in dispute on analysis of and socialist policy toward the Indo-China war turn centrally on the appraisal of the Viet-Minh. There is and can be no question raised as to the imperialist role of the French and their American backers, nor of the corrupt quisling character of the powerless Bao Dai regime. We consider the war conducted by the Viet-Minh to be one of national liberation, that the Stalinist leadership of the Viet-Minh seeks to become the ruling class in its own right, after the pattern of bureaucratic collectivism as exists in Russia and elsewhere. The Martin document submitted to the National Action Committee characterizes the military struggle as being between "French and Stalinist imperialism" and states that the Viet-Minh aims to establish "a typical Stalinist satellite state".

In examining the Martin position what first strikes the reader is the glaring methodological error evident in the phrase "French and Stalinist imperialism". Obviously there can never be a military struggle between French imperialism, a very real and concrete matter of armies and administrators, and Stalinist imperialism, a socio-economic characterization of certain drives arising from the nature of bureaucratic-collectivist society. Such slipshodness in a Marxist is thoroughly inexcusable. To speak of a given war as an imperialist war one must be able to identify and point out the imperialist forces at work on both sides. If Martin maintains that the Viet-Minh is an agency of Stalinist imperialism we ask....What imperialist power is it an agent of? Not just "Stalinist imperialism", comrade, we won't be put off with that versatile phrase. Countries are not reduced to colonial or satellite status by abstract ideologies, however persuasive and insidious, but by the economic power and armed might of concrete imperialist nations. Come, come.... If you try to tell our movement that Indo-China is currently the scene of armed battle between French armies and an ideology, not only we but all Marxists within earshot will be unable to restrain our tittering!

What imperialist power, what imperialist nation, is the Viet-Minh the agent or tool of? Russia? There are no Russian forces in Viet-Nam, there never have been, there very likely is not a Russian in the country--barring an ex-countess here and there. Chinese perhaps? The Viet-Minh was an established force, Stalinist control and all, well before the Chinese Stalinists won power. In fact, at its inception and for some time, the Viet-Minh has close ties with the Kuomintang of Chian Kai-Shek! While collaboration is obviously taking place between Chinese and Viet-Nameese Stalinists on the level of diplomacy and to some extent military supply, this can be explained with complete satisfaction as an alliance of mutual interest against a common foe. There is no evidence of actual Chinese Stalinist intervention in Viet-Nam, nor any indication of supersession of the Viet-Minh leadership by Chinese.

For our part, we believe that the Yugoslav and Chinese experiences have shown that it is entirely possible for a native Stalinist movement to seek and attain social power on its own, and that this is what is happening in Viet-Nam. Ho Chi Minh no more wants to be a satellite than do Tito or Mao, or for that matter any native Stalinist anywhere. His goal is a nationally independent Stalinist state, and he has sufficient forces to have a real chance of attaining it. (Why this is so, and what can be done to avoid this outcome or the alternative of continued imperialist subjugation, we shall take up in our analysis of the Indo-Chinese revolution.) We feel that we have decisively established the national-revolutionary character of the war and in any such war socialists, as we all know, must be unequivocally for the military defeat of the foreign imperialist power.

## II. , THE VIET-NAMESE REVOLUTION: STALINIST LEADERSHIP AND PEASANT COMPOSITION

The Viet-Nameese revolution differs from the classical examples on which the Theory of Permanent Revolution was based, in that it appears at a more advanced stage of the decline and degeneration of world capitalism, and thus acquires additional problems through the presence on the scene of a new social force, the

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Stalinist bureaucracy. Throughout the colonial and backward countries in the present period the role of the native bourgeoisies in the initial national stage of the revolution is increasingly being played by the Stalinists. This development reflects the defeats suffered by world imperialism and the extreme puniness of the native bourgeoisies. Today it is the Stalinist parties who lead the nationalist peasantry and petty-bourgeoisie against the imperialist powers. Nevertheless, the tasks of the national movement remain the same, and the problem of the proletariat -- to assume leadership of the movement and push it forward to social-revolutionary goals -- is basically unchanged, once the class-exploitative nature of Stalinism is understood.

Indo-Chinese Stalinism has today based itself solidly on the peasantry and sunk deep roots in the countryside. In its eight years of leadership of the Viet-Minh government it has clearly defined itself in terms of its class aspirations and policies, and emerged as a real contender for social power. As a class, the collectivist bureaucracy represented by the Stalinists is a reactionary one, because it suppresses the only progressive class in modern society, the proletariat. However at the same time, it carries out objectively progressive policies: National liberation, land division, and accumulation through expropriation of the protected strata and foreign interest of initial industrial capital. This dual role of Stalinism in the backward and colonial countries is admirably analysed by Comrade M. Y. Wang in the NI for March-April '51

The Viet-Nameese Stalinists have been able to capture the confidence of much of the peasantry because of these objectively progressive actions. However, these tasks are very far from completely carried out. It is extremely doubtful that the French, unlike the Kuomintang, can be driven from the country by peasant armies alone, jungle victories notwithstanding. This could only be accomplished by calling for, and obtaining, an anti-imperialist rising of the workers and urban masses generally, a step of which reactionary Stalinism is incapable. At this point we are about to hit upon the key to a genuine socialist alternative in Indo-China.

At this juncture we back away for a moment to review the present state of advanced Marxist understanding of the fundamental dualism of Stalinism. For a long time we Marxists considered the Stalinist parties to be simply overseas agents of the Kremlin. The development of the theory of bureaucratic collectivism and the Yugoslav and Chinese experiences, have forced a modification of this approach. We now understand that the Stalinists are agents of the Kremlin for the basic reason that, as a class which exists only potentially before its accession to power, its actual class base is a foreign one -- namely the big, powerful bureaucratic-collectivist ruling class of Russia itself. However, the moment a Stalinist party takes power in a country, the situation, still speaking in class terms, begins to change: It now has its own social base, it is now a class for itself. No ruling class desires to share power with another, especially if that other is a brutal, rapacious, completely domineering and totalitarian one like the Russian (or Chinese) collectivist bureaucracy.

Therefore, whenever a Stalinist party takes power, the organic ties which bound it to Moscow (or Peiping) are immediately destroyed. The only remaining ties are those of naked force or the threat of force (Poland, Czechoslovakia, North Korea, etc.) or those of mutual interest (China). Where neither exists, as in Yugoslavia, an open break can easily take place. The Independent Socialist movement has characterized this contradiction between the international and national features of Stalinism as fundamental to the bureaucratic-collectivist social system.

It is the misfortune of the Viet-Nameese Stalinists (and if we are clear-sighted enough, the opportunity of Third Camp Socialists) that they are caught squarely in the middle of this contradiction. This is so because, though they have already formed themselves into a class holding state power in substantial areas of

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the country, they have not yet consolidated that power against the Franco-Americans, the Viet-Namese working classes, and the Chinese and Russians. The Viet-Namese Stalinists are dependant on Moscow and Peiping precisely to the degree that their own power in Viet-Nam is as yet insecure; victory in the national war would permit them to move very rapidly to the status of independant national ruling class to which they quite naturally aspire!

The Stalinist Viet-Minh leadership is thus intonsely and immediately desirous of establishing control over the entire country. But the Chinese and Russians have no reason to desire such a development. Today they are able, as its only allies in a desperate struggle, to exert important pressure on the Viet-Minh. Tomorrow, an independant state of Viet-Nam, Stalinist rulers notwithstanding, like all Viet-Namese traditionally antagonistic toward China, might well prove obdurate and dangerous. Therefore it comes as no surprise that the Russians and Chinese are openly offering to sell out the Viet-Minh.

### III. THE INDO-CHINESE REVOLUTION (cont.): THEORY OF PERMANENT REVOLUTION AND THE ROLE OF THE PROLETARIAT

The most important aspect of the Viet-Namese revolution, viewed in the light of the Marxist theory of Permanent Revolution, is its peasant character. About 90% of the population of the country is rural, the immense majority of those being exceedingly poor. The conditions of livelihood of the Viet-Namese peasant have been among the worst in Asia. Over half are landless, and among the others usury and tax-gouging have worked cumulative economic havoc.

The basic historic task of the Indo-Chinese revolution is to give land to the peasantry and attain national independence. The central nature of these tasks stamp it conclusively as a bourgeois revolution. According to the Theory of Permanent Revolution, the bourgeois revolution in backward countries today can be led to completion by neither the bourgeoisie or the peasantry.

That the peasantry, true to its type everywhere, has failed to take leadership in the revolution is apparent in the fact that it follows the Stalinists, and has shown no signs whatsoever of forming a real class party of its own. Besides those who follow the Stalinists, significant sections of the peasantry in some parts of Viet-Nam are organized in several large politico-religious sects, with their own local government organs and their own militias. These groups have demonstrated their complete lack of political clarity at every step, nor can anything be expected from them without decisive leadership from outside the groups themselves.

The Viet-Namese bourgeoisie is an historic abortion. The French imperialists never permitted it to be born; for decades their iron control of the economy forced most native capital to return to the land in the form of usury capital. The result has been that the Viet-Namese bourgeoisie is tied in the closest possible way to the structure of feudal oppression of the peasantry. Its well-grounded fear of the peasant movement, in the light of its own political and economic impotence, effectively debars it from playing any social-revolutionary role. Indeed, it can play no real role even in the national revolution, since it needs desperately some form of foreign domination to maintain its own class position. The most that it is capable of is a purely demagogic show of nationalism, whose real purpose is to gain concessions from the French; its fondest hope is to trade its French yoke for an American one.

As opposed to the prematurely senile bourgeoisie, the Viet-Namese proletariat is a potentially decisive social class. Its numerical smallness--little more than 5% of the population--is negated by its concentration in the cities, and the opportunity this gives it to mobilize the volatile urban petty-bourgeois masses.

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In addition, it has a tradition of great combativity, and a long history of organization into class parties of the Marxist vanguard.

The revolution of 1955 presented the Viet-Namese proletariat with the chance to take power, but it was unable to take real advantage of it, although it took many conscious steps in that direction. The basic reason for its failure is that the Stalinists had the confidence of the peasantry for their policy of "people's front" and collaboration with the "Western democracies." In 1945 the Viet-Namese proletariat was faced with the choice of acceptance of the Viet-Minh regime or civil war. Sporadic armed conflicts did break out in many localities, but on the whole the Viet-Minh regime proved capable of consolidating itself in most of the country. Having subdued and limited the proletarian movement--that is, having prevented that movement from winning leadership of the peasant struggle--the Viet-Minh considered itself strong enough to carry out the imperialist bargains of Yalta and Teheran. It permitted the British to land troops, and subsequently the French to return. The rest is familiar: By 1946 the revolutionary wave had passed its crest and subsided.

Since that time the Viet-Namese proletariat has been passive and, as the direct consequence, the peasant and urban petty-bourgeois masses have been without serious leadership. The consequences of leaderlessness of the masses have been twofold: First, for lack of any other alternative, the peasant movement has fallen ever more thoroughly under the sway of the Stalinists. Second, the radical national-democratic formations of the petty-bourgeoisie, like the religious-political Catholics, Cao Dai and Hoa Hao, who showed considerable development toward political clarity at the height of the proletarian movement, have sunk into confusion, utopian dreaming, and abstentionism. French rule in the big cities and the rice-bowl districts has been pretty largely free of serious threat of general strikes or uprisings, which would otherwise make their entire military position untenable in the country. Besides the obvious matter of brutal French repression, the paralysis of the once-powerful working-class organizations, and of the working-class itself, is undoubtedly more than anything else the direct consequence of the Stalinist betrayal in 1945-46. It is reasonable to assume that the Stalinists reciprocate this mistrust; in any case, they are not likely to desire the more active participation of the proletariat in the revolutionary struggle.

Today the proletariat is the decisive uncommitted social force in the country. It has the potential, clearly shown in the history of its political struggles and especially in the social-revolutionary battles of 1945-46, to achieve leadership of the Viet-Namese masses in the national movement--given, of course, a high degree of political clarity and organizational coherence. For a Marxist, analysing the Indo-Chinese conflict from the standpoint of Permanent Revolution, the isolation of the proletariat from the peasant struggle is the chief stumbling-block to the advance of the Indo-Chinese revolution.

#### IV. SOCIALIST POLICY AND PERSPECTIVES FOR THE INDO-CHINESE NATIONAL STRUGGLE

It must be understood that the authors consider themselves to be free of any illusions about the possibilities for clear and "unbroken" social-revolutionary developments in Indo-China, regardless of correct policies. The development of the revolution in colonial countries, or backward countries in general, has long been understood by the Marxist movement to be subordinate to, and conditioned by, the progress of the proletarian movement in the advanced centers. If the October Revolution itself could not advance to socialism and was in fact overwhelmed by counter-revolutionary Stalinism because, ultimately, of the failure of the revolution in Germany and the West, it is obvious that it is even less possible for the Indo-Chinese proletariat, by sheer clarity and will, to achieve the victory of socialism in the single backward nation of Viet-Nam. Either developments toward



greater social power of the proletariat will take place in the advanced countries and provide a world context within which the struggles in the colonial areas can advance toward socialist goals, or the Viet-Namense revolution and its gains will be inherited by a new bureaucratic-collectivist ruling class on the Stalinist model. This is nothing but ordinary realism, and is basically no different from the prognosis for the Russian workers' state made by Lenin and Trotsky both before and after October. To realize the difficulties and limited possibilities of the revolution does not mean that the revolutionary struggle itself is a mistake!

In China after the second world war the Stalinists, at the head of peasant armies, overran the country and established the rule of their own collectivist bureaucracy, which thus became consolidated as the ruling class. The Stalinist victory was achieved without, and over the heads of, the Chinese proletariat, largely passive as that group had been since the disasters of the 1920's. In power, the Chinese Stalinists, while proclaiming the role of the working class as that of leading society under "Peoples' Democracy", actually suppressed such working-class social initiative as did arise. The passivity of the Chinese proletariat, and its exhaustion and disillusion, immensely facilitated the consolidation of bureaucratic-collectivist totalitarianism in the course of a few years, although this process had taken far longer in Russia itself, where the tradition of proletarian leadership was rooted out only after bitter struggles. More, although Stalinism at length triumphed in Russia proper, important cadres of Marxism-Leninism throughout the world revolutionary movement were salvaged, and the lessons of Stalinist counter-revolution were not by any means lost on the advanced workers of many countries. It is precisely these cadres who were trained during the October period who present the hope today of world-wide proletarian resurgence, of world revolution and world socialism. Will anyone say that the Bolshevik Revolution was in vain?

Everything said in the last two paragraphs is well known, but the conclusions are not always drawn. For us, the Marxists, the lesson is this: There is a world of difference for the proletarian movement between a revolution which is overwhelmed and goes down fighting, and a revolution which never takes place. If an Indo-Chinese revolution under proletarian leadership is betrayed and isolated, and goes down under the wave of bureaucratic-collectivist reaction, that is a thousand times more progressive for the world proletarian struggle than if the proletariat merely passes mutely from on slavery to another. It is extremely probable that the end result in Indo-China, short of World War III, will be an independent Stalinist (or at best, semi-Stalinist) state, allying itself for the present with the Russian and Chinese powers. Within this general characterization, the key question for Marxists is "To what extent is the proletariat imbued with class-consciousness and solidarity? To what extent must the regime adapt itself in its drive for class power to the dynamism of the working masses, and attempt to hold to support of sections of those masses?" Petty-bourgeois terror in the face of the probability of Stalinist development of the revolution, like petty-bourgeois terror of any of the consequences of revolution, serves only to paralyse such elements and those led or influenced by them in the face of imperialists and collectivist bureaucracy alike.

In the struggle for political clarity in the world Marxist movement on policy in Indo-China, we should raise the following slogans:

- (1) Unequivocal military support to all native forces fighting for expulsion of the imperialists.
- (2) Call for the Viet-Namense proletariat to take the leadership of the national struggle by strikes and risings in the cities.

(3) No deal between the Stalinist imperialist powers and the Western bloc for partition or occupation of Viet-Nam. The Viet-Nameese blood shed in the name of independence must not be traded for Russian trade or Chinese legitimaoy!

Thos politically advanced Viet-Nameese Marxists who accept our line should be advised to take the following course:

- (1) Organize the proletariat for intransigent political, military, and economic struggle against the imperialists.
- (2) Educate the proletariat to the understanding that the interests of the world Stalinist leaders may lead them to sell-out to the imperialists.
- (3) Explain to them why this is so, from their own historical knowledge of the Stalinists' tactics and on the basis of the class nature of bureaucratic-collectivism.
- (4) Set for them the goal of winning over the Stalinist and independent-nationalist peasant formations to the leadership of their own program for independence and socialism.
- (5) Prepare them for continuing their class struggles, and for continued agitation among the peasantry, even under a regime dominated by the Stalinists.
- (6) Convince them that the fate of their revolutionary struggle for socialism depends ultimately on the victory of the world-wide proletarian struggle, and that their own courage and determination can have an important role in revitalizing and inspiring that struggle.

The Third Camp, as understood by Independent Socialism, will arise from the world solidarity of the working class and the colonial peoples. Their can be only one road to the building of a Third Camp movement in Ind-China: The proletariat itself must establish its political leadership of the national struggle, by entering it and broadening its demands to the socialist transformation of society.

end.

Totalitarianism. It does not mean historical tyranny, or even simply twentieth century dictatorship, neither Ceasar nor Franco, properly speaking. It does not mean the simple suppression of liberty.

Totalitarianism is the substitution of state coercion for every other principle in a society. It not only involves the destruction of the individual, but the totaling of individual destructions into the ruin of the whole, of individuality as such. Its jurisprudence, for instance, is not personal but categorial, the conviction of the International-Jew-Trotskyite-Titoist who "should" have committed the crime rather than of the actual assassin. It must ultimately penetrate into every center of autonomy, into art, religion, even into tradition itself.

It is not the last reaction of a suicidal capitalism, as the Stalinists once described it. For it involves the creation of a new class society, a drive which was forcing Hitler to turn against those very industrialists who originally supported him. In this movement, it is the elaboration of tendencies which exist in twentieth century techniques, and it would be impossible without the science and industrial resources of our time.

Totalitarianism is total. The state does not merely concern itself with external actions, but with freedom as such. In Orwell's "1984" the citizen must not only confess his guilt to Big Brother: he must believe it.

The United States today is not totalitarian, or immediate to it, and it would be a mistake to talk as if it were. But there are tendencies in that direction, particularly in the war economy, and we must recognize them for what they are in order to fight them.

The Army has not only documented an instance of this tendency: it has publicized it. In the November, 1952 issue of Colliers, there is an article, "Combat Soldiers Fail to Shoot", by Bill Davidson. It is based on the studies on Brigadier General S.L.A. Marshall, the Army's expert on the subject.

In World War II, the Army discovered that only 15 to 25 per cent of the men in a position to fire their weapons actually did - even though they were under attack. In Korea an intensive program has raised this percentage to 50, but 75 is considered the maximum possible.

The Army blamed the "non-firer" on his inhibitions. The child in our culture is trained to repress the desire to kill. Laws prohibit it. The traditions of Christianity, Judaism and the Enlightenment variously create an ideological position of the right of others to bodily integrity.

Therefore, in order to solve the problem of the "non-firer", the

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cultural and individual inhibition against killing must be destroyed.

The Army took a methodical road. It concluded that these values could be destroyed, or made inoperative, in three ways. First: the identity of the individual must be crushed and he must be made a member of a mob. A man in a mob will do things he would not otherwise do. Second: a group ethic, sanctioning violence, must be evolved. What is wrong for the individual is not wrong for the group. And lastly: the leaders of the men must function as father figures. This will take away the sense of guilt, for the men will follow blindly.

Several characteristics are basic to the Army's approach. It uses psychological analysis and technique. These techniques all require the destruction of the individual personality. And lastly, there is the amazing fact that the Army publicizes this activity in a national magazine.

The use of psychological techniques poses a tremendous problem in the struggle against totalitarianism. The nineteenth century socialist concept of the masses spontaneously reacting to changes in the objective situation must be qualified. For it is now possible for a government to manipulate the external world so that the data conforms to its aims. The Army's method of handling the non-firer is an ambitious attempt to eradicate the effect of the culture in which a man was born.

Victor Serge realized the importance of the psychological sciences when he wrote ("Socialism and Psychology", MODERN REVIEW, May, 1947, pp. 195-6) "It is no longer possible to ignore mass psychology which has been inadequately studied but the importance of which cannot be doubted if one takes into consideration phenomena such as the panics which spread through armies and nations, lynchings, meetings whipped into frenzy by irrational agitation, the life of whole populations subjected to the totalitarian process which crushes individual, human personality."

It is interesting to note that Serge places an emphasis on the mob in his examples - and what the Army is attempting to do in its first approach is create a mob methodically. The Nazis and Stalinists have, of course, extended the use of psychology far beyond that of the Army. Yet this is perhaps the boldest example we yet have of an American willingness to operate so consciously in the depersonalization of the individual.

In fighting such a technique the democrat is at a great disadvantage, at least in the short run. If not only the interpretation of data, but data itself, is controlled, an impossible situation is created. This instance, which the Army supplies, is probably one of the most significant and dangerous steps in that direction - although the Eisenhower BBI&O technique is another important example.

The very existence of a group with the Army trained to think in the terms of using knowledge of psychology and psychiatry for political indoctrination constitutes a tremendous threat. One remembers that it was under the guise of war necessity that the FBI amassed a tremendous amount of fingerprints. How are they being

( more )

used today? How will psychological manipulation be used in the future?

There is, within the American people, a tradition of freedom which is sometimes surprisingly strong. World War II did result in totalitarian elements being introduced into the economy. But contrary to many socialist predictions, there was a fairly quick abandonment of the war economy, at least in its institutional form. Therefore, we must be cautious in estimating the significance of the Army's non-firer program.

We must, in fact, place it within the context of the permanent war economy and of the increasing reactionary ideological aspect of the cold war. Seen in this light, the Army technique is not so much important in itself, but as a portent of what may come. The propaganda of the last war within the United States was chiefly repetitive, and it at least had the virtue of being phrased in a progressive mythology. However, it is quite probable that this will not be true in the advancing of the cold war and a possible third world war. More subtle methods may be needed and certainly a more total unanimity will be demanded. The Army, at least, is ready.

The second aspect of the Army program which is essential to it is its anti-personalism. In the Colliers article, Dr. M.M. Frolich, an army psychiatrist, was quoted as being quite precise on this point. It is necessary that the individual be destroyed in each one of the three approaches.

Categorical guilt is fast becoming a part of our cold war law. It is not only a question of the administrative use of "guilt by association" in congressional committees. It is far more dangerous to the actual legal fabric of civil liberties when it occurs under the guise of the conspiracy concept.

In "polite" white collar crimes, such as anti-trust prosecutions, the old doctrine of conspiracy had been enlarged, and less actual proof of intent, specific steps and the like, required. But this was in a process in which "crime" was only a fiction, and the punitive sanctions hardly ever used. Nevertheless, it established a dangerous series of precedents.

Now this doctrine of conspiracy is being used in political crimes - and has fallen to the amazing level of only requiring, in the Smith Act, conspiracy to advocate, not even conspiracy to act. The result is that the government has written notions of collective guilt into the law.

The Army approach to the non-firer is the reverse side of this coin. It attempts the creation of the group, and of a notion of group "right" which is the correlative of group "wrong" involved in the Smith Act prosecutions. These relations only have significance as tendencies. It would be wrong to suggest that personal freedom has been destroyed. But the areas in which they occur - cold war anti-subversion and cold war militarism - indicate that they are a basic feature of the war economy. And that more can be expected.

The Army's anti-personal group approach calls to mind a far more extreme example of the same method. Often, a new group of S.S. troops were required by the Nazis to commit some particularly

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heinous crime. After it was done, they were assembled and told that they had incurred a group guilt in the eyes of the world and must always be together, even die together, because they were condemned as a group.

There have been "group-think" programs before, but the particular characteristic of the Army example is its conscious use of psychological technique. Again, it contains within itself the possibility (and thus far, only the possibility) that the demands of the cold war will necessitate the destruction of all personality and the creation of far larger and manipulable groups. For the issue involved goes farther than the destruction of the externals of personal liberty. It is an attempt to change the person himself, and to make him part of a new group. It is here that the Army program bears its most terrible similarity to the aims and methods of totalitarianism.

But by far the most dangerous fact about the Army program is that it is publicized -- and that it is accepted.

In the nineteenth century, social thought conceived of group consciousness as progressive, fashioned out of changes in the world itself. Yet the twentieth century has revealed, in Nazism and Stalinism, regressions of tremendous proportion. There is a sense in which Stalinism conforms to a certain need in the Russian people, a sense in which it is popular, despite all its crimes.

As Serge points out, the unconscious contains a source of regression, particularly the group unconscious. He writes, "The seeds of totalitarianism exist in all modern societies since they are as much rooted in the despotism of the past as in the possibilities opened to the state by modern technology." And in this case, it is the use of the modern technology - psychology - to bring to the surface the past despotism of the unconscious that is the danger. It is certainly no accident that the third method used by the Army is the creation of leaders as "father-figures".

The very basis of technological society provides a possible support for such manipulations. In the depersonalization which resulted from the industrial revolution, the destruction of the independent craftsman, the anti-individualist division of labor, there are two functional classes - the technical elite and the mass. It can be seen in the resistance to workers-control so often encountered among workmen, in the desire to retain the old relationship. Erich Fromm has described it as an "escape from freedom".

This tendency need not issue in totalitarian forms. It is possible to attack the problem and solve it. But it can, especially when there is a conscious psychological exploitation of its possibilities. This is why the cold war and the permanent war economy should not be conceived of as simply reaction. For it could constitute a "progress" to a new form of society based on new and more conscious exploitation than any which has gone before.

The Army has worked out the technique necessary to solve a problem which it faced. But the particular kind of technique it chose, the anti-personal manipulation of individuals by means of applied psychology, is no accident. It is a technique which can solve far larger problems and may well be called upon to do so. It is a

technique which provides a terrible image of what could come as a result of the institutionalization of the permanent war economy. It demonstrates once again the inter-relationships of economy, scientific technique, and war demands. It is a weapon which is potentially as absolute as the atomic weapons and, in a sense, far more terrible, because it leaves the person alive after it has destroyed him.

At the end of the article, Davidson confesses that he had doubts about the morality of such a technique. He went to a minister who told him that the veil could be lifted on "man's brutality" in defense of the country - and be lowered again when the war was over. Aside from the twisting of ethics needed to arrive at such a position, it misstates the issue completely.

The question is not only of the effect on the nation's consciousness. For, even assuming that the people are ready to have the veil lowered back again, will the Army be? Will the ruling powers, who could easily come to see in such a method an easy way to control the masses?

It is not a linear, abstract consciousness with which the Army deals. It is a consciousness at the particular moment of twentieth century technology and twentieth century crisis. In this, it is a small, but disturbingly significant, example of tendencies toward totalitarianism in our war economy.

end.

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To set the record straight: I wrote

1. In Conversation Piece #2 the sentence: And then there are the youth. as a paragraph in itself; it was mimeographed as the first sentence of the paragraph which would normally have followed it.

2. In Conversation Piece the sentence:

----- The answer is

... YES.

The answer is YES. was mimeographed.

3. I - if not the mimeographer - write: Democratic party; not: D. Party.

4. I do not know what will happen to what follows - or what has been done to this passage in mimeographing.

CONVERSATION PIECE #3

We all want the most effective kind of revolutionary organization. In what does the effectiveness of a revolutionary organization consist? In its ability to participate actively in the creative transformation of society without, once that transformation has been accomplished, transforming its associates or members into a new ruling class. What has the experience of our century taught us with respect to how the second, undesirable transformation - the transformation into a new ruling class - takes place? Chiefly this: that in the case of the one revolution that succeeded in abolishing the Capitalist mode of production as we know it the group that played the role of vanguard became objectively the new ruling class - that the bureaucracy of the group was, as it were, lifted out of a position of opposition to the status quo and literally placed atop the new society. From the point of view of economic analysis the Soviet Union may be called bureaucratic collectivism, but in terms of political analysis it may be called a party-state: that is, a society in which economic functions are centralized in a state which is controlled by members of a party who, in turn, are controlled by the party's bureaucracy - by the party's formal organizational hierarchy. Can the Russian experience be generalized? - or was it merely a function of the industrial backwardness of Russia, the privations of the Civil War, the "knavery of the Stalinists", etc.? It seems to be Hal Draper's opinion that Russia's unhappy fate, while strongly influenced by the above conditions, is not incapable of duplication in the highly industrialized, "ideally revolutionary" countries to the west: "Suffice it to say that ... we viewed (the I.S.L. in 1949 - R.I.) the labor governments measures as opening the road to an historic fork in social development - either toward socialism, or (insofar as one raised the question of the end-result of an uninterrupted continuation of the Labor leadership's bureaucratic course) toward a new bureaucratization of society." (from About the Class Character of the British Labor Government) (I agree.) It would seem that - if the wrong fork is taken - the new ruling class will illustrate the main feature of the Russian bureaucracy: it will be under the control of the bureaucracy of the ruling monopoly.

What does our experience teach us with respect to how social revolutions are effected under Capitalism as we know it? This is of course open to debate, but in my opinion: that there must exist in addition to the organizations of the revolutionary sections of the people a conscious organization of revolutionaries capable of adding to the coherence of the spontaneous popular movement.

If these theses be granted - that a distinct revolutionary organization is required, but that there is at least a high degree of possibility that if the structure of such an organization exhibits a formal bureaucracy, whether it be of the "rigid" type associated with the Bolsheviks or the comparatively less "rigid" type of the British Labor Party it will transform its bureaucracy into what amounts to a new ruling class - then for safety's sake at least we ought consider other possibilities.



In what does the effectiveness of a revolutionary organization consist? In the opportunity it affords those associated with it to assume responsibilities commensurate with their abilities. In the ease with which it allows associates who can no longer fulfil their tasks or who have shown themselves unable to fulfill them satisfactorily to vacate them and to be replaced by more capable persons. In the degree to which the activity of the associates corresponds to the real influence of the revolutionary organization among the revolutionary sections of society. In the degree to which it can utilize the most people. In the degree of assurance it provides against the growth of a "vested interest" in the maintenance of the organizational structure or subsequently in the maintenance of a privileged position in the new society.

Bearing all these things in mind, remember one thing more: persons who join a voluntary organization join it because they are in fundamental agreement with - at least - its aims.

Imagine an organization of the type I have proposed. It is a confederation of caucuses based upon the voluntary cooperation of individuals working as a left opposition within the voluntary organizations of the people. The number of people deployed in any organization is left, in the last analysis, to the discretion of the associates individually - guided, I hope, by the gauges described in Conversation Piece #2. Thus if, as in America, the historically progressive forces adhere about equally to the Republican and Democratic parties, approximately an equal number of associates will attempt to enter each; and in Britain, where a very large section of these forces adhere to the British Labor party a proportionately greater number of associates will enter it, and a smaller number will enter the Conservative party (which receives the electoral support of important numbers of farmers, etc., and sections of the very poor).

It must be remembered, however, that the army is not a voluntary mass organization and that left-oppositionism is particularly frowned upon within it.

The possibility is raised that caucuses of our organization in opposing political parties may oppose each other in elections. This possibility is fraught with possibilities - for us. For example: in a campaign between a laissez-faire Republican and a New-Deal Democrat our Republican caucus campaigns against the New-Deal and for genuine freedom of enterprise while our Democratic caucus campaigns against the Eisenhower administration and for a political realignment. Each tells the truth about the other's party - and both approach the same end in a different way.

What sort of independent life - apart from its work in other organizations - will our organization have? It is capable of any kind of activity - the types its associates choose will vary with the situation. In some situations no independent activity at all will be required. In some situations associates may constitute themselves as a separate political party and run protest candidates: the platform to depend upon, of course, the case at hand. In some situations publicity publications will be helpful: there may be others in which this specific activity will do more harm than good. In fact I would say that the only really indispensable independent activity for an organization of this kind (beside caucus and "inter-caucus" meetings) is the publication of an internal discussion bulletin without which, of course, it is impossible even to think of succeeding.

For the rest, the federated caucuses will keep in touch with each other through the discussion bulletin, - and the mails, telephones, etc.

The organization will have no officers. It will have no dues. How then can it operate? Its finances will be secured from voluntary contributions. Organizational and caucus responsibilities will be assumed by volunteers. Two crises may develop: there may be no volunteers (or donations) or too many volunteers. In the first

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instance it is safe to assume that interest in the organization has ceased, and since there will be no formal bureaucracy with a vested interest in the maintenance of the organization, the organization will automatically dissolve. (Incidentally (to anticipate a little): that is what will happen to it after the revolution.) The second instance is particularly illustrative of the central principle around which the organization is based. Each of the contesting associates actually has two goals: to obtain the position and to aid in the development of the organization. And he seeks the first goal in order to further the second. Therefore in most cases his desire to preserve the organization - not for itself, but for what he can do when he cooperates in it - will triumph over his desire for the position, the rivals will realistically assess each other's abilities, and all will yield to the best man. As the issue is being decided, the concerned associates may conduct a poll among themselves to indicate the general sentiment. This does not alter the voluntary character of the cooperation on which the organization is based, for such polls, as we shall see, cannot be binding or authoritative directives. In those cases where rivalry supercedes desire to maintain the organization the organization will - must obviously - divide like the sturdy amoeba. But considering the internal freedom of the organization, I think such divisions will be pretty much unknown. Unknown because unnecessary. Much the same procedure applies to factions. Nothing compels one faction to submit to the decisions of another in this organization - nothing, that is, except the (one might say) revolutionary consciences which brought them together in the first place. If factions do not unite - they divide. But note well: this does not mean that they will stand apart forever and glower at each other like our present-day splinters. The new kind of organization is an aggregation of individuals freely cooperating for specific projects - united only by their desire to cooperate. If a difference of opinion causes an individual or group to refuse to cooperate on a project - to do something else - there will be nothing to prevent him or them from cooperating on others. Thus persons who are in only partial agreement with our aims can work with us to the limit of their agreement, and will not be forced to accept our discipline where their own consciences refuse it. The organization will have discipline - self-discipline.

And that indeed is the basic kind of discipline of all radical groups - for in America, at least, they are voluntary associations whose members can leave them when they feel they must. I have merely tried to make this hidden principle a conscious guide.

Because of its great flexibility it will probably be better if the organization has no formal name: for no faction can be said to "speak in its name".

The nature of our proposed tactics makes it, in my opinion, advisable that all associated with the organization should act as openly as is consistent with their own safety.

I do not think there is any reason why the organization should not own any property the associates think necessary. But care should be taken that no formal position is created to administer the property, that the organization owns it collectively (as it were), not in the name of an individual but through some such device as a holding company, etc., and that all property be freely open to all associates: if the first 2 suggestions are followed the third will tend to follow automatically.

I do not think there is anything to prevent occasional payments to associates - if such payments are not made to "officers" but to associates according to need.

Through the principles of confederation and voluntary cooperation a local, regional, national, international, and if necessary an interplanetary organization can be built up. It should be emphasized that no "Master Plan" is foolproof: I can not say that this kind of organization will succeed where all the rest have failed,

nor can I even say that such an organization will be positively immune either to bureaucratism or to sectarianism. All any of us can do is try our best: if this organization fails, revolution itself may well be impossible; but if it can be launched those who are associated in it, even in their day-to-day activities, will be building the new society within the shell of the old.

Comrade Denitch says that there is no "better form of organization." Perhaps.

---January, 1954

Note:

1. Unintentional misreading and my own clumsy formulations have led to a great deal of misinterpretation of my whole position on working in other organizations. When I dealt with this question I had two intentions. First: I wanted to propose gauges which would be applicable in our relations with any organization. And second: I wanted to indicate a change of emphasis I think most necessary if our work is to be successful: a change which would locate the main body of our work within the organizations of the people and those to which they voluntarily adhere rather than in independent activity. I used the example of the Democratic and Republican parties solely to illustrate my intentions only in order to imply a subsidiary point: namely that we should not be guided by outworn prejudice and crude sectarianism but rather should non-categorically examine each organization singly according to the best gauges available; that "principle" is irrelevant. I have been reproached for allegedly advocating our immediate entry en masse into these parties. Actually I said no such thing. Ideally of course we should be everywhere; but under the present extremely un-ideal circumstances our most fruitful work is to be done elsewhere. The point however is that now this is only a personal calculation, but to the associate in a revolutionary organization of the type I offered it would be the result of the application of simple, standardized, and efficient tests.

2. The outlines I have suggested will be filled in in the press of action.

---April, 1954

end

\*\* (Editor's note)

The above article by Comrade Ilson is the third of a series. The first two (Conversion Piece and Conversation Piece #2) appeared in the YPSL-SYL JOINT DISCUSSION BULLETIN -- the discussion bulletin published jointly by the Young Peoples Socialist League and the Socialist Youth League prior to the merger of those organizations into the Young Socialist League in February, 1954. The three issues of the bulletin that were issued are still available, in limited quantity. Copies are .20 cents each, or .50¢ for a complete set, and may be ordered from the YSL National Office, 3rd Floor, 114 W. 14th St., New York 11, N.Y.

During the last few years there has been a vast amount of material written about the guilt or innocence of Alger Hiss and William Remington. Very little of this literature has treated the vital question of why these men became Communists in their youth and not socialists.

The tragedy of Alger Hiss was the tragedy of American youth during the 1930's. The events of that period had been a grim awakening for American students. It taught them that progress was not inevitable, that capitalism staggers on from crisis to crisis, that the individual is frozen into a pattern of society based upon status. American society seemed to be crumbling under the impact of privilege, monopoly and racism. The intellectual attraction of Communism was that it offered the student a new set of values in a decaying society.

The youth did not embrace Communism simply because of unemployment. Many students could get jobs, even at the worst of times. The trouble was that by 1930 there was no standard of values which an intelligent student could accept. Patriotism, religion, the family honor, decency -- these were traditional beliefs which no longer had any meaning for the youth. The debunking of Western civilization had reached its climax, and cynicism, disillusionment and despair were widespread. Although the youth did get rid of such beliefs as patriotism and religion, it did not get rid of the need for something to believe in. During the twenties many young intellectuals, including some gifted British writers like Evelyn Waugh and Christopher Hollis, submitted to the Roman Catholic Church. It is significant that these young people accepted the Catholic Church and not the Protestant sects. They embraced the Church with the most absolute faith, the one with the most rigid discipline and the one with the most power and prestige behind it. One does not have to look further than this for the reasons why so many young people gravitated towards Communism. For Communism, like Catholicism, was a creed to which the youth could cling. Here was a church, a faith, an army and a discipline. The youth saw, in the Communist movement, a vision of the Kingdom of God on earth. It found in the Communist Party a sense of comradeship and belonging in a cause that was assured by history to triumph over poverty and injustice.

The youth did not accept socialism because it was too closely linked with the old order. After all, did not the socialists believe in gradual reforms when more drastic changes were needed? The American socialist movement was unable to produce a version of socialism which the mass of the youth could find desirable. During the depression, when the political and economic situation became desperate, there was no socialist group which could give the general discontent a voice and a direction. There was no great socialist leader capable of explaining just why America was in the mess it was and what was the way out of it. Most socialists thought in terms which had no appeal for young people who required a new faith and for whom socialism was bound up with liberty, equality

and internationalism. Much of the blame for this was due to the ineptness of the socialist leadership and the different squabbles among the different socialist groups. American socialism was forced into the same rut as European socialism: it became fossilized in theory, and sectarian in action.

Had the socialists of that period been able to bury their differences and offer the youth a dynamic program of political and economic change, thousands of young people would have been spared the disillusioning and cynical experience of Communism. Many students who were attracted to Communism in the thirties and remained faithful to it after they grasped its nature became neurotic types, people fascinated by the spectacle of power and cruelty. Although they are no longer Communists today, their political judgement is warped and their faith in democracy is doubtful.

Students were driven to the Communist faith by the rise of fascism in Europe. In almost every country the choice seemed to lie between Communism and fascism. Russia appeared as the only force capable of resisting German totalitarianism. The half-heartedness of the socialists in opposing fascism added to the Communist's appeal.

The dismal record of the German socialists during the twenties and thirties drove many students into the Communist fold. After World War I the German masses were in the mood for drastic political and economic change. But what happened? The German socialists lacked the capacity to act, to provide the leadership that could bring these changes into being. Their policy was one of compromise and conciliation with the elements that had their roots in the nation's reactionary past. For a while in Germany, at least, the socialists could have taken decisive steps to transform the country into a socialist state. However, they drifted in and out of conservative coalitions, with little or no view of what was needed. Nor was the record of the Italian socialists any better. They could not mobilize the Italian masses against the onrush of fascism. Their resistance to Mussolini melted away under pressure from the Right.

During the 1920's and 1930's, it seemed that only the Communists were prepared to fight tyranny and had the imaginative grasp to see what was needed and to demand the necessary sacrifices from their following. Although many students saw the resemblance between Communism and fascism, they accepted the myth that to be anti-Communist was to aid the fascists.

The importance of what happened in the thirties may be greater than has now been realized. The experiences of many young people in the Communist movement makes them shrink from political activity. Apathy and despair have taken hold of their thinking. It is against this background that totalitarianism has been able to do its dirty work.

Today the major task of the socialist movement is to prevent the students from undergoing the disillusionment of the 1930's. There is still a vast potential source of idealism, at present dispirited and dismayed, which could be tapped by socialist organizations of courage and determination. There are countless students who, without being aware of it, are in sympathy with the basic democratic aims of socialism and could be won over if only socialists could

find the program to move them. Every student who feels that freedom is threatened, every student who has a genuine hatred for injustice and war is potentially on the socialist side.

In the coming days, the one thing which will awaken the support of the youth is the underlying ideal of socialism: liberty and justice. Socialists must hammer two facts home into the youth's consciousness. One, that socialism is the unyielding enemy of Communism and reaction; the other, that socialism is compatible with freedom, liberty and human dignity.

Containing Communism or any other kind of tyranny depends upon the faith of our youth in these democratic values. Let us hope that mistakes of the past will not be forgotten by the socialists. For unless they offer the youth leadership in reshaping society along socialist lines, the outlook for freedom and peace is very dark.

===== end =====

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