

Vietnam -- Key Issue of the Year

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Both celebrations were the occasion for self-congratulation among the exponents and defenders of the capitalist system. In the Soviet Union, the current heads of government, committed to continuing Stalin's policy of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism, were preoccupied with trying to make appeasement work in face of the broadening U.S. military thrust on the mainland of Asia. Their observance of the 1917 events was featured by embarrassment over Lenin's program of world revolution and obstinate silence over the fate of the general staff which the founder of the Soviet Union had assembled in the successful struggle to overthrow Czarism. In place of the revolutionary lions of 1917, the Soviet Union in 1967 could offer only a few hyenas, rather bedraggled and toothless ones at that.

As for the one hundredth anniversary of Capital, the main point made by the capitalist ideologues was that against all of Marx's expectations their economic system still remained in existence. That this was a cause for good cheer among the majority of mankind was dubious, however, in view of the proliferation of reactionary regimes on all continents, a nuclear arms race in which the capacities of the two sides are measured in fantastic multiples of possible "overkill" of the human race, and a situation in Vietnam that is growing more and more ominous.

The continued escalation of U.S. imperialist aggression in Vietnam, already the dominant current issue in world politics in 1965 and 1966, became even more overriding in 1967. In January, U.S. troops in Vietnam numbered around 380,000.

The American military staff in Saigon, headed by Gen. William C. Westmoreland, insisted on further escalation. In July the White House conceded to the pressure and new levies of conscripts were shipped across the Pacific. It was reported that Johnson had set the "ceiling" at an army of 480,000 men under the American flag in the tiny, savagely devastated country. But in December still more contingents were dispatched in what was described as "the largest and longest airlift ever undertaken." According to a press wire from Saigon, "A ceiling of 525,000 has been set by President Johnson."

It remained unclear whether the variation in the height of the ceiling reflected the elasticity observable in the terminology commonly used at State Department briefings or whether it represented part of the widening of Johnson's "credibility gap" during 1967.

The mounting fear over the logic inherent in Johnson's escalation of the war in Vietnam was not confined to those bearing the brunt of the costs and the suffering; that is, ordinary people. Fear was evident in higher circles, too. On May 11, U Thant, general secretary of the United Nations, stated that "if the present trend continues, a direct confrontation between Washington and Peking is inevitable and I am afraid that we are witnessing today the initial phase of World War III."

By September, American planes were bombing targets within seven miles of the Chinese frontier. On October 12, at a press conference, Secretary of State Dean Rusk outlined U.S. objectives in Vietnam in terms of fighting the "yellow peril," talking about one billion Chinese armed with nuclear weapons within a decade. This became a prowar campaign theme of the Johnson administration, being voiced by such prominent spokesmen as Vice-President Hubert Humphrey.

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On November 28, in a televised interview, former President Eisenhower advocated an invasion of North Vietnam, saying, "This respecting of boundary lines on a map, I think you can overdo it." The statement caused some lifting of eyebrows, since the official pretext for U.S. involvement in the civil war in Vietnam was the allegation that the North Vietnamese failed to respect boundary lines on a map.

Coincident with Eisenhower's bellicose statements, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara was dropped from Johnson's cabinet as expendable, presumably because he was the final one left in top government circles affected by twinges of doubt about the wisdom of escalating the war any closer to the brink.

As the year came to a close, unnamed administration "sources" admitted that Johnson was "considering giving field commanders in South Vietnam authority for 'hot pursuit'" into Cambodia. At a background seminar conducted by the State Department December 13, U.S. government officials, according to the press, "were apparently discounting the likelihood of intervention in the war by the Soviet Union and Communist China as a result of actions along the Cambodian frontier."

A substantial sector of the American ruling class remained deeply dubious of the tactical advisability of Johnson's course in Vietnam. The columns of the powerful New York Times gave free vent during 1967, as in the previous two years, to the doubts of this sector, providing a forum for debate among the petty-bourgeois intellectuals, whose views ranged from out-and-out "hawks" to "doves" willing to engage in "civil disobedience," provided that it is properly civil to the powers that be.

Important as this opposition has been in providing a shield for more determined and consistent opponents of the war, it has offered no real alternatives. So far as the capitalist system and the interests of American imperialism are concerned, Johnson could justifiably consider the spokesmen of this sector to be nothing but carping critics and "nervous Nellies."

Senator J. William Fulbright continued in 1967 to be the leading congressional doubter of Johnson's course in Vietnam. After voting for the Tonkin Bay resolution, passed by the U.S. Congress in August, 1964, which Johnson has utilized as a virtual declaration of war giving him the authority needed to plunge the United States into a foreign conflict, Fulbright had a change of heart. But his proposals have offered little to undo the evil. On November 21 he deplored the "near

absolute power" of the White House, to commit the U.S. to war, which threatens the country with "tyranny or disaster." In the future, he said, Congress should be "much more cautious" before voting for blank checks like the Tonkin Bay resolution.

Of greater interest was his explanation December 13 of a shift within ruling circles in the United States. A military-industrial complex, dependent on an annual war budget of \$75 billion, has become a force "for the perpetuation of our global military commitments." This force is corrupting American society from top to bottom. "More and more our economy, our Government and our universities are adapting themselves to the requirements of continuing war -- total war, limited war and cold war." The material incentives derive from "a huge, permanent military establishment" that provides workers with a living and business with a profit.

Fulbright's observations on the rising influence and power of the military caste in the United States and the sector of the capitalist class most directly benefited by war contracts echoed the gloomy comments in the speech read by Eisenhower upon leaving office. There is truth in these admissions. A huge, permanent military establishment has become entrenched in the U.S.

Fulbright's remarks could also be taken, in part, as ironic comment on the obscene spectacle the previous evening at the AFL-CIO convention in Bal Harbour, Florida, when a warmongering speech by Johnson was cheered far more lustily by labor's top bureaucrats than even the most reactionary business circles would have thought proper. George Meany, the president of the highly ossified organization, led the pack, pawing the president like one of the White House beagles, only too eager to commit labor to voting for the master again and again and again.

The enthusiasm in these well-kept circles for Johnson and his war in Vietnam scarcely reflected the feelings of the rank and file. It was because of the pressure from below that Walter Reuther of the United Auto Workers discreetly absented himself from the Florida orgy. With his eyes on the mounting antiwar movement in the United States, Reuther in fact resigned February 3 from the executive committee of the AFL-CIO; and on April 22 the UAW convention voted to empower Reuther to withdraw the union from the organization. Evidently Reuther did not care to risk the squeeze on his career involved in being caught in a bear hug between Johnson and Meany.

One of the most significant developments internationally in 1967 was the

massive broadening of the antiwar movement among the American people.

Opposition to involvement in the civil war in Vietnam was indirectly indicated in 1964 by the huge majority cast for Johnson in the elections as the "peace" candidate running against Goldwater. The opposition took a more active form immediately upon Johnson's escalation of the conflict in February, 1965, teach-ins and rallies being staged on nearly all the campuses in the country. From the campuses, the movement began to impinge upon wider layers and this became clearly evident in 1967.

On April 21 between 400,000 and 500,000 people rallied for a march in New York protesting the war. On the same day in San Francisco more than 75,000 staged a similar march. These were the largest marches ever held in either city and, taken in conjunction, marked a historic departure for America. Of the wars conducted by the United States after reaching the imperialist stage, this one was shown by the April 21 demonstrations to be the most unpopular by far.

Another national demonstration was organized in Washington on October 21. This turned out to be another record breaker; it was the largest that city has yet seen, the turnout being 150,000.

On top of this, demonstrations on a local scale became so frequent in the latter part of the year as to be difficult to keep track of.

The draft system was under heavy fire from all quarters and there were increasing indications that among the ranks of the armed forces themselves the desire to voice bitterness over the war in Vietnam was on the rise.

Johnson faced increasing political problems in relation with the 1968 presidential campaign. His "popularity" as measured by polls had dropped to such a low level as to invite comparison with Herbert Hoover's status in 1932. Johnson's immediate circle put on a cheerful front and talked about the status of Truman's fortunes in 1947 and how that was overcome; but it was rather noticeable that none of them suggested utilizing Truman's famous tactic of a "whistle-stop" campaign. Nor did they care to draw any comparisons with what happened to the Democratic party in 1952 after two years of Truman's adventure in Korea.

Johnson's rivals in the Democratic party saw little hope of retrieving the situation. They nevertheless began a "dump Johnson" move and Senator Eugene J. McCarthy was chosen as the groundbreaker in this operation.

One of the main political objectives of Johnson's rivals is to divert the antiwar movement from further pursuit of the street demonstrations, which proved so effective in 1967, and to corral it safely within the two-party system. Most of the so-called "peace" candidates made this painfully clear as they sought to attract attention.

The problem of stemming and gaining political control of the antiwar movement is one faced by the ruling class as a whole. They may deem it necessary to grant a concession in order to accomplish this. An indicated move would be to try an "Eisenhower"; that is, advance a "responsible" figure in the Republican party who would promise to do in Vietnam what Eisenhower did in Korea.

But another giant problem for the American ruling class registered its presence in terms unusually violent even for the United States in 1967. This was the explosive accumulation of grievances in the ghettos.

Beginning with outbreaks in April in Nashville, Louisville, and Cleveland, nearly all of America's big cities saw protest actions of an elemental kind that in some instances amounted to virtual uprisings. The black liberation struggle during the summer permitted the colonial peoples to see that they have a natural ally inside the imperialist fortress itself which has taken inspiration from their own battles for freedom.

The explosions were chaotic, unformed, and lacking in centralized leadership. They thus tended to be spasmodic and local rather than coherent and interconnected nationally. They constituted storm signals pointing to the rise of a movement endowed with clear political goals and sustained power.

The Republican and Democratic machines responded to the colossal challenge by deciding to make at least some room for Negro representation in the offices under their command. Thus in various areas, Negro candidates were able to win office in 1967 under auspices of the two-party system. The ouster of Adam Clayton Powell from the House of Representatives in January was, however, a warning from the white political bosses that these representatives must know how to keep their place and not assume that a stamp of approval entitles them to act like an equal.

In all likelihood the generosity of the Democratic and Republican machines in providing political plums for the deserving will prove to be too little and too late. The mood of rebellion in America's ghettos gave strong impetus in 1967

to the slogan of Black Power. Protagonists of Black Power linked up with the antiwar movement particularly in the huge April 15 demonstrations. The movement has also shown an inherent tendency to evolve in the direction of revolutionary socialism, as was demonstrated in the case of Malcolm X.

On August 31, the Socialist Workers party announced its plans to run a presidential slate against both the Democrats and Republicans. The SWP convention in November approved Fred Halstead, a well-known figure in the antiwar movement, as candidate for president, and Paul Boutelle, an Afro-American leader, for vice-president. The first responses to the campaign, being conducted in vigorous style by Campaign Manager Jack Barnes, indicated that 1968 will prove to be a fruitful year for the cause of revolutionary socialism in the United States.

One of the most extraordinary developments in 1967 was the coordination of antiwar demonstrations on an international scale. The appeal for coordinated action came from the American movement. The response was apparent in rallies and demonstrations in such widely separated regions as Europe, Australia, India and Japan. Tens of thousands of people were involved in some of these demonstrations.

They represented a great moral force epitomized in the findings of the International War Crimes Tribunal initiated by Bertrand Russell. The verdict of the tribunal at its hearings in Stockholm May 2-10 was that the U.S. government was guilty of aggression. Its second session, held in Copenhagen November 20 to December 1, brought in a verdict of guilty on a number of other counts, including genocide.

The Vietnamese people expressed their gratitude repeatedly in 1967 for the moral and material support they were receiving from many sources.

It fell to the Cubans, however, to express in the most vigorous way the gratitude felt by all the oppressed sectors of humanity for the heroic struggle being waged by the Vietnamese. They explained how the Vietnamese freedom fighters have been left manning the front-line trenches against the imperialist aggressor virtually alone; and they appealed again, as they had appealed since the escalation began in 1965, for more effective aid for them, and in particular a closing of ranks against the common foe.

They went even further. Ernesto "Che" Guevara, convinced that the best way to help the Vietnamese was to open up new revolutionary fronts, took to the field again, his idea being to set a personal example. His slogan, calling for

"one, two...many Vietnams" was made the central slogan at the first conference of the Organization of Latin-American Solidarity held in Havana July 21-August 10.

Guevara perished in the attempt; but his example lost none of its force because of that. The sector of Latin America in which he fell, the country named after Simón Bolívar, who also thought of liberation in continental terms, is rotten ripe for socialist revolution. In the not distant future one may well imagine the youth who take up Guevara's banner, and win victory under it, renaming their country after the twentieth-century Bolívar who correctly saw that the most effective help that could be given the beleaguered Vietnamese is to widen the international revolutionary struggle.

Revolutionists the world over keenly felt the death of Che Guevara. Some circles, however, took Che's death as a propitious occasion for opening a counter-attack against the Cuban leadership for its condemnation last March and again in July of the Venezuelan CP leaders who betrayed the guerrillas in their country and turned toward pressure politics in the bourgeois electoral arena. In Moscow itself the attack was spurred through publication of several articles questioning the concept of armed struggle even in countries suffering under dictatorial regimes and the oppressive might of foreign imperialist forces.

The issue of the Vietnam war was so predominant in 1967 that not even the blitzkrieg conducted by Israel in June against the Arab revolution displaced Vietnam long from the headlines. The Israeli forces caught the United Arab Republic and its allies off guard. However the Israeli victory, in reality an imperialist victory over the Arab peoples, settled nothing. The Middle East remains a powder keg, like many other sectors of the capitalist world today.

The colonial world continued to rumble despite ferocious repression in many countries. Violence flared on a mass scale repeatedly in India during 1967 and that subcontinent, next only to China in population, appeared to be moving toward a major paroxysm.

In November a weakness suddenly appeared in one of the main girders of world imperialism. The pound required emergency devaluation and some \$3 billion in loans to save the British government from bankruptcy. The British workers received another lesson in the futility of sacrificing to save capitalism. The outcome of that could be a rise in the class struggle in Britain that would make very welcome news in Vietnam as well as other areas that have staked their fate on defeating imperialism.

ATTACKS ON "EVERYTHING THAT MOVES"

Testimony at the Hearings on U.S. War Crimes

[The International War Crimes Tribunal, which held its second session at Copenhagen from November 20 to December 1, found the United States government guilty of a series of war crimes, including genocide, the use of weapons banned by international agreement, maltreatment and killing of prisoners, and violence against and forced movement of prisoners.]

[The verdict was based in part on evidence submitted at the first session of the tribunal, held in Stockholm May 2 to May 10, 1967. Further evidence was then obtained by teams that went to Vietnam for on-the-scene investigation.]

[In our last issue, as an example of the material considered by the tribunal in reaching its verdict, World Outlook published the text of Gérard Chaliand's testimony on the massacre at Dai-Lai.]

[Below we publish another example -- the text of the introduction to the report of the Seventh Enquiry Commission of the tribunal. This body traveled in the zone under control of the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam. It was composed of Professor Francis Kahn, Dr. Jean-Michel Krivine and Roger Pic, who wrote the introduction.]

* * *

This enquiry commission has completed investigations from September 15 to October 7, 1967.

We had two main purposes:

(1) To judge if the U.S. army goal was to systematically destroy the civilian population and its means of existence, forcing thereby the Vietnamese to concentrate in special camps.

(2) To investigate the utilization of forbidden arms such as fragmentation bombs and toxic products.

Our work was done in three periods: Professor Francis Kahn spent eight days; Doctor Jean-Michel Krivine, two weeks, and myself three weeks in South Vietnam.

The investigations were carried out in the east Nambo zone, in Tay Ninh province (northwest of Saigon) by the whole commission, after which I finished alone in a hamlet of central Nambo in the Plain of Reeds.

Under the protection and care of a guerrilla detachment of the National Liberation Front, accompanied by interpre-

ters, cadres of the Front, province and region chiefs, and General Secretary of the National Liberation Front committee for the denunciation of war crimes, Mr. Ung Ngoc Ky, the commission traveled approximately 600 kilometers, both by walking and by sampans, visiting many ruined villages and peasants hiding in the deepness of forests, to collect testimonies, interrogate and listen to the greatest possible number of civilian victims of U.S. army operations.

The province of Tay Ninh, which we traversed most often is precisely the operational zone where in February and March of this year, U.S. headquarters launched "Operation Junction City," the biggest operation involving the widespread and systematic razing of the countryside.

Cited from American records, 45,000 men, 800 tanks, 1,200 bombers and helicopters were used in the operation after gigantic preparation of the ground and massive bombings by B-52's and spreading of defoliants.

The testimony which we brought back to add to the files of the Tribunal mostly concern the consequences of those military actions launched in a province exclusively composed of fields and forests, the only purpose of which was admitted to be for creating the notorious "cleared zones."

We visited in Tay Ninh province: Chau Thanh district, Hao Duoc village, Thanh Dien village, Hoa Hoi village, Hoa Hiep village, Ta Bang village.

We have been able to collect 373 testimonies written in Vietnamese, recorded and signed. All these pieces with their translations and pictures of the witnesses are added to the file which is deposited with the Tribunal. We have filed and recorded certain depositions. Before we read our reports, we will project three extracts of those testimonies to show how we have been working.

Professor Francis Kahn will afterwards present his report concerning the testimonies of the people from Hao Duoc and Hoa Hoi.

Doctor Jean-Michel Krivine will more particularly talk about other testimonies collected.

I will then testify on the material collected in central Nambo, third part of the investigations conducted on the spot.

To underline certain aspects of the life of the peasants who remain in devastated zones, who try to survive in spite of the rakings and constant military operations, I made as a free lance, independently of my work of enquiry, a filmed reportage which has been shown, since the beginning of this month, on many television programs.

The film makes no pretensions toward being an exhibit in evidence but I think that it can help to understand how the South Vietnamese live nowadays -- those who escaped destruction or concentration camp life.

I would like to try now to briefly express my main impressions after this visit to the so-called "scorched earth" zone.

During those three weeks, we have not seen a single hamlet, a single house which was spared by bombings or rakings. If the forests and jungle of east Nambo have resisted chemical products and bombings, if half of the civilians survive in the zones controlled by the National Liberation Front, guerrilla forces and National Liberation Army, all of the villages have been destroyed. All the peasants we met, all of those we interrogated, told us frightening stories, each one of which is a true and full indictment of the war conducted by the Americans.

Every family has been touched either by the bombings, deportations or torture and imprisonment. All the testimonies recorded in our files are moving stories of useless suffering, pain and mourning undergone by them. We will of course report only some of those testimonies.

During the two months "Operation Junction City" lasted, the whole Tay Ninh province was particularly well combed by "search and destroy" teams. All the hamlets were razed, all the rice plantations poisoned by chemical products, samples of which we have ourselves brought back. The grain reserves were annihilated and the civilians discovered were deported to concentration camp zones called by the Americans "pacification zones," "new life hamlets," to change the name of the "strategic hamlets" already notorious.

Many peasants we saw escaped from concentration camps, many others had fled from the advancing U.S. troops or simply hid in the forests and escaped the tank columns.

Civilians are now forced to lie in hiding in the forests. They built miserable huts, well hidden in the wilderness. Each family has dug an underground shelter; they live like primitive men to avoid being located.

In fact, this so-called "white zone" or "free fire" zone is now declared by the Americans as totally "Vietcong" where all signs of life must be extinguished systematically.

By night and by day, during our stay, the constant fire of artillery was heard. From the military bases, particularly in our region of Traug Long and Tour Hai, the American artillery shoots at random to maintain a constant state of anxiety and insecurity.

The reconnaissance planes fly methodically over the whole zone in large concentric circles. As soon as some movement appears as a sign of human presence, as soon as a field appears to be cultivated, orders are given for a concentrated artillery attack.

The least sign of life located by the reconnaissance planes is immediately followed by an attack of fighter-bombers which fire rockets, drop fragmentation bombs, napalm and phosphorous bombs. We have often seen in the undergrowth 200 meters round a huge amount of aluminum fragments from rockets, bomb casings, pineapple bombs.

If we believe the reports of the leading cadres and officials, since the beginning of "Junction City" and the policy of attacks on "everything that moves," the average expended ordnance is two tons of projectiles per inhabitant and one killed or wounded in every eight persons.

Half of the population escaped the rakings or fled from regrouping centers.

About 10,000 persons live in the wilderness with the help of the N.L.F. army, guerrilla units and community services of the N.L.F.

In spite of the "cleared zones," the Front keeps the education and health service operating even in the most miserable hamlets, that is to say, four or five huts grouped in the jungle.

To assure their maintenance and provisioning, peasants are obliged to cultivate by night all the rice paddies and tiny kitchen gardens on the fringe of the forests. Otherwise, any field or rice patch slightly showing cultivation would be automatically destroyed by defoliants dropped from planes or helicopters. We saw different metallic drums dropped on rice paddies and then shot full of holes by the same planes in order to permit the chemical products to dissolve into the water of the rice field and to pollute and contaminate the produce.

It is therefore only by hiding and avoiding the reconnaissance planes and living practically underground that

the people are able to survive what I won't hesitate to call Genocide.

We will try for each of our particular depositions to prove these facts.

Personally, after I saw on-the-spot consequences of this war, after this visit to South Vietnam, after my prior deposition in Stockholm on my investigation mission to North Vietnam, I cannot

do otherwise than to denounce with all means, the atrocious crimes committed against the Vietnamese people as a whole. I want to cry out my indignation, to do everything I can to spread the truth.

To remain silent, to be an accessory, to not denounce the crime which we have seen would be to become its accomplice.

THE CP GAME OF TURNING CHE'S DEATH AGAINST CHE'S PROGRAM

By Pierre Frank

Many people throughout the world were deeply moved over the news of Che Guevara's death. The blow was a hard one; but the youth resolved afresh to conduct their battle against capitalism all the more vigorously. Demonstrations were widespread in tribute to the memory of Che and in token of the resolution to carry on his struggle.

But a body is a windfall for the vultures, and the world is not lacking in these. The spectacle of the Bolivian "gorillas" serving Washington could not be more edifying. Che's "journal" was found; for these "gorillas" it became an occasion to auction it off to the highest bidder. Perhaps there are still good souls who believe that it is the custom to shoot pillagers of the dead on the field of battle.

Vultures of the Barrientos type are perhaps not the worst. Their nature is known and they do not wrap themselves in the banner of socialism. There were others, brought up in the school of Stalinism, who did not wait until Che's body was cold before resorting to the most ignoble of political operations. On the very morrow of Che's death, the columns of Pravda and other Stalinist organs were opened to articles by Argentine and Chilean "Communists," partisans of "peaceful coexistence," directed against OLAS [Organization of Latin-American Solidarity] and the Cuban leadership.

These gentlemen, who, to persevere in the worst parliamentary cretinism, never drew any lessons from the heavy defeats in Brazil, Indonesia, Greece and other places caused by their policy of seeking "peaceful and parliamentary roads" hastened to utilize the blow suffered by the guerrillas in Bolivia in order to attack the Castroist leadership and the revolutionary tendencies in Latin America and elsewhere.

In conjunction with this, they featured one of the secretaries of the pro-Moscow Bolivian Communist party,

Jorge Kalle, in an interview which appeared in the Chilean Stalinist daily, El Siglo, and which was reprinted in l'Humanité and l'Unità [see World Outlook December 8, page 1,012, for full text of Kalle's interview]. In addition, the leadership of the French Communist party sent a member of its Central Committee, J. Arnault, to Latin America. Arnault is a "specialist" in colonial questions, the author of a book, Du colonialisme au socialisme [From Colonialism to Socialism], in which, in order to do battle with Trotsky, he commits a shameless falsification of the First Congress of the Communist International.*

To every gentleman his due. Let us begin then with Arnault. He presents himself as an innocent. "European that I am, just arrived in Latin America, I did not understand..." "I did not know that, from 1952 to 1954, the Estenssoro government had carried out certain reforms..." "I couldn't say..." The journalistic trick is all the more repugnant as a device for passing off reactionary merchandise.

The upshot of his presentation is that the choice of Bolivia for guerrilla

* The First Congress of the Communist International, held in March 1919, adopted a "Manifesto to the Proletariat of the Entire World," which took as its axis the revolutionary struggle for proletarian power in Europe. The manifesto declared: "Colonial slaves of Africa and Asia, the hour of the proletarian dictatorship in Europe will sound for you as the hour of your deliverance." This manifesto, written by Trotsky, was adopted by the whole Congress, including, among others, Lenin, who gave the closing speech. In his book, Arnault does not speak about a "manifesto" for immediate action, but puts it as a matter of "theses" adopted under the influence of Trotsky which subordinated the struggle in the colonies to the victory of socialism in Europe. The door of the Communist International was barred to the Arnaults of those days.

war is not comprehensible. Why? He went to Bolivia by way of Cuzco, Peru, and engaged in the following reflections:

"Crossing the frontier between Peru and Bolivia, the change is obvious: the neatness of dress, the frequent appearance of shoes, the organization of the peasant habitat (in Peru the Indian villages are like pimples on the land), an air of Indian dignity gives one the feeling of having found a population better integrated in Bolivian society. In the streets of La Paz, the Indian does not seem to be at loose ends; he is at home." (Emphasis in the original.)

We have taken up elsewhere Paz Estenssoro's reforms, which Arnault did not know about. He still does not know that Estenssoro and Siles largely undid those reforms, preparing the ground for Barrientos. (Arnault does not even mention the name of Barrientos and alludes only once to "the intervention of the United States which facilitated the military coup.") But he did see that the peasants do not feel too frustrated.

He came in complete good faith and he found "a national feeling" in Bolivia which is -- listen to this! -- "as strong as the French nationalism at the beginning of the century that demanded its Alsace-Lorraine." (That emphasis is not mine but his.)

He also saw that "the young officers are generally from circles in modest circumstances; the army participates in work for the general good in the rural areas."

Hence, "in view of so many unfavorable elements, one wonders about the reasons for Che Guevara's choice." The article is entitled, "Why Did Che Guevara Come to Die in Bolivia?" ["Pourquoi Che Guevara est-il venu mourir en Bolivie?"] which tells a good deal about the feelings of this "special envoy" of l'Humanité.

"The central question remains: why Bolivia?" he repeats toward the end of his article. This is not to be taken to mean that there might be other countries in Latin America where armed struggle is more indicated than in Bolivia. If he had put his question within that frame, we could discuss with him, even if we were in disagreement. But he poses this question in order to insinuate "another hypothesis" of a kind that only a disreputable person could suggest. It is necessary to quote him again: "Last January 2, speaking of Che Guevara, Fidel Castro compared him with the Phoenix, the bird that perpetually rises from its ashes. This Phoenix, why could it not have occurred to someone to place it somewhere -- and there, kill it? Che Guevara could have been the victim of a vast plot."

Plot organized by whom? For this operator, it is sufficient to make the insinuation. He has friends who will take care of the rest.

We note that J. Arnault does not once touch the question of the role of the pro-Moscow Bolivian Communist party.* On this point, it is Jorge Kalle who is given the floor. To him, "the revolution must be an essentially national phenomenon: this is our principled position and it is no secret." He tells us besides that with regard to drawing "the lessons" of the Bolivian "experience" (he is answering a question on what is called "the negative outcome of the guerrilla action"), "None are more qualified or more entitled to do this than the Communist parties and their leaders."

The revolution -- a national affair? This is not the opinion of the counterrevolution, particularly the "green berets" of the Pentagon, who were on the side of the "gorillas" in Bolivia; one could say in command of them. The truth is that Kalle is aiming this at the Cubans above all; he is repeating in another way Arnault's line, according to which the guerrilla struggle was something alien to Bolivia. Kalle demands for the Bolivian CP, as well as for the leaderships of all the Communist parties, the right of primogeniture -- they alone are qualified, authorized to decide what policy to follow. By what right?

What did the Bolivian CP do, then, with regard to the guerrillas? It "supported them with all the means at its disposal, without taking part in an organizational way," says Kalle. "And there was a nucleus of our members who, outside the party bodies, took part in the armed actions."

The Stalinist duplicity in this is towering. What did the support with all their means consist of? If the CP did not participate in an organized way, why did party members participate in armed actions outside the party bodies? The question

* The pro-Peking Communist party of Bolivia could not remain silent about the guerrillas. It took up their defense formally, but without doing anything effective. We cannot pass by the fact that Peking has remained silent on the polemic between Castro and the Communist party of Venezuela, on Guevara's message, on the OLAS conference; while a black exile from the United States, in Peking after having been in Cuba, is allowed to publish a bulletin filled with venomous and slanderous attacks against the Cuban leadership. Finally, it cannot be overlooked that Peking has not said a word about the death of Che Guevara.

could prove perplexing, if we did not know from other sources that the members of the party who participated in the armed actions, or who helped the guerrillas, did so without the knowledge of the party.

More precisely, the picture appears to have been as follows. The leadership of the Bolivian CP participated in the Tricontinental conference in Havana in January 1966, and voted for a resolution there in a way that satisfied the Cubans. But, when it came time to go into action, they proved to be turncoats like the leadership of the Venezuelan CP, and revealed their hostility to revolutionary means, among other things compelling members who favored the guerrillas to act without the knowledge of their own party. It is probable that there were leaks. One can be almost certain that the partisans of the "democratic roads" did not take precautions in behalf of those who were preparing the revolutionary road.

We do not have the least intention of discussing the possible errors of the guerrillas -- whether they were isolated and why, etc. -- with people who are acting as counterrevolutionaries. The errors are subject matter only for genuine defenders of the combatants.

Kolle not only says nothing about supporting those who are continuing the struggle -- there is not a word about this in his article -- but he advocates a policy of "strengthening of our forces" (what this means under the circumstances can be guessed), of making possible the "forming of a popular, anti-imperialist front," etc. All this verbiage does not hide abandonment of the guerrillas.

In addition, so that there will not be the least error, dotting the "i's" with regard to the "plot" conceived by Arnault, Kolle declares:

"It can be predicted that two tendencies will show up on a continental scale, one current parallel to the Communist movement, the other in opposition to it: on the one hand, development of armed guerrilla movements; on the other

reactionary activity directed by the CIA, which will seek to create provocations and to 'establish' responsibility in order to decapitate the revolutionary movement."

Since, according to Kolle and his acolytes, only the leaderships of the Communist parties are qualified to determine what policy to follow, and since they never see the necessity of the road of armed struggle, the conclusion is simple: the CIA will maneuver with guerrillas in order to decapitate the revolutionary movement.

As can be seen, the Stalinists, like the Bourbons, have learned nothing and forgotten nothing. Whoever upsets their policy of "peaceful coexistence," whoever dreams of struggling with revolutionary means, is either an agent of the CIA or a simpleton caught in its maneuvers.

Unfortunately for these gentlemen, the time when Stalin's lies passed for good coin is over. Day by day the struggle in Vietnam is unmasking the nature of the Kremlin's policies and those throughout the world who support them. The guerrilla struggle in Bolivia is not dead despite the blows it has just received. Guerrilla war is the necessary means of struggle in Bolivia at present.* The infamous actions of the Kolles and Arnaults, far from finding an echo, will contribute to casting a more glaring light on the policy of "peaceful coexistence," a policy which has abandoned the guerrillas and which seeks to turn this betrayal to advantage in talking up the "democratic and parliamentary roads."

November 26, 1967

* We refer the reader to a report from La Paz, published in World Outlook November 10, page 901, which offers precise information on the situation in Bolivia, the inescapability of a guerrilla struggle, and the positions of the various political formations in Bolivia, particularly that of the pro-Moscow Communist party.

SOVIET INTELLECTUALS PROTEST TRIAL OF WRITERS IN MOSCOW

The impending trial of four imprisoned Soviet intellectuals in Moscow has evoked a new wave of protests by the Soviet intellectual community. The defendants, including Aleksandr Ginzburg, have been held for eleven months without trial. They are charged with "slandering" the Soviet Union.

The December 13 issue of the Paris daily Le Monde reports that two petitions

have been circulated on behalf of the prisoners, one signed by 100 "personalities of the world of letters"; the second signed by forty-four.

Le Monde comments that "the mere fact of the existence of these petitions indicates a change. The intellectuals are no longer afraid to take risks. They express their views and no longer passively accept what has been decided on high."

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