

## AMERICAN MAOISTS URGE CHINESE WALL FOR NORTH VIETNAM

The February issue of Challenge, the monthly newspaper of the American Maoist group, the "Progressive Labor Party," carries an editorial that should be of special interest to the international antiwar movement, to socialists and all those in every country who stand on the side of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

The editorial offers hard evidence on how Mao's rejection of a united front with the Soviet Union in defense of the Vietnamese Revolution has been developed inside the imperialist United States into an ultraleft sectarian position highly injurious to the Vietnamese cause.

According to Challenge, the trip to Hanoi made by Harrison Salisbury, assistant managing editor of The New York Times, "America's version of Pravda," was "part of the United States and Soviet Union's attempt to crush the revolution in Vietnam." The purpose of Salisbury's trip was "to help arrange phony negotiations between U.S. aggressors and the Vietnamese."

"A central aspect of Salisbury's reportage concerns U.S. bombing of north Vietnam," continues Challenge. "He is dwelling on the horrors of bombing to feed the Soviet Union's tactic of obscuring the basic demand of U.S. GET OUT OF VIETNAM NOW. In its place the Soviets would like to see the terms to negotiate pivot around ending the bombing of north Vietnam. This slick U.S.-Soviet gambit has sucked in a good deal of the anti-war movement around the world and particularly in our country. The central demand of the anti-war movement in the U.S. is now 'stop the bombing.' This switch from 'GET OUT OF VIETNAM NOW' has been carefully guided by the Communist Party and their Trotskyite allies who dominate peace offices in many cities around the country."

In consonance with this thesis, Challenge finds it convenient not to mention what a bombshell Salisbury's report was in the United States as an exposure of the lies of the Johnson administration. The White House, the Pentagon, the State Department, the war hawks and fascist-minded "anti-Communists" were enraged at Salisbury. Some of them, too, claimed to see the hand of the Kremlin in his trip. The series of articles which Salisbury wrote, together with his interviews on radio and television, also had the effect of arousing a fresh wave of sympathy among the American people for north Vietnam. This was the main source for the broadened protest against the war which Challenge deplores inasmuch as it centered around "Stop the Bombing."

"Salisbury's mission, far from being a mission of 'good will' or his being a man of 'good will,' is designed to strengthen the 'trojan horse' tactic of 'aid' from the Soviet Union. Soviet 'aid,' like these phony 'good will' missions, is designed to lull the Vietnamese and betray the revolution. These acts are aimed at winning the confidence of the Vietnamese in order to cut their throats. The U.S. and the Soviet Union would like the Vietnamese to enter negotiations and surrender the revolution."

It is quite true that the New York Times wants negotiations. This influential daily considers Johnson's escalation of the war to be too dangerous and the concomitant losses to American imperialism in other areas to be too great to justify continuation of the bloody conflict. The New York Times does not stand alone but represents a sector of the American ruling class. In other words a rift -- not a big rift, but a rift just the same -- exists in the American ruling class over Johnson's war in Vietnam.

Challenge, like its Peking mentors does not choose to see this rift, still less try to take advantage of it. Their view is a logical continuation of the still grosser error of refusing to see any difference between the Kremlin and Washington and refusing to press the Soviet government for a united front against the common danger and in behalf of another workers state -- the Democratic Republic of Vietnam -- not to mention the mutual defense of China and the USSR against imperialism.

Thus we come to the remarkable policy proposed by Challenge to counteract the imperialist game. The first bit of advice is that "The Vietnamese people would be better off without Soviet 'aid.'" Yes, that is actually what the editors of Challenge wrote. "The Vietnamese people would be better off without Soviet 'aid.'"

The same goes for Salisbury, and, for that matter, anyone who values the worth of peace. "The Vietnamese people need Salisbury and his ilk in their country like they need a hole in the head," declares Challenge. "At this moment Vietnam is being flooded by scores of half-baked and outright phony 'peace missions.'" To believe Challenge, "Most of these people are not men of 'good will.' Most are agents of the U.S.! The few who go as well-meaning anti-war forces from the U.S., are sucked into the U.S.-Soviet scheme. The U.S. and Soviets know that these people are pacifists, and viewing the horrors of war will intensify their pacifism."

Thus we come to another prize proposal of these American Maoists: "The Vietnamese ought not to let any of them in." Yes, Challenge really said that. "The Vietnamese ought not to let any of them in."

This truly stunning slogan in favor of a Chinese wall for north Vietnam, while it may win high praise in some circles as an example of "Mao's thought," will not win much approval anywhere else. It may be, of course, that the editors of Challenge will enjoy the cynical laughter of the State Department which has been seizing the passports of persons whose pacifism has been intensified by visiting north Vietnam.

Finally, it should be noted that Challenge misrepresents the facts when it claims that the left wing of the antiwar movement has switched its opposition to the American imperialist aggression in Vietnam. The main slogan remains, "For immediate withdrawal of the American troops."

Heavy pressure is of course being exerted from the right to water this down. But those exerting the pressure in this direction have not succeeded up to now. This is shown by the preparations now underway for the April 15 Spring Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam. If the pressure has been successfully resisted, it must be added that no credit for this goes to Challenge.

It is too bad that Challenge and the American Maoists under its influence have chosen to stand on the sidelines, following an ultraleft sectarian policy, rather than join a united front in opposition to the dirty colonial war being conducted by American imperialism in Vietnam.