

What Makes Lyndon Run?

To effectively oppose the war in Vietnam, we must know why it is being fought. It's not hard to see why the Vietnamese are fighting. They are fed up with living under American puppets, working for bloodsucking landlords, supporting the rotten gang of crooks in Saigon. They want to run their own lives.

It's not hard to see why the American troops are fighting. Some have no other choice. Others sin-

ATROCITIES: SPECTACULAR AND ORDINARY

We believe that it is extremely important to keep in mind not just the American atrocities in the Vietnam war, but also the political nature of the war. Otherwise, dangerous illusions may spread.

The American forces in Vietnam are waging the war there with unprecedented brutality. The napalm burning of children, the torture of prisoners, mass round-ups of "suspected Vietcong," defoliation of the land, the strategic hamlet concentration camps--no technique is considered too ferocious by the American rulers. To top it all off, General Ky brags that his hero is Adolf Hitler.

In the face of this, a natural reaction of many people in the anti-war movement is to focus only on the brutal atrocities of the Americans. The next step then is to demand immediate negotiations to end the war. But the great danger is that negotiations would partition the country once more, or set up some phony coalition government, or devise some other sell-out. Then the valiant struggles and sacrifices of the Vietnamese people to throw out the ruthless foreigners and their no less ruthless puppets will have been in vain.

Exclusive emphasis on atrocities represents a pacifist approach. But this mood sometimes spreads to others who should know better. A good example may be seen in a leaflet issued in New York a few weeks ago calling for a demonstration to protest the planned bombing of Haiphong and Hanoi. The sole point of this leaflet was that large numbers of people might be killed, and it ended by asking, "Where is the voice of the President for peace this Christmas?" On this basis we might also condemn the NLF for setting off bombs in Saigon, bombs which also kill innocent people sometimes. This particular leaflet was signed not only by pacifists but also by leaders of the Progressive Labor Party and the Socialist Workers Party, organizations committed to support of the NLF. The PLP and SWP consider themselves revolutionary Leninists. Have they really forgotten

cerely believe that they are "protecting democracy against totalitarianism."

The 64-dollar question is: why are LBJ and his fellow members of the U.S. ruling elite fighting? Why do they want to stop the NLF from coming to power? One answer might be: they really believe their own propaganda, they really believe that Hitler-loving General Ky is a friend of freedom. But that's a bit hard to take. Undoubt-

edly, Johnson and friends rationalize a good deal, but that can't take us very far in trying to understand their real motivations.

Perhaps Johnson and company are crazy? Egotistical megalomaniacs? Now the possibility that LBJ wears a Napoleon costume in secret is admittedly attractive, but hardly a serious explanation for what is obviously a deliberate, considered and bi-partisan policy. We believe that the explanation is

this: the men who run this country owe their social position to, have been trained by, and are fundamentally committed to a certain kind of social system. That social system is one in which private individuals can acquire great wealth and through that wealth wield great power. This is "their" kind of setup, one in which they can operate, one in which they feel "comfortable." It is this kind of system which prevails in Britain, in Venezuela, on Formosa, in every country of the "Free World," whether it is "rich" or "poor," "white" or "non-white," a parliamentary democracy or a rigid dictatorship. Furthermore, it is this kind of system which exists nascently, in embryo, in such countries as South Vietnam, Thailand, most African countries, etc. (Many of the latter named countries have fairly large degrees of state control of the economy. However, this state intervention is designed to lay the basis for a future "private" economy, with the corresponding social system beloved by the American elite, and usually does not even now prevent foreign businesses from investing in these countries and businessmen from occupying an exalted position in the political system.)

Furthermore, these countries play a role in the U.S. economic system, and certain of them are extremely important for several giant American corporations. For one thing, American businessmen have investments in many of these countries. Businessmen tend to do things like investing in underdeveloped countries, not out of a concern for human welfare, but to make profits. And these investments do return great profits. The following table will illustrate the Latin American case. The table is from "The Great Fear in Latin America," by Gerassi, page 355, and is in millions of dollars:

| | <u>Investment</u> | <u>Income</u> |
|------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1956 | 826 | 800 |
| 1957 | 800 | 915 |
| 1958 | 317 | 653 |
| 1959 | 347 | 600 |
| 1960 | 267 | 641 |
| 1961 | 500 | 770 |

In addition, many underdeveloped nations have "one-product" economies. They import manufactured goods from "advanced" countries like the U.S., and export raw materials such as tin, copper, coffee, etc. If they developed balanced economies and began to deal with the "advanced" countries as equals, the advanced countries would lose these afore-mentioned economic advantages. But the local ruling powers, themselves large landowners, businessmen, and military and political groups stemming from these economic classes, (Continued on other side)

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WHICH ARE YOUR ENEMIES?



S. Vietnamese liberation fighters



Los Angeles Police in Watts

what Lenin said about bourgeois pacifism?

The point is not that we should be unconcerned about people dying, but that focussing on the more

spectacular outrages committed by imperialism in Vietnam may lead to the view that "killing" is all that is wrong in Vietnam. This (Continued on other side)

ATROCITIES (cont.) WHAT MAKES LYNDON RUN? (cont.) NEXT ISSUE:

is the view of many of those who cry for negotiations. All they want to do is stop the slaughter, even if the corrupt tyranny of General Ky remains in power.

But the real atrocity in the colonial world is the daily atrocity, the unreported, unspectacular atrocity committed by a brutal dictatorship, which is the daily life of most people in the underdeveloped countries. It is these ordinary atrocities which lead the colonial masses to revolt. If there were a sell-out at the negotiating table, then the super-atrocities of the American forces would be replaced by the ordinary atrocities of the ordinary colonial dictatorship. That is where a false humanitarianism would lead. Only when the oppressive social systems which rule in those lands are destroyed will this kind of atrocity end. Thus we must support revolutionary struggles against those systems, including support of the means used by the oppressed to achieve their liberation.

The only peace in Vietnam which we should support is a peace which guarantees the victory of the Vietnamese masses. Anything less means a return to the ordinary institutionalized atrocity of underdeveloped capitalism--an atrocity which wont get color pictures in LIFE magazine, but which would be nonetheless real.

--David Lucas

BILL EPTON SENTENCED TO ONE YEAR

Bill Epton, a leader of the Progressive Labor Party, has been sentenced to one year in prison under the "criminal anarchy" law in New York. This sentence demonstrates that the powers-that-be in New York are somewhat more intelligent than, say, former Chancellor Strong. They have proved that they "mean business," that black militants in Harlem had better spend their time sweeping the sidewalks for the War on Poverty rather than exposing the system and seeking to lead mass struggle against it. They have shown that they will convict and imprison their revolutionary opponents on the flimsiest of evidence. On the other hand, they have avoided giving Epton the ten or twelve year sentence that would shock liberal public opinion and also lay the basis for mass protest. They are betting that people will now be far less aroused, less willing to donate money for Epton's legal expenses, etc. than would have been the case had he gotten ten years on the basis of an unintelligible tape recording. The appeal courts will thus be quicker to let his conviction stand.

It's our job to make this move backfire. Unless the court decision

benefit from the existing set-up. They, too, have a stake in maintaining the existing order. If their countries are U.S. plantations, they are the plantation foremen. Those who do not benefit from this cozy little arrangement are the "plantation workers," those who must work in the mines, load the ships and grow the crops of these countries. They are the ones who have little or no access to education, to even primitive medical care, and have high death rates. They are the vast majority of the inhabitants of these countries.

Up to the 2nd World War, the dominant "power blocs" in the world were the advanced capitalist nations, whose economic rivalry spilled over into the military field. Thus Marxists find the fundamental causes of wars in this period to have been economic rivalries between capitalist nations jockeying for dominance in the underdeveloped world and seeking to become pre-eminent on the world market.

The aftermath of World War II saw this pattern change fundamentally. For one thing, the USA emerged as the undisputed leader of the capitalist world. Germany and Japan were prostrate, and the rest of the Allied nations were at best junior partners to America. But a second major change occurred, which was to prevent the post-war period from being "the American Century," and which is happening in Vietnam today. We speak of the colonial revolution.

Now the men who run the U.S. are not revolutionists, and they aren't particularly enthusiastic about revolutions of any type. But there is one variety of colonial revolution they can live with, the kind that cuts the political bonds tying the colonial nation to the metropolitan country but which keeps it, however loosely, within the capitalist orbit. Such are the revolutions that have so far occurred in Africa. And this type of revolution is even more palatable because it is directed against other big capitalist nations, not the U.S., which didn't need a formal empire. In the "independent" nations of Latin America, Africa, and most of Asia, the U.S. can still "do business" in its own way, hemmed in a little here and there perhaps, but operating within a

can be reversed on appeal, they will have succeeded in removing Epton from the scene of action for one year. (Although if they are smart, they will keep Epton in isolation. After all, if the Black Muslims can make converts in prison . . .) It should be our business to make sure that when he comes out, many more people will have heard about his case and what he tried to do, and will know that black people have an alternative to the Kings, Farmers, and Rustins.

basically "friendly" economic environment.

But there is a second variety of colonial revolution, and one which is becoming increasingly popular. This is the kind of revolution which has occurred in China, North Vietnam, and Cuba, and is the kind of revolution which is going on in South Vietnam today. This kind of revolution is decidedly unacceptable to the gentlemen who determine American policy, and for good reason. For it is a revolution against capitalism. When this kind of revolution triumphs, foreign investments are nationalized. No new ones are permitted. From being a raw materials supplying and surplus goods absorbing colony of the capitalist bloc, these countries begin the rapid development of their own economies, using their resources for their own benefit, and not for the benefit of foreign investors and the local oligarchy.

Furthermore, this process is continuing and increasing its tempo. The "wretched of the earth" are realizing that they do not have to live on incomes of 100 dollars a year while native landlords drive American Cadillacs, that their children do not necessarily have to grow up illiterate, that there is no law of nature condemning them to animal-like existence and an early death. Despite great repressions and frequent mis-leadership, they are moving on to the road of armed struggle against their oppressors, domestic and foreign.

That's what happened in China. That's what happened in Cuba. It's what's happening in Vietnam today. And it is what will happen in Peru tomorrow, the Congo the day after, and in Thailand the day after that.

What is the response of the American decision makers? Paratroops, Marines, napalm, and gas. It must be their response. They cannot and will not allow the whole underdeveloped world to go Communist without putting up the most desperate resistance. A temporary gesture in the direction of "reform" was made by the Kennedy Administration in the Alliance for Progress (while that Administration simultaneously increased the Special Forces branch of the military apparatus). But the Alliance is now universally recognized as a failure, if anyone ever believed in it anyway.

And thus our conclusion: the war in Vietnam is the first in a series of wars which the U.S. will be fighting, so long as the present social system rules here. Our rulers will no more voluntarily accede to the anti-capitalist revolution than you will voluntarily allow your left hand to be sawed off.

And this conclusion poses a difficult and complex task for the anti-war movement. If we are to end these wars, we must end capitalism.

"What?" object the critics, "End

CASTRO vs. TROTSKYISM

Our next issue will feature an article on the recently-concluded Havana Tri-continental conference by Geoffrey White.

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FOOD NEEDED FOR STRIKERS

The Delano grape strikers are urgently in need of food donations. Especially needed are canned tuna, oats, sugar, coffee, canned meat, peas, detergent, pinto beans, canned milk, potatoes, macaroni and spaghetti. San Francisco residents can take food to 85 Ney St. (585-4290). East Bay residents can leave food in the garage at 1155 Walnut St., Berkeley.

There will be a benefit party on Saturday night, Feb. 12, at 1332 Rhode Island St., San Francisco. Admission: \$1 donation plus a food item. Jack Ybarra, NFWA organizer, will be present.

American capitalism? Are you crazy? We can never do that. If that is the prospect you have to offer us, we might as well quit and go home, and await the final holocaust."

And this objection appears well-founded. It is not difficult to see that the huge majority of American citizens agree with, or at least accept, the present system. American opponents of capitalism remain, at present, only a small minority. For the moment, let us note only one thing: there is nothing inherent in Americans which makes them support the system. They support it because it has, in the last 20 years at least, provided relative economic security for the majority of the people. The average American could count on having a job, being able to consume cars and TV sets, live a relatively comfortable life. Why should he oppose the system?

But can we count on an eternal continuation of this happy arrangement? And if not, what changes in the political consciousness of the "average American" can we expect to see?

On the answers to these questions hang the strategy which our movement should pursue. In future issues of Spartacist-West we hope to analyze these issues in detail.

--Doug Hainline