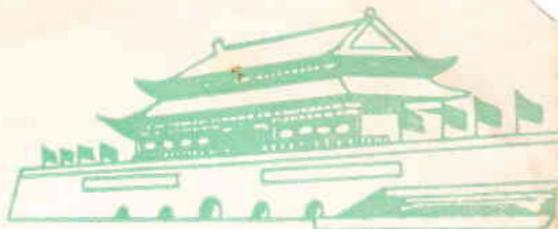


NUMBERS 11—20



Letters from China

by Anna Louise Strong

NEW WORLD PRESS • PEKING

Printed in the People's Republic of China

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*Extra Issue A**

**DELEGATES RETURNING FROM MOSCOW
MET BY MAO**

July 30, 1963

Dear friends,

Peking July 26. When the delegates of the Chinese Communist Party returned to Peking from that Bilateral Conference in Moscow which the West said "failed", they were met at the airport by one of the biggest ovations ever seen there. From Mao Tse-tung down, every top leader of government, party, trade-union and social organization came out, a total of 5,000 people, with bands and banners.

Mao seldom appears in public; this is the first time he has been seen at the airport since he went in 1961 to welcome Premier Chou En-lai back from that 22nd Congress of the CPSU where Chou took exception to Khrushchov's attack on Albania. Mao went informally to the plane-side to shake hands with the delegates as they came down the steps, then he shook hands also with all members of the plane's crew, who were Soviet citizens. Then he circulated informally in the crowd, exchanging greetings, amid drums and cymbals and cheers.

* Two extras were done by mimeograph in the summer vacation.

It was as if they celebrated a triumph. They did. Its nature may be deduced from the presence at the airport of the Embassy representatives from every Socialist nation from the U.S.S.R. right down to Cuba, including all the East European states as well as the three small Asian states — Mongolia, Korea, Viet Nam — that border China. It was further made plain in the banners which proclaimed:

“Long live the Great Unity of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. and China!

“Long live the Great Unity of the Socialist Camp and the international Communist movement!

“Persevere in principle, eliminate differences, strengthen unity and wage common struggle against the enemy!

“Persevere in defense of world peace!”

The joint communique released simultaneously by Moscow and Peking said merely that “the delegations had set forth their views... on important questions of principle” and “had recessed until a later date to be mutually arranged”. The AP caustically remarked: “It seems that the two sides did nothing but read lectures at each other.” Quite true! BUT —

- 1) This is the first time in 46 years that the Soviet Party has listened to a lecture on doctrine and behaviour from another Communist Party on a basis of equality! This opens the way to basic criticism within the Socialist camp, without splitting the Socialist states. It means much for the world!
- 2) This is the first time that the Soviet people have been allowed to read a long document presenting China's views — that June 14th “proposal for a

general line for the international Communist movement’. This is the first time they learn that a gulf exists. The first step to understanding is to know the position of the other side! This is the step that has been taken.

That it was taken with anger and acrimony on the part of Khrushchov was obvious from the expulsion of Chinese Embassy personnel for circulating the Chinese “Proposal” in their line of duty, from the provocative smashing of the glass case outside the Chinese Embassy that displayed news-photos, and from the “Open Letter” sent out July 14 by the CPSU to all its members, filled with greater invectives against China than had been used in Moscow before. But now even the virulence of the “Open Letter” has a positive side. With every epithet against China, true or false, the CPSU makes clear to the Soviet people the extent of the gulf, whose existence they had not been allowed to know.

So, however angry Khrushchov may have been — and the West reported him “in a rage” at the Kadar reception, though he came up with smiles at the farewell reception to the Chinese—he did not break state relations. He broke relations with Albania in 1961 for a lesser difference; he broke economic relations with China in 1960 in the withdrawal of experts and cancellation of contracts; but when it came to breaking diplomatic relations with China, this was beyond his power. The Soviet people may follow him in much and may be ignorant of much. He may possibly convince them that China is wrong or even crazy. But unless China breaks with them, which China certainly will not do, he **cannot convince them that the U.S.S.R. should break with China.**

They recall too well the great relief when the long "capitalist encirclement" was ended by the Chinese revolution, and the long border, on which Washington had planned to install anti-Soviet bases to bomb the U.S.S.R., became the border of an Ally.

So the net result of the Bilateral Conference is: ideological criticism will continue, but state relations will not break. **Criticism within unity** is a triumph for the entire Socialist Camp and for its survival and progress.

Let the world's Communist Parties, now expelling members, learn!

* * *

Meantime China has published very widely the "Open Letter" of the Soviet Party to its members, July 14, which is a long detailed attack against China but which the spokesman of the Chinese Party urges everyone to read and study carefully "as a negative example". It filled three pages of the *People's Daily* July 24, and was prefaced by a short "editorial note" in an ironic vein with few adjectives.

The "Open Letter", says the editor, is "full of distortions of fact" of which 70 to 80 may be found, but only a few will be mentioned now.

The first "distortion" noted is the claim by the Soviet Party that "the Chinese Party would have no scruples about attaining socialism through a third world war at the cost of hundreds of millions of lives". This "charge of bellicosity", says the editor, "is completely false. The Chinese Party has always held that world war and nuclear war can be prevented through the joint struggles of the people of the world."

Examples are given, beginning with Mao's statement in Dec. 1947 in an official report, to the effect that "together with all the democratic forces of the world . . . we can surely prevent . . . the outbreak of a third world war". Ten years later this confidence had grown and become more specific. In 1957, in Moscow, Mao Tse-tung listed ten events by which the "forces of socialism and peace have become stronger than the forces of imperialism and war" and "would be able to prevent world war".

The second "distortion" is the accusation that China "has made a 180 degree turn on the question of the denunciation of Stalin by the 20th Congress of the CPSU". "Nobody knows better than the CPSU that this is not the case," states the editor, for China had many times told the CPSU immediately after the 20th Congress, stating its view that "the Soviet leaders were in error in failing to make an all-round evaluation of Stalin". The Chinese Party made such an evaluation in its editorial "On Historical Experiences of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", but in the interests of solidarity did not publish its direct criticism of the 20th Congress of the CPSU. The CPSU well knew the position of the Chinese Party. (This is a calm but deadly charge.)

The third "distortion" concerns the charge that China was the first to "extend ideological differences into state relations". The fact is that "on July 16, 1960, the Soviet side suddenly notified China of its decision to withdraw all the 1,300 and more Soviet experts within a month, to scrap the hundreds of agreements and contracts it had signed and to discontinue supplies of many important items of equipment and materials. This inflicted incalculable difficulties and losses on **China's economy, na-**

tional defense and scientific research and was the main reason for the reduction of economic and commercial links between China and the Soviet Union. China was the victim yet now the CPSU blames China for 'reducing the economic and commercial links' and 'expanding ideological differences into the sphere of state relations'. This is an amazing reversal of fact".

These editorial comments are made with a terse restraint which a British diplomat might envy. But if that "Open Letter" issued by the CPSU to its members has indeed 70 to 80 "distortions of fact" of this kind, and if the *People's Daily* intends to release them on appropriate occasion, then a recent comment by the *Washington Post* seems apt: "Mr. Khrushchov will learn, as we Americans did, that it is easier to get into a discussion with the Chinese than to get out of one."

However sharp the discussion, the aim is unity. This was blazoned on the banners which in Peking greeted the returning delegates:

Long Live the Great Unity of the Socialist Camp and the International Communist Movement!

Anna Louise Strong

Extra Issue B

CHINESE STUDENTS, HELD IN USSR, BACK IN PEKING

September 20, 1963

Dear friends,

That trainload of Chinese students which was held 52 hours by Soviet troops and then deported, at last got back to Peking, after Moscow had flooded world headlines with charges of their alleged "outrages", such as "smuggling forbidden literature", "imprisoning two customs guards in a compartment five hours" and "committing sanitary violations in the station". At last we have the chance to hear the students speak.

They report that their Peking-Moscow express, with Chinese crew of 19 plus 73 Chinese passengers, mostly students returning for their winter term in the U.S.S.R., reached Naushki, the Soviet customs, at 4.17 p.m. on the 7th. The trouble came over **eleven copies** of a *Hsinhua News Release* which four students and eight crew members had brought for train reading. It contained the Chinese Government's Sept. 1st statement on the Soviet Government's Aug. 21 statement on the Test Ban. The Soviet officials tore up three copies and seized the other

eight. The Chinese demanded their literature, saying they had a right to have and read official news. The train chiefs went to the station authorities to argue; the students argued in the train. They laugh at the "silly lie" that they held any guards "prisoner"; the guards were armed, the students not.

All non-Chinese passengers meanwhile were transferred to a Soviet express. Hundreds of Soviet troops then surrounded the station and cordoned off the Chinese train. Forty-two students were confined in the customs room for over 20 hours without water, food, warm clothing or freedom of movement or chairs to sit on. A large number of troops manhandled them, including forming a circle around them, locking arms and tightening the circle to crush the Chinese. Some of the troops seemed not to want to do this, but a lieutenant colonel shouted orders. Thirty students were made ill, some with high fever, while seven had bruises and sprains. (The cause of any "sanitary violation" seems clear.) After 52 hours detention, the train with all the 92 Chinese was deported, under armed troops in all corridors.

This is the most serious incident so far but not the only one. Five Chinese army captains, returning by another train to study in a Soviet military academy, were also deported for possessing Chinese Government literature. Earlier, some Chinese Embassy personnel were deported from Moscow, and the entire *Hsinhua News Agency* in Prague was deported for circulating Chinese statements, its cable leases Peking-Prague and Prague-Havana being arbitrarily cancelled, breaking China's main news-

connections with Europe and Latin America. It is sad to see such actions in Khrushchov's war on China's ideas. Soviet correspondents in China send cables without censor and hand out any documents they please.

Yours,

Anna Louise Strong

Letter Number 11

GOLDEN AUTUMN IN CHINA

October 25, 1963

Dear friends,

As China swings into its long, golden autumn, the main concerns are these:

1) More than **2,000 foreign visitors** from 80 countries came for the October holidays, the largest number ever. The economy continues upward, with food especially abundant.

2) All hearts turn towards **Cuba's great hurricane disaster**. 9,059 tons of rice, first instalment in some \$30,000,000 worth of emergency relief, reaches Cuban port within two weeks!

3) **Ideological discussion** continues, settles into series of basic pamphlets. Nobody expects it to rupture state relations. (See Chou En-lai's interview, page 22.)

Cautious optimism earlier this year grew into calm confidence in the overall economic and political situation as the Chinese People's Republic entered its 15th year. The cheerful absence of tension was so marked that it surprised the more than 2,000 visitors from over 80 countries plus the 1,000 Overseas Chinese who came to the Oct. 1st National Day celebrations, the largest attendance China has ever had.

A typical first comment by visitors from Britain and West Europe was: "But the two greatest powers on earth are attacking China; how can Peking be so peacefully unworried." A typical action of visitors from Moscow and East Europe was to come loaded with two weeks' bread ration, fearing to be hungry in China; they then dumped the stale bread into the hotel trash and went home with baskets of apples and sausages. Visitors from Africa, Asia, Latin America, Australasia hastened around to see the sights.

Nothing seems more ludicrous here than the quaint American notion that China is "isolated" from the world. I shall discuss below the danger such misconceptions present. That old stand-by *Time*, in a long piece in September called "The Arrogant Outcast", stressed the impossibility of getting information from this "most impenetrable closed-in area", and built its picture of China from five refugees in Hongkong, a Belgian POW from the Korean War who after 13 years went home, an alleged secret army document which fell into Washington's hands and unnamed British industrialists seeking trade. Throwing all this together, *Time* came up with a picture in which any resemblance to China was "purely coincidental".

Yet *Time* could easily have learned that there are 32 registered foreign correspondents in Peking, that *Reuters* and *Agence France Presse* send out thousands of words a month, all uncensored. On National Day, this press corps was augmented by over 100 visiting journalists, including top newspaper editors from around the world.

For me personally the reception for visiting journalists was among the best parties of the year. The resident foreign correspondents and some leading Chinese news-

men met the more than 100 visiting journalists on Sept. 29th, at an informal affair with no speeches except a toast to start the ball rolling. A lavish buffet supper was followed by a program of folk dances and music from different parts of Asia, Africa, Latin America. You sat at any one of a roomful of small round tables and table-hopped whenever you liked.

This time of year in "isolated China" is one of much hospitality to visiting friends; my own routine work was wrecked by three weeks of never-ending parties, banquets and visits. Among foreigners that called at my home were two British economists, seven Australians, a group of Brazilian women, two Indonesian magazine editors, a Chilean, and the American Negro Robert Williams, whose "Voice of Free Dixie" is broadcast from Cuba to his native south in the U.S.A. I took advantage of the presence of visitors to go on one of the specially chartered planes for three days in Yenan.

More than a third of the visitors came to do business. Britain, France, Belgium and the Netherlands all sent trade delegations, some of whom signed contracts before the holidays. Largest and most energetic was the delegation of more than 500 Japanese, representing 600 industries which put on a big exhibition on Oct. 5th, the bulk of it consisting of 5,000 tons of machinery on which the Japanese want orders.

At Chou En-lai's big banquet on the eve of the holiday I sat next to a dark-skinned man from Kenya who proved to be the president of the East African Academy of Sciences, which I didn't know existed. He had been meeting with scientists from 17 countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and Australasia, as a Preparatory Committee to set up a much larger Scientific Symposium next

August for these areas. These scientists feel that they do not get all the help they need from their colleagues in "imperialist" lands in branches needed to develop their national economy.

The parade of half a million people on Oct. 1st was, as usual, a breath-taking harmony of marching color, largely secured by the thrifty Chinese by millions of tissue paper flowers — red, blue, green, yellow — and tall silken banners of organizations that swept in changing patterns 150 abreast across the great Tien An Men Square, so swiftly that everyone got home for lunch. A tall Brazilian artist standing near me was in rapture: "What color! And they call China a drab monochrome!"

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PEKING

PRODUCE

OWN

FOOD

A solid reason for the present joyous mood is the food situation. As direct result of three scarcity years, in which all Chinese cities strove to produce as much food as possible by their own efforts, Peking now produces within her own enlarged borders practically all the food for her 7.4 million people except for part of the grain.

This emphasis on self-supply is no fetish, but an effort to control the city's food supply efficiently at minimum cost in transport. Tropical fruits like bananas, pineapples, oranges still come from the south, and are balanced by Peking's export of apples, peaches, pears and grapes to other areas. Some grain is more conveniently brought from other areas, balanced in part by export of famous Peking ducks.

Figures of Peking's food supply were given by personal interview with Vice-Mayor Chen Hung-yi. Greater Peking has an area of 6,485 sq. miles with a million acres of cultivated land. Of its 7.4 million population, 300,000 are agricultural families within the municipal limits. These produce, in communes or on state farms, all the vegetables, fruits, eggs and milk, most of the meat and part of the grain for a population 22 times their number. This puts them high among the world's efficient food producers.

Vegetables marketed in Peking rose from 300,000 metric tons in 1961 to 500,000 tons in 1962 and are running in 1963 another 50 percent above 1962 thus far, with 3.3 million pounds daily marketed in August, and a peak of 11 million on some days. Retail prices run 10 to 20 percent below a year ago and even dropped to less than a cent a pound on luscious ripe tomatoes, this drop being cushioned for the farmers by advance contracts with the municipality. The increase in vegetables is attributed to better irrigation, which now counts one electric pump for every $8\frac{1}{3}$ acres; and to great increase in fertilizer.

Peking's orchards marketed 99 million pounds of fruit in the first half of 1963; the amount rose with autumn. Prices fell 25-30 percent due to big supply and direct commune-to-consumer marketing through 1,300 street-stalls and 2,000 push-carts touring the neighborhoods.

China's diet for ordinary folk has always been poor in meat. Today the sale of meat and poultry runs two and a half times last year, while eggs are four times as plentiful. Milk, relatively new in China's diet, is 44 percent above last year which makes it 14 times what it was in 1949 when Peking became the nation's capital.

A walk in the streets or a talk with Chinese friends gives life to statistics. Everywhere on the streets you find fruit stalls and tasty snacks of various kinds for sale. Grain is rationed at the same rate as before but now my Chinese friends find they accumulate surplus grain tickets, because with the greater variety in food now, they do not want to eat so much grain.

People also buy consumer goods of much variety. You drop into a peasant's home in a fairly distant village and find a bicycle in the yard, a clock on the wall, a radio on the table, and a big pile of new quilts folded on the *kang*. Often they have a sewing-machine or are planning to buy one. These commodities were very rare in former days; now they are all "Made in China". Radios, incidentally, usually have short wave as well as medium wave. Nobody objects if you care to listen to the Voice of America. Few seem to care for it, because it is so ignorant of China.

LET'S NAIL A FEW OF THE ANTI-CHINA LIES

Lies about China are becoming too many to list. But friends send me clippings and want a reply. So let's nail some chief distortions, a few at a time.

There are four main sources of lies and two main kinds. The biggest are "made in America", either directly or by hints to correspondents as to what to get. Many foreign espionage services maintain professional forgery outfits; Chiang Kai-shek's merry men are considered proficient in this. They can forge an entire issue of the *People's*

Daily and only change the words on posters, so that a photo of a street demonstration in Peking welcoming a foreign dignitary becomes an anti-India demonstration. New Delhi is a source of distortion on Sino-Indian affairs and a transmission center for general lies. Moscow, alas, is not always scrupulous with its facts.

Some lies are passing, and cured by time, but their echoes linger as a sour taste. The "families thrown into barracks" and "the starving Chinese" are examples. More serious are the lies made for permanent use, refuelled with variations. Chief of these is China's alleged "belligerency", embroidered with many accessory themes from "population pressures" to "China wants to plunge the world into nuclear war, killing half the human race".

This year's crop of lies is a bumper one. A new poisonous ingredient, "China's racism", has been added to the old "China wants war". This brew becomes the "Yellow Peril" with nuclear bombs and all the colored races added! Behind it one feels the definite aim of certain elements to so poison the American people's minds with ideas of "blue ants", or even, as one letter to *Time* put it, "a nightmare of almost fungiferous population", that they may welcome any Pentagon project to bomb Chinese to bits as a kind of "sanitation of the earth".

★★★★★★★ Don't worry about maps used to show
★ alleged claims to neighboring lands in
★ **MAPS** Southeast Asia, Burma, India, and/or
★ **AS** the Soviet Far East. Several such have
★ **MYTHS** appeared. Some are forgeries; others
★ may be historic maps of China's boundaries under the
Ming or Ching Dynasties. Last June New Delhi published a map which they claimed was published by

Hsinhua with an article on "Unequal Treaties". *Hsinhua* replied Aug. 15th that both the map and the article were forgeries.

A Californian friend sends me a *UPI* dispatch from London based on a map from New Delhi, said to have come from a book called "History of Modern China" published in Peking, and thought "by diplomats" in London to show Peking's aggressive intent on all of Southeast Asia. This is a sloppy story, for "diplomats" may be a single clerk the correspondent took to lunch. However, I did a bit of inquiry and found that no "History of Modern China" has yet been published by the Foreign Languages Press, though one is planned. Their "Outline History of China" has only one map, showing the route of the Long March.

It didn't seem worth while to try to track down all possible histories published in Chinese, because any history that covered the Ming and Ching Dynasties and showed them on maps would have all of Southeast Asia, Burma, parts of India, and the Soviet Far East in China.

So what? China's present government recognizes historic changes and has made boundary treaties with most of its neighbors — Burma, Nepal, Mongolia, Pakistan and now Afghanistan, all of which found China generous with territory.

Modern treaties speak louder than historic maps.

★★★★★★★ The "racist myth" is now close to the
★ top among lies about China. In its pure
★ **RACIST** form it appeared in a three-column ad
★ **MYTH** in the *NY Times*, Sept. 3rd, sponsored
by "Latex Corporation as a public service", sent me by an American friend. Under the title "Communism's Own

Racism”, it claimed that China is appealing to color against the whites.

Chief evidence was an alleged quotation by Chen Yi, China’s Foreign Minister and Vice-Premier, who was quoted as greeting Kenzo Matsumura, a prominent Japanese, in September 1962, with the words: “The East after all remains the East and Asians must change world history. We must unite and strengthen ties between peoples of the same color of skin.”

Authority given was Moscow’s *Pravda* quoting the Peking *People’s Daily*. I chased these down. Matsumura came to Peking to talk trade; the welcoming speech on Sept. 16th was not by Chen Yi but by Premier Chou En-lai. He referred not to color of skin but to the full moon, (it was the Harvest Moon festival) as “symbol of unity”. He said Japanese and Chinese should be friends.

Four days later Matsumura gave a return banquet and here the words about “The East is East”, etc. really appeared. They were said by Matsumura. His comments appeared in the *People’s Daily* without direct quotes. He said nothing about “color of skin” but he did say that his visit should strengthen ties between countries “of the same language and race”. *Pravda* quoted this a year later, on Aug. 27th, 1963, added direct quotation marks and changed “same language and race” to “color of skin and written language”, putting it in black type to call attention to the fact that the *People’s Daily* was quoting a “Japanese imperialist”. *Pravda* must have been hard up for something to pin on China. Chen Yi’s guilt was only “by association”. He sat at table where Matsumura was host.

It remained for Latex Corporation in New York, to transfer the remark about “color of skin” to Chen Yi, and

to strengthen the “color” reference by omitting the reference to “language” which confined the relation to China and Japan. The build-up of the lie was thus complete.

★★★★★★★★★★ The package of distortion that really kept me awake was the Sept. 11th editorial on “Rethinking China”, in the *Christian Century*. Not because it was worse than others, but because it set out to be good, to rescue China from its “tragic loneliness” and bring it back to the fellowship of man. And its mix-up of **ignorance, arrogance and irresponsibility** stunned me — coming from such a source!

It began: “What can be done to break down China’s **self-chosen isolation** from the rest of mankind? Her break with Russia, following on her wanton attacks on Korea, Tibet and India, and her military and diplomatic intervention in Southeast Asia. . . .” Whence all this?

I have already noted how far from “isolation” China is. But if we grant “isolation”, was it “self-chosen”, or imposed by American embargo, armed intervention and present armed blockade, with nuclear weapons always trained on Chinese targets? Is the editor unaware that China never “attacked Korea”, but entered that war four months after America’s attack and only after MacArthur had dropped bombs on Manchuria? Is he unaware that Tibet has been recognized by most of the world for 1,200 years as part of China? And that even then, the Chinese People’s Liberation Army halted eight months on the edge of Tibet till the Dalai Lama and Lhasa authorities signed agreement with the new Peking government?

Is he unaware that Chief of Staff General Maxwell Taylor told a Senate committee hearing last April, in

heavily censored testimony, that India had been "inching forward" and might have started the border conflict? And that not a single Chinese soldier has been found anywhere in Southeast Asia, but American soldiers are plentiful, waging war in Vietnam, promoting war in Laos and maneuvers in Thailand?

Every line breathes the arrogant assumption that Americans have the right to police the world, but China has no right to defend her own frontiers. But this is rather common in Americans and was not what shocked me most. The worst was the distortion of Mao Tse-tung's appeal to the world's people on behalf of the American Negroes' struggle for human rights. This showed incredible irresponsibility towards truth. Nor is any honest mistake possible here for Mao made only the one statement, and, as the editor notes, it was his first public statement for years.

Mao, twice asked by an American Negro to make a statement supporting the Negroes' struggle, did so on Aug. 8th. The full text was given in *Peking Review* Aug. 16th. It takes up more than a page but the operative words are:

I call upon the workers, peasants, revolutionary intellectuals, enlightened elements of the bourgeoisie, and other enlightened persons of all colors, white, black, yellow, brown, etc. to unite to oppose racial discrimination practised by U.S. imperialism and to support the American Negroes in their struggle against racial discrimination.

Mao added, perhaps too optimistically, that only the reactionary ruling class oppresses the Negroes and the white people generally do not, and thus finds that only

10 percent of the world's people want to oppress the Negroes while 90 percent are on their side. He deduces that the American Negroes will win, and ends on a prophetic note: "The evil system of colonialism and imperialism grew up along with the enslavement of Negroes and the trade in Negroes; it will surely come to an end with the thorough emancipation of the black people."

Where in this highly humanist appeal does the *Christian Century* find anything like its words?

"A summons to colored peoples to unite in war against the white race was issued from Peking in the name of Mao Tse-tung. His call for **worldwide racial war** reflects a degree of hate and desperation which can only be described as psychotic." . . . Later the editor returns to Mao's **"policy of collective racial suicide"**.

Now I do not know where that editor got that distortion. I doubt if he made it up himself; his material is mostly second-hand. The most charitable view is that he latched onto a handy slander and passed it along. But I know he could have checked it in New York for the *Peking Review* can be had there. And an editor who uses such statements against a leader of one-fourth of mankind without checking, shows criminal irresponsibility.

That was why I lay awake wondering whether not only the Pentagon with its nuclear stock-pile, but the prejudices of "good Americans" had become a danger to the survival of man. And if that editor has any God I would pray him to make that editor start "Rethinking America" and just let China alone.

HIGHLIGHTS OF REUTERS' INTERVIEW WITH CHOU EN-LAI

Chou En-lai's interview Oct. 16th, given to *Reuters'* general manager, is such a clear, important summary that I threw out my discussion of the Tripartite Test-Ban Treaty in order to give the brief highlights.

- 1) **Socialist states won't split**; Party discussions continue.
- 2) No basic change likely in **relations with U.S.A.** till U.S. armed forces leave China's soil and waters.
- 3) China ready negotiate **Indian boundary** any time.
- 4) China's **economic advance** will continue.

* * *

1) **Differences with U.S.S.R.** "Serious difference on principle exist between Soviet and Chinese Parties." "Contacts between the two states and two parties will continue." . . . "I see no reason for thinking that the two states should be severed from each other."

As to whether the withdrawal of Soviet specialists in 1960 added to China's difficulties, Chou replied: "Of course, it had its effects," but added: "We don't want to say too much about it. If the Soviet Union had not provoked this dispute we would not have said as much as we did."

Chou stated flatly that "those who thought they could use the Sino-Soviet differences to deal with China and the Soviet Union separately would certainly be disappointed". "If any act of aggression occurs against any socialist country, this would be an act of aggression against the whole socialist camp."

2) **On relations with the U.S.A.** "China does not refuse negotiations with the U.S.A." But they are not likely to get very far "as long as the U.S.A. does not change its basic policy", which is "one of aggression and war threats against China". . . . "We are willing to be friendly with all peoples throughout the world," but "we cannot be friendly with any country" which "still occupies our territory Taiwan and carries on armed threats in the Taiwan Straits". Chou conceded that voices are being raised in the U.S.A. for a change of policy, but so far "none of them have any idea of changing this policy of splitting Taiwan from China".

3) **On the Sino-Indian boundary**, the Premier said that China has successfully negotiated its boundary with several countries and long ago offered to negotiate the boundary with India, but India always imposes conditions. The "current Indian attitude", he said, "proceeds from their need to carry out the cold war, and this meets the need of the United States". India, he says, provoked the conflict; but the border is now quiet because of measures taken by China. It will remain quiet unless India again invades Chinese territory.

The constant reports from New Delhi that Chinese are massing troops and planning invasion were characterized by Chou as "absolutely baseless", and published "merely to create cold war with the aim of getting foreign aid and suppressing the people".

The boundary, he said, should be settled "by direct negotiations without preliminary conditions". China was ready for this at any level. Chou himself would go to New Delhi if desired.

4) **On China's economy** Chou said this year shows "an all-round turn for the better". Parts of the country suf-

fered from drought and other parts from large-scale flooding. Despite this the grain crop is higher than last year, cotton shows even bigger increase, while vegetables and meat have increased still more. . . . In industry we shall exceed the planned output in a "vast number of products". . . . "You can see this in the market."

Chou foresaw a steady upward movement. "Our experience in dealing with natural disasters," he said, "has prepared us better to handle them."

The policy in which "agriculture is the foundation and industry the leading factor" will continue "throughout the period of socialist construction". However, "the ratio of state investment in agriculture and industry will vary according to the situation".

As for trade, Chou said that China's internal market is developing and there are also possibilities of foreign trade "with those countries that wish it" on the basis of "equality and mutual benefit". Trade relations are developing with Japan, France and Britain.

PROMPT HELP FOR CUBA

As the heroic Cubans plunged fiercely into the fight to rebuild the ruin left by the Oct. 4th-8th hurricane, help began to come from lands around the world. China surprised everyone by the speed with which her first 9,059 tons of rice reached Santiago port on the 19th, indicating some magic or good foreign contacts for ships cannot make Cuba from China in two weeks. Her Red Cross medical gifts by plane came the next day.

List of gifts announced Oct. 16th by Chou En-lai, estimated at nearly \$30,000,000 by foreigners here, includes 50,000 tons of grain, 2 million kilos of canned meat, 25 tons of tea, 3,600,000 meters of cotton cloth, a million pair of rubber shoes, 20,000 tons of cement, 10,000 tons of rolled steel, 20,000 cases of glass, and 300,000 writing pads with over 17 million pencils!

Of more value even than the goods, to my mind, is the speed shown, the implication in Chou's note to Castro that this is a first "urgency" gift, and the confidence shown in Chou's words of greeting:

"We are convinced that the unity of the people is more powerful than a hurricane. The heroic people of Cuba, under your leadership, will certainly emerge victorious from the trial, will rebuild all destroyed by the calamity and build better.

With revolutionary salutations,

Chou En-lai"

That should be a shot in the arm for Cuba's morale which is as important as food.

Yours,

Anna Louise Strong

Letter Number 12

“ALL-ROUND TURN FOR THE BETTER”

December 8, 1963

Dear friends,

A two weeks closed session of Chinese People's National Congress ended December 3, with a communiqué about the “all-round turn for the better”, the beginning of “upsurge in agriculture” and the “independent base” laid for modern industry. I shall give the next letter to this theme and hope to get it out by the year's end. Other events in the area are:

- 1) U.S.A. steps up war in South Vietnam, intervention in Laos; Cambodia repudiates “aid”.
- 2) New World Sports Organization, GANEFO, Games of New Emerging Forces, formed in Indonesia. (See p. 37.)
- 3) Communist Debate continues; China issues Comment No. Five, on “War and Peace”.

CHINA ON WAR, PEACE AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The long-awaited summary of China's views on war and peace appeared Nov. 19 as comment by the joint

editorial departments of *People's Daily* and *Red Flag*, two official organs of the Chinese Communist Party under the title “**Two Different Lines on the Question of War and Peace**”. It appears also as a 38-page pamphlet.

Technically it is Number 5 in a series of answers to the July 14th “Open Letter” of the Soviet Communist Party which the Chinese at the time said contained “70 to 80 distortions of fact” on which they reserved reply. The replies have been appearing as a numbered series of what may become Marxist classics on problems of long-range interest.

Five questions have thus been handled since July 14. The first, “On the Origin and Development of the Differences Between the Leadership of the CPSU and Ourselves” is a factual account that becomes an analysis of how differences arise in a united movement. The second — “On the Question of Stalin” — analyses not only Stalin but the growth of the world's first socialist state. Was it the work of a gangster or not?

The third, “Is Yugoslavia a Socialist Country?”, not only makes a devastating analysis of Yugoslavia, but sets criteria, applicable to systems as widely different as Nehru's “socialism” and the USSR, as to whether a “socialist country” is growing towards communism or backsliding into capitalism. The fourth — “Apologists for Neo-Colonialism” — raises the question: Shall socialist countries help ex-colonial peoples fight for full independence, or help imperialism to impose new forms of dependence through “aid”.

Of all subjects so far covered, Number 5 is most important to most people. Many people are not Marxists and the number who care what happens to Russia or China is limited. But all people care about mankind's

survival. If China has anything to say about preventing nuclear war, people want to know. That is what Number 5 is about.

Of all the lies spread around the world about China, the most serious is the lie that China wants war, that her leaders see war as the only road to world revolution, and are willing to see a billion people killed by nuclear bombs as a means to world socialism. This has never been true. Mao Tse-tung gave me his basic view on nuclear bombs when he said in 1946 in Yanan: "In the end the bomb will not destroy the people; the people will destroy the bomb."

This is still the base of China's view.

This view has now been developed by the leaders who made the revolution and built the present China. They are experienced and skilled in the strategy both of war and of peace. They maintained for twenty years many "liberated areas" under constant encirclement by enemies with superior weapons. They developed their armed forces from a few thousands to millions, always drawing their arms and manpower from the enemy. This experience is not unlike that faced by many national revolutions, encircled by hostile imperialism today.

In comment Number 5 we also find the attitude a socialist country should take towards nuclear arms, and the revelation that the Chinese entered the Korean War so that the USSR might stay out of it, since any clash between the American invaders of Korea and the Russians might mean world war. The editorial thus ranges over many subjects of which I have space for only a few.

"Imperialism is the source of war in modern times", is the thesis with which the argument begins. It specifies

"U.S. imperialists" as "the wildest militarists of modern times . . . the ferocious enemy of world peace". Some people may stop right there, but those who know the extent of the wars that Washington already carries on around the world, and the war bases planted on all continents, will agree. The editorial gives some data on these.

The article makes clear, as Mao did to me in 1946, that the U.S. is NOT at present seeking war with the USSR, but seeks first to take over weaker lands, Vietnam, Laos and others. Its "global strategy" has been "to grab and dominate the intermediate zone lying between the United States and the Socialist camp, put down the revolutions of the oppressed peoples and nations, proceed to destroy the socialist countries, and thus to dominate the whole world". If this is admitted, it easily follows that the best immediate strategy for peace is to halt U.S. imperialism in the "intermediate countries" by helping the resistance of the peoples, and that this involves the least risk of an expanding nuclear war.

Two different "lines" have appeared in the Socialist camp for preventing world war. One is to build the united front of the world's peoples against the war-makers; this is the correct way in China's view. The other is to make deals with the war-makers and call them "peace-lovers", as Khrushchov called Eisenhower and Kennedy. This, says China, deceives the world's peoples, breaks the morale of the anti-imperialist struggle, assists the "global strategy" of imperialism and thus increases the danger of nuclear war.

Such is the basic argument, much over-simplified.

The Chinese make it clear that they do **not believe** in stirring up revolutions or local wars, as has been charged.

These revolutions and wars are started by the constantly increasing oppression of imperialism which the oppressed people resist in many ways and which finally may drive them to a revolutionary civil war or a national war for independence. When this occurs, the socialist lands are "duty bound", in China's view, to support the people's struggle and not the imperialists.

This does not mean that China supplies arms to all such struggles. Support is of many kinds and the Chinese are careful strategists. The chief support is to "expose imperialism" so that the world's people and even the people in the imperialist country turn against it. China's aid has been given in ways that do not "escalate" a war, but help the people end it.

Two concrete examples may be given, though they are not given in Number 5. See on page 38 how China "supported" Cambodia without any flaunting of arms.

Algeria is another example. China did not recognize its revolutionary government until it was recognized by the Arab states, its natural allies. Then China's timely recognition enabled Indonesia and other Asian states to follow suit and was a major help. Moscow for two years longer supported de Gaulle while French Communist Party members actually went into battle against the Algerians.

ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS

1) China's first plank is that ALL nuclear weapons should be abolished by "complete, total and resolute prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons . . . of testing, manufacture, stock-piling and use". Some people call this "Utopian" and hence "hypocritical". But China has formally proposed it to all nations with which she

has diplomatic relations and has received some favorable replies. Noted peace-makers, like Lord Russell, think it should be "taken seriously".

Chinese consider this not only the correct final aim, but also an aim that can reasonably be approached step by step, such as the withdrawal of foreign military bases, the creation of nuclear-free zones etc. They do NOT think the present Tripartite Test Ban is a step in this direction, but rather a step towards "nuclear monopoly" and the strengthening of U.S. imperialism and hence a step towards war.

2) As long as imperialism brandishes nuclear weapons, China thinks the Socialist camp should "gain and maintain nuclear superiority". At this point some Western pacifists will protest: . . . "The old story!" But Marxists will understand that socialism by its nature does not produce war while imperialism does. China criticizes Khrushchov for breaking in 1959 the agreement to furnish nuclear help to China, because this reduced the potential of the Socialist camp.

3) Socialist countries use nuclear weapons ONLY for "defensive use", i.e. to "deter" or "reply" to an imperialist nuclear attack. **"A socialist country must absolutely not be the first to use nuclear weapons."** This must be made clear to the world. It follows that socialist countries must not use nuclear weapons as a threat, or engage in "nuclear blackmail or nuclear gambling". They must not use "nuclear weapons to support the people's wars of national liberation and revolutionary civil wars and have no need to do so". This is an important plank!

With Cuba clearly in mind the article says that nuclear weapons "are of no use whatever to make revolutions or to help a war for national independence. . . . The

oppressed nations do not possess them, and how would a socialist country plan to use them in helping? Would it use nuclear weapons on an area where a war for national liberation was in progress, thereby subjecting both the revolutionary people and the imperialists to a nuclear strike? Or would it be the first to use nuclear weapons against an imperialist country which was waging a conventional war of aggression?" Either of these "is impermissible for a socialist country".

The boast by Khrushchov more than once that he would use long-range missiles to defend Cuba, is considered by China "dangerously provocative". His "brandishing of nuclear weapons" in the Caribbean crisis is branded as "irresponsible nuclear gambling".

THE KOREAN WAR

Chinese are stung by the CPSU's charge that they "hope for a head-on clash between the Soviet Union and the U.S.A. and try to push the Soviets into nuclear war". They reveal what has been known to people in China and guessed by some foreign experts but never officially confirmed till now, that China entered the Korean War in 1950 so that the USSR wouldn't have to. (ALS. The reason of course was that a head-on clash of American troops against the USSR, which MacArthur threatened, might easily have become world war, while the special force of "Chinese Volunteers" did not even put China at war technically with the U.S.A.)

"We ourselves," they say, "preferred to shoulder the heavy sacrifices and stand in the first line of defense so that the Soviet Union might stay in the second line. Have the leaders of the USSR any sense of proletarian morality when they concoct such lies?"

PREVENTING NUCLEAR WAR

China thus never seeks war nor promotes it but considers it a socialist duty to help oppressed peoples and nations when they are attacked by imperialism. In giving help she avoids escalating war and especially opposes introducing nuclear weapons. Her aid is given on a basis of equality and mutual aid, in the belief that socialist lands can help by material aid and experience but the anti-imperialist resistance of national struggles is equally important, since it wears down the strength of imperialism.

Chinese believe that nuclear world war can be prevented only by worldwide struggle of the people against every new aggression by imperialism. It cannot be done by agreements or treaties. China does not oppose negotiation, even with imperialists. She has taken part in several negotiations, notably in Geneva in 1954 on Indo-China and in 1961 on Laos. She supports "summit conferences", and "any kind of conference that is beneficial to world peace". But she finds it "absolutely impermissible to pin hopes for world peace on negotiations, spread illusions about them and thereby paralyze the fighting will of the peoples, as Khrushchov has done". The article adds: "With every retreat, he increases the appetites of the imperialists. He is always an unrequited lover."

In China's view, to confuse the people into believing that the imperialists want peace, is the deadly danger. For the only power that can chain imperialism and prevent the launching of nuclear war is the active consciousness of the world's people, vigilant in opposition. Treaties may be useful but they cannot bind imperialism. Without the active support of the people, treaties become dead letters.

“To defend world peace it is necessary constantly to expose imperialism, to arouse . . . the people . . . to place reliance on the strength of the Socialist camp . . . on the revolutionary struggles . . . of the working people of all countries . . . on the liberation struggles of the oppressed nations, on the struggles of all peace-loving people and countries. . . . This . . . is the line of . . . Communist Parties in the 1957 Declaration and 1960 Statement.”

China thus backs the awakened consciousness of men against the bomb, as Mao did to me in 1946. To those in many lands who fear that “the people” are too apathetic and confused to unite even to save themselves from death, the editorial ends with the optimistic fact that “The people’s consciousness has been much raised in recent years” and “can be raised indefinitely” . . . “The world today is no longer what it was on the eve of World War Two.”

AMERICA’S “FORWARD THRUST”

The “pomp and panoply” of the funeral, as the *NY Times* noted on Nov. 27, exceeded that of any modern ruler. They understate. Not even Genghis Khan drew to his bier so great a throng of chieftains as the kings, presidents and dignitaries who walked on November 25 from the White House to the Cathedral to honor the leader of an empire far wider than any that Genghis knew, and with far more murderous weapons.

When Genghis died, his chiefs rushed back to dispute the succession, stopping their drive into Europe, so

Europe was saved. The modern ways are quicker. Almost at once Lyndon Johnson assured the Congress that he would continue “America’s forward thrust”.

* * *

In South Vietnam this meant that the “special war” with 17,000 American “advisers” flared to the highest week’s record of scorched villages and slaughtered peasants. Two more Vietnamese burned themselves to death in protest, one in front of the U.S. Embassy.

In Laos a rally of 5,000 people in Phongsaly and 2,000 in Sam Neua protested the “U.S.-Nosavan” invasions of their “liberated areas”, especially the Nov. 21st assault on Vang Vieng and Na Mon by Nosavan’s troops with U.S. aircraft AT-6 support. They demanded that the U.S. “halt its aggression and observe its pledge to respect Laotian neutrality”.

Cambodia discontinued American aid (see p. 38).

In Korea the Pyongyang press denounced the killing of South Korean civilians in the test-firing of a U.S. atomic shell and called the American Military’s continued occupation and its bringing in of nuclear arms, an “illegal violation” of armistice pledges and “the root cause of all the sufferings . . . of the South Korean people”, making South Korea a “hot-bed of war in the Far East”.

All this took place towards the end of November. So when the World Peace Council opened in Warsaw Nov. 28, and the French delegate, supported by the Russians, proposed that all stand for a minute of silence to honor Kennedy as a “leader of peace”, and neon lights at once came on to take the picture, some surprised delegations protested.

The Japanese said that Kennedy's "new aggressive nuclear strategy in Asia" had turned Japan into a military base of U.S. imperialism, "headed for its own nuclear weapons". For this "we hold Kennedy responsible and cannot stand in tribute to him as a man of peace".

The Vietnamese said: "Every day in our country people are killed by American gun-fire. It was under Kennedy that they drove our people from their homes into strategic hamlets and began the burning of our crops and trees in chemical war."

The Chinese delegation protested against a tribute to Kennedy "since the World Council has many nations differing in their relations with the U.S.A." They said it might be better to honor the victims who died resisting U.S. aggression in Vietnam, Cuba and elsewhere. . . . This got nowhere but delegates from Japan, Korea, Vietnam, several African countries, Sweden, Belgium and even America, came up later to thank the Chinese.

* * *

From Moscow N. Khrushchov immediately cabled "President Johnson": "The death of J. F. Kennedy is a great blow to all people who cherish the cause of peace." The Moscow Radio played dirges all day.

But those who had watched U.S. war expenditures under Kennedy zoom from **\$46.7 billion** in 1960 to an estimated **\$60 billion** for 1964, had heard the President himself boast that the nuclear weapons of the strategic alert forces had doubled in 24 months. They had seen assassination publicized as a daring CIA method until every political murder from Lumumba in the Congo to Pholsena in Laos was suspected of being a CIA job.

So when President Kennedy himself was struck, one felt with shock that the contradictions in the American system he led had grown until it could no longer co-exist even within itself.

* * *

Final verdict was given not in words but in **fifteen billion dollars**, when the N.Y. Stock Market, which dropped sharply and closed down on Kennedy's death, reopened to "the biggest one-day rally in market history", total gains being reckoned at that sum. (*NY Times*, Nov. 27.) Big Business was confident that the American forward thrust would go on.

NEW SPORTS INTERNATIONAL

More than 2,200 athletes from all parts of the world took part in "a great event in the history of world sports" in Djakarta in November. Over a million Indonesians, as well as the world's press, watched events in the new Bung Karno sports complex, which includes a 100,000 capacity stadium.

"GANEF0" (Games of the New Emerging Forces) stems from Indonesia's expulsion by the International Olympics Committee. Early this year President Sukarno, a fighter, proposed a new sports organization "free from imperialist control". China at once joined.

Despite IOC threats that participants would be blackballed from the Olympics, athletes from 49 countries took part. The largest visiting contingent was the Chinese, followed by the USSR (second-stringers), the UAR

and little Cambodia. Cuba, Bolivia, Mali, France, Finland, were present, to indicate the variety.

Five new world records were made — though the IOC may refuse to recognize them — three by North Korea, two by China. The sensational long-striding Korean lathe-operator Sin Kim Dan rang up world records in the women's 400 and 800 meter races. Many national records were also smashed.

Following the games, GANEFO was officially organized as a new international sports organization, "to foster cooperation among nations looking towards lasting peace and brotherhood of man". It will hold its games every four years, with Cairo as the 1967 site.

★★★★★★★★★★

★
★
★ **CAMBODIA'S**
★ **WAY!**
★

It is refreshing to note how little Cambodia defied the Big Colossus and got away with it. Her refusal of U.S. aid has been widely noted by an embarrassed

American press, but the crucial reasons for it have been usually left out.

Cambodia, a tiny state in Southeast Asia, wedged between Thailand, Laos, South Vietnam and the sea, has only three million not very literate people, and a chief of state named Prince Sihanouk, with a good French education, aware of facts of life in the modern world. Specifically he knows that U.S. imperialism wants Cambodia as a highway between its two vassals, Thailand and South Vietnam, to build a wide base against China. Thus, the survival of his country, not to mention his own

survival as a prince, depends on delicate balancing between China and the "free world".

Sihanouk made Cambodia a proof that bold neutrality pays. He got a fine port from France, a big hospital from Moscow, some modern factories from China, some military and economic "aid" from America. He made Cambodia famous beyond its strength by initiating the Fourteen Power Conference on Laos in Geneva. But Thailand and South Vietnam keep nibbling away his borders, and plots to assassinate Sihanouk have not been lacking in which the CIA appeared involved.

In early November Sihanouk protested to Washington that a subversive group called "Free Khmers" (Cambodians) operated a radio station in South Vietnam under U.S. protection to promote his overthrow, and unless this stopped he would be compelled to refuse American aid.

Mr. Phillips replied from U.S. State that America knows nothing at all about "Free Khmers".

So Sihanouk captured two "Free Khmers" crossing his border with arms and held a public hearing in a big "People's Assembly" where they confessed that "U.S. Services in South Vietnam" were "the direct purveyors of their arms, finances and plans"! These plans were to invade Cambodia with an armed force composed of Khmers and Vietnamese, overthrow the government and kill its prince.

In view of these facts, Cambodia informed U.S. State that "the most elementary dignity" forbade any further acceptance of U.S. aid and requested immediate cessation of all military, economic, technical and cultural aid, and the withdrawal of the relevant U.S. organizations from Cambodian soil.

However, the Royal Government "conveyed deep respect and friendship to the American people" and "hoped they would understand that a sovereign state cannot tolerate certain acts of U.S. functionaries" and "in view of its friendship for the American people, the Royal Government would continue diplomatic relations".

Peking waited a day to let the American press make shamefaced comment, which it did, and then China entered the stage, not as "Communist China", and not as a weapon-brandishing great power, as Khrushchov did in Cuba, but as "a neighbor of Cambodia", and a "signatory of the Geneva Agreements of 1954" which guaranteed Cambodia's sovereignty and neutrality. She noted that Cambodia was a "peace-loving country" now menaced by invasion "by U.S. vassals" and stated that if Cambodia were thus invaded, China would give Cambodia "all-out support". She called on the "countries concerned . . . to halt U.S. armed intervention and . . . preserve the peace of the area".

At last reports the U.S.A. had accepted both diplomatic relations and the cancellation of aid and was "studying" Cambodia's request that her neutrality be "guaranteed" by the Geneva Powers.

This little diplomatic classic is worth study; it shows how to make a nuclear power back down. China's approach drove wedges even between the U.S.A. and its hirelings, by calling on Thailand and South Vietnam to "keep the peace of the area" as signers of the Geneva Agreements. Cambodia's approach drove a wedge between the American people and their officialdom, isolating only the Pentagon and the CIA. The U.S.A. lost face in Southeast Asia while Cambodia and China gained.

PERSONAL NOTE

This issue specialised on "Peace" to meet many requests. Next Letter will satisfy other requests by covering the National Congress report and other aspects of China's internal development. I hope to do it at once.

Anna Louise Strong

Letter Number 13

ENTERING 1964

December 30, 1963

Dear friends,

In Peking the New Year's celebrations have begun; last night the People's Daily threw a party for some of the journalists, tonight the Peace Committee takes its turn. Parties and visits will go on for days; it is a mystery how one does any work. Weather is crisp but so far no snow. At times a dry, howling wind from the North Pole via the Gobi cracks my skin and makes me sorry for the soil.

South of us, Washington's intervention in Vietnam and Laos continues to claim victims but gets no victories. So the restless U.S. Navy pushes into the Indian Ocean to the annoyance of most nearby nations.

Premier Chou En-lai has gone visiting in Africa for a couple of months, taking along Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Chen Yi and many lesser lights. We miss them in the festivities. Even if you couldn't often get a personal talk, they were presences that brightened the social atmosphere. Chou has a special talent for flashing warm glances of friendship across a banquet hall of 5,000 people, cheering individuals. Chen Yi, big, jovial, frank and breezy in his speeches, seems always ready to spill the beans and often does. We hate to see them disappear

into that dangerous outer world of capitalist strife, but we know that, for building Afro-Asian unity against imperialism, this trip is a worthy follow up of Bandung.

The People's National Congress ended nearly a month ago, a closed session of 1,012 deputies Nov. 18 to Dec. 3. Its published communique noted "**with satisfaction**" that China had "**overcome the difficulties**" caused by three years of natural disasters and by acts of Soviet leaders who "unilaterally tore up agreements and withdrew specialists", and had also "rectified shortcomings in practical work".

It noted that "**the communes have been further consolidated**" and agriculture has improved year by year since 1961, that in spite of exceptionally heavy floods and prolonged droughts in some areas, the total grain crop is higher than last year and the cotton and other crops have still more increased. "A new upsurge in agriculture is taking shape."

Industrial growth was described as "**satisfying**" in scale and output with "**a leap forward in variety and quality**". The year's plan for industrial production is stated as "overfulfilled in all respects". Capital construction is "greater than in 1962". The domestic market has "increase of commodities and a downward movement of prices". Plans in retail sales and in foreign trade are both "overfulfilled". **Forty percent of the workers got wage increases. The state budget was balanced with a slight surplus.**

To this rather bare outline some striking details were added that indicate growing strength. (See p. 53.)

Since China's economic policy is still stated to be one of "**readjustment**", I went to Vice-Premier Po I-po for a full discussion of the meaning of this term.

WHAT CHINA MEANS BY “READJUSTMENT”

Interview with Vice-Premier Po I-po

Under the drab term “readjustment”, China is re-making its entire economy to build more efficient relations of industry and agriculture for satisfying the people’s needs, and to create an economic base independent of foreign aid. This has been going on for three years and still continues.

I went to ask Vice-Premier Po I-po just what is meant by “readjustment”. As Chairman of the State Economic Commission, and Vice-Chairman of the State Planning Committee, his reports about once a year make the Western experts rush to analyze. But I went because my last interview with Po I-po was seventeen years ago in the Taihang Mountains when he was political commissar for the army defending a “liberated area” about the size of Germany with a capital in a hidden hill village.

I asked him then, a bit impatiently: “Why does everyone talk cheerfully of ‘victory’ when Chiang Kai-shek is taking your county towns?” He gave me, in clear arithmetic and common sense, the precise reasons why Chiang was getting bogged down in county towns so that the People’s Liberation Army would soon be able to take the initiative. From then on I understood how the PLA strategy worked.

This time Po I-po received me in more splendor than in the Taihang Mountains. Instead of a small room on a back street in a hidden village, he used one of the handsome audience halls of the old imperial palace, now available to vice-premiers for interviews. It was bright with

the sun shining through a long wall of windows, and it had a big red Chinese rug and many comfortable chairs around a coffee table with fruits and tea. In a small adjoining dining-room we later had an excellent lunch.

I wanted just what I had wanted in 1946, the clear common sense about strategy, economic this time, not military. I asked the same kind of question: “Why are you all so cheerfully ‘readjusting’ instead of launching a ‘big advance’?”

Po I-po had the same direct manner and didn’t seem much older. “Your word ‘readjustment’ does not quite cover all the meanings in our Chinese slogan of eight characters, roughly translated as ‘readjust, consolidate, fill in, increase variety’. But ‘readjust’ may be the best term to cover them all. When a commander in war wins a battle, he pauses to let the troops rest, regroup and reorganize; he sums up experiences, studies the strength and weakness revealed and estimates what is needed for the next victory. Our economy moves ahead by a rhythm something like that. After every important period of action we sum up experiences and ‘readjust’ for the next action. The period may be long or short; this depends on many factors. But on this ‘readjustment’ depends the success and the speed of the next action.”

In the first five-year plan, he explained, in 1953-57, China had no experience in large industry and could only copy the USSR. “The speed was not all we wished and there were other lacks. In 1958-60 we tried some ideas of our own under the name of ‘Big Leap Forward’. We made some big achievements and also some errors. All this had to be digested to combine our experience with Soviet experience and find the best way. To this was added Comrade Khrushchov’s action in 1960. He pulled

out all the Soviet specialists and broke the contracts to deliver equipment. This forced us to create a new, independent economic base."

Po I-po described many types of readjustment: within an industry, between industries, between industry and agriculture, and for a new economic base. He gave examples of all.

In steel-making China shot up to 18 million tons in 1960, three times the 5.35 million in 1957. "But quality was not all good, and variety was lacking. It did not meet our needs. We had excess of ordinary steel; it lay around some time before we could use it. But our growing industry needed many steel alloys. We saw that eight to ten million tons of good quality in adequate varieties was more needed than 18 million tons of ordinary steel."

"Would you then say that the great steel drive of 1958 when sixty million people made steel was a mistake?"

"It was not a mistake," he replied. "It was indispensable. When you as a writer write 10,000 words and then cut it down to 5,000, this is no mistake. It enriches the result. That steel drive gave us a nation-wide steel industry faster than any other way."

He gave another **example from machine-building.** In the old China they repaired and assembled but could not make machines. In the first five-year plan they made a considerable number. In 1958 they launched the slogan: "Liberate Ideas"; the workers began to make inventions. In three years machine-building, lathes, etc. increased by 150 percent. "Much faster than the first five-year plan," said Po I-po. "But we were getting too many of some machines and not enough of others. We lacked enough very big machines, the precision machines and

the machines that make agricultural equipment." This was another readjustment needed inside industry.

More serious was adjustment needed between agriculture and industry. "We drew too much manpower from the rural areas into the cities," said Po I-po. "The natural disasters showed that our city population was bigger than our farms could feed. Our industry became modern but our farms were not yet mechanized. We had to reduce our city population from the expanded 130 million down to 110 million until we could mechanize the farms." (Po I-po omitted what I knew from other sources that this was not done by administrative order but by closing down of unessential industry and giving the jobless six months grain tickets if they agreed to go back to the farms to produce food.)

Another example of the overall adjustment between farming and industry is the **moving of factories to be nearer their raw materials** and/or consumers. "We grow peanuts and soy beans in many parts of the country," said Po I-po, "but the factories that processed them into edible oil were all in the coastal cities, which means extra transport both ways. We have now moved factories nearer to the source of their materials and also moved raw materials nearer to processing factories. But this must not be overdone. When local people process their own tobacco or make their own soap, they sometimes waste good tobacco in poor cigarettes or good oils and perfume in bad soap. So we must set standards and only permit local factories to have the raw materials if they turn out good quality."

Much work has been done to rationalize transport. "During the Big Leap everyone wanted everything at once, and got it wherever they could." Timber grown in

Manchuria was found going south of the Yangtze while timber grown in the south was travelling north. Maps were made showing the sources of basic materials like coal, oil, steel, timber, and where they were needed.

"We did a lot of adjustment on such problems," said Po I-po, "so that timber grown in the north should not cross the Yangtze southward and vice versa."

Probably the most serious readjustment was caused by what Po I-po called "**the surprise attack in 1960 by Comrade Khrushchov**". This was very severe. There were some 300 large constructions and enterprises in all branches of industry and all parts of the country in which over 1,300 Soviet specialists were employed on contract to design, supply and install equipment. This all stopped within a month in midsummer of 1960. The specialists were withdrawn with their blueprints and the equipment stopped coming. To be accurate, we could still buy machines of the ordinary kind that we ourselves could make but not the key machines needed. It was like taking out the dishes in the middle of a meal".

He gave examples. In Anshan Steel Works a new plant for cold-rolling steel sheets for auto bodies and similar uses had eleven Soviet specialists to install two groups of machines. The first group of machines was installed and was being tried out when the specialists were withdrawn. Only 20 percent of the second group of machines had arrived; the rest never came. The second set was quite different from the first and could not be copied from the other.

"What should we do? Our workers and technicians were angry and determined and decided we must make those machines ourselves. They sent out a call for ideas from all Chinese workers who knew steel rolling, espe-

cially in the Northeast. We had to invent from scratch. Within a year we had it operating. They may not be like the machines the Soviets would have sent, but they roll steel sheets with 90 percent of them up to standard, while the USSR contract promised us only 80 percent."

Three years ago everyone was waiting for a **big power plant at the great Sanmen Gorge** on the Yellow River; it was to feed a power grid touching three provinces. The USSR was supplying generators and turbines of 150,000 kilowatts by contract, with specialists to install them. Bigger than anything China had ever known. The first generator-turbine combination came in 1960 but the specialists never arrived and no more generator-turbines came. Slowly the Chinese learned how to make turbines and generators of that size and install them. The hardest bit was to weld together the two huge turbine blades that came separately and had to fit within 0.1 mm tolerance. They've done it now, within 0.06 tolerance. Meantime factories in three provinces built their own steam plants, or waited for three years.

"So now," said Po I-po, "**some of the comrades think we should offer Khrushchov a medal for the spur he gave to our self-reliance!** Sometimes it isn't enough to have lessons from Marx and Lenin; you may need a spur from Chiang Kai-shek or an American embargo." He noted that Chiang at first gave the Communist-led armies 400,000 KMT dollars a year in the united war against Japan but he stopped it in 1939, the Communists had to learn to feed and arm their own soldiers; by the time Japan was beaten they had 1,100,000 soldiers instead of the three divisions Chiang paid for. Similarly the U.S. embargo spurred China to make and even to export many machines the U.S. forbade them to buy.

“Khrushchov thought to strangle us with one clutch,” said Po I-po, “but he made us do our best in these three years. The difficulties he made we have overcome by building a new, independent economic base. This is not entirely finished for we take time to adjust to the resources and needs of our land before we begin our next overall advance.”

Almost as in afterthought Po I-po returned to the question I had raised. **“To readjust is not to stand still,” he said. “Every readjustment has been a swift but specific advance.** In 1963 alone Anshan made 126 new kinds of rolled steel. Petroleum advanced 50 percent a year until China is now practically self-sufficient both in crude and in petroleum products. Output of **chemical fertilizer tripled** between 1959 and 1962; **insecticides grew ninefold** from 1958-62.”

Some provinces have advanced very fast. Kwangtung, whose two or three crops per year need good water control, has now 12 times as many electric pumps as in 1957 with other irrigation and drainage equipment in proportion. Despite serious drought this province produced 350,000 tons more grain in 1963 than in 1962. See page 52 for Chao An County’s “miracle year”.

“Meantime,” said Po I-po, **“we have been clearing off all our debts to the USSR, on loans as far back as 1950.** The heaviest payments came in our hardest years. What is left will be easily cleared by 1965. Then we shall have no debts to anyone.”

“Few nations can claim such solvency,” I commented.

Vice-Premier Po I-po concluded: “We shall then plan our general advance on an economic base fully adjusted to our needs and all our own.”

DR. MA TRAVELS SOUTH TO KWANGTUNG

(Bits of personal letters from Dr. Ma Hai-teh)

Our train travelled slowly south (in November) through the area where that giant cloudburst dropped 18-24 inches of water in 24 hours on a large section of South Hopei, sweeping away crops, houses, bridges, railway lines. Repair brigades were working around the clock, at night under great flood-lights, with bulldozers, earth-moving machines, mobile electric plants — much more modern equipment than you saw even a year or two ago. Track-laying cranes were putting down prefabricated rail and bridge structures.

Several old friends in the sleeping-car recalled the anti-Japanese resistance days when our job was to tear up rails, almost by hand, carry them off and bury them. The later job of laying them again to keep pace with the Liberation Army’s advance was even tougher. The post-Liberation rail network was also built by much hand labor. Now mechanization makes things go.

At dawn we saw the area where the waters had passed. Damage to crops varied; in places there was total loss but the peasants already ploughed to put in new seed. Help of all kinds was pouring in; sidings were loaded with food, fuel, clothing, building materials, medical supplies. Brick kilns, locally built, had come into action; most of the population seemed making bricks. Some new houses were already up. We were struck by the spirit of confidence even in this disaster.

A happier sign of the times were the delicacies on sale at stations further down, tender roasted chickens in the

north, cakes and dumplings in Central China, fragrant sesame candies further south. Fruit everywhere, apples, pears, peaches, grapes, then bananas, papayas.

Canton was in its usual state of bustle; the Export Commodities Fair in full swing. But we set off for the east coast where our medical team from Peking with some 80 doctors and nurses added from Kwangtung have been making a health survey now in its third year.

* * *

Chao An County has a very old history. On our off Sundays we picked up shards of pottery from Tang and Sung days on sites of old kilns destroyed when the Mongol conquest killed everyone in the county town.

This year Chao An made a different kind of history. It had the longest drought but the biggest crop the area ever knew. County records go back a long way. A 180-day drought in the Ching Dynasty caused a peasant rebellion that was drowned in blood. A later drought in 1943 of 100 days had results posted up on a board in Goo Hsiang Commune telling what happened to the 7,000 people of their township center. "In 1943 with 100 days of drought, 656 people died of hunger, 323 became refugees, 462 beggars, 248 children sold."

This year's drought lasted 240 days. But they got the biggest crop in their history. The peasants call it "the miracle year". I visited 14 of the 19 communes in the county. The late rice was a wall-to-wall carpet with thick pile. Fields just reaped gave 66.6 bushels per acre; when the early rice was added, it totalled over 110 bushels. The county-wide average was given as 7,500 lbs. of rice per acre, counting early and late crops.

They had also sweet potatoes, sugar-cane, vegetables, and so many pigs that they waited in line to sell. The area had more pigs for sale than the state refrigeration facilities could handle so each commune brought its pigs to slaughter on a different day. Every commune had fishponds, and side occupations such as pottery and embroidery. So income was "way up" despite drought.

People were joking, full of energy. When I asked peasants how things were, they would say: "Chairman Mao is a good husbandman." One old peasant told me the "miracle year" came from "the return of the iron cow". This was an iron statue from the Sung Dynasty put up to guard a bridge; it was washed away in 1961 and washed back upstream this year. The peasant grinned and added that "we don't believe those superstitions any more. A reservoir with pumps does more than an iron cow".

The Party secretary of Ling Hai Commune disagreed with the "miracle year" idea. He held a meeting to discuss causes. Things listed were reservoirs and irrigation canals built by the commune, the recent addition of electric pumps, better tillage, increased fertilizer and a new strain of rice with a high yield. Beyond this, the commune organization, and the recent experience in fighting disasters. The secretary thought that good crops would continue and even improve.

INDUSTRIAL BRIEFS

Industrial production moved upward month by month in 1963. Plans for all major items were overfulfilled: 30

percent more tractors, 40.5 percent more fertilizers reached the farms than in 1962. Quality and variety improved; costs in labor and materials were reduced.

* * *

China now designs and builds: coal pits yielding a million tons a year; integrated iron and steel works with 1,500,000 ton capacity; 650,000 kw power-plants, heavy machine tool plants etc. She is 90 percent self-sufficient in steel, 85 percent in machine building.

* * *

China has developed trade with 110 countries. (See *China Reconstructs*, Jan. 1964 for more.)

* * *

Peking, now a major industrial center, made over 400 new products in 1963. Her textile mills produced more than 1,700 new designs in cotton, silk, wool and artificial fibers. Peking Steel Works made 160 new steel products, including nearly 100 kinds of rolled steel. The machine-building industry, a child of the last five years, turned out over 100 new products in 1963, including high precision grinders, giant cranes for construction sites, and specialized equipment for the oil and fertilizer industries. Two new types of pump for deep wells in areas with low water-table, and an easily moved electric transformer station that can be assembled, dismantled and moved about are items popular in the countryside. (Dec. 28)

* * *

Catch up with Shanghai, a slogan sweeping industrial plants, has brought 10,000 skilled workers and technicians from all parts of China to Shanghai to study techniques

and methods of the foremost factories there. Steel, machine-building, power equipment, chemicals, textiles and light industry all send their quotas by arrangement. They compare Shanghai techniques with their own practice to study wherein they lag behind. Shanghai also sent out 900 managers, technicians and workers in four groups to exchange knowledge with Peking, Shenyang, Tientsin and Canton. (Nov. 11)

* * *

Far West Kansu Province, formerly isolated and backward, now manufactures 10,000 industrial products, three times as many as in 1957 and one hundred times pre-Liberation figures, when even nails had to be brought from outside. Ninety percent of consumer goods came from outside the province till 1958. Today Kansu produces not only woolen textiles, thermos bottles, plastics, canned foods, milk products and other consumer goods, but its 75 farm machinery works—there were only five in 1957—mass-produce chemical fertilizer, cement, pumps, diesel engines. (Oct. 30)

* * *

Cotton gins are working three shifts on the new crop of cotton which continues to pour in to the state trading departments though the deliveries contracted were fulfilled a month earlier than usual. The new cotton is already reaching the Shanghai and Tientsin textile mills, which report it unusually white, strong, pure. Bigger acreage, better irrigation, more fertilizer and insecticides made a better crop. (Dec. 28)

* * *

The Yangtze Gorge route between Ichang and Chungking is now marked by seven times as many buoys as in pre-Liberation days. Instead of easily damaged wooden ones these are now iron spars giving accurate data. Signal towers and telecommunications and fog signals have cut the time of this once dangerous passage almost in half, with resultant savings to freight and passengers. (Nov. 1)

GOOD NEWS IN TIBET

Tibetan Peasants and Herdsmen, having gathered their fifth good harvest since the 1959 reform freed the serfs and gave them land, are flocking to some 600 cooperative trading centers in which the state trade organs have tripled the goods to meet the season's demand. They buy cotton weaves from Shanghai, silks from Hangchow, sugar from Yunnan, tea from Szechwan, enamelware and aluminum pots from various industrial centers. **Six farm-implement works now make iron tools in Tibet itself**, where five years ago the serfs still believed that "iron poisons the soil". Iron tools now replace the old wooden sticks.

Health and educational facilities are also spreading on the roof of the world. Some 1,600 Tibetans, many of them former serfs, have graduated as veterinarians for the stock-breeding areas, where many diseases that decimated the herds are being brought under control. **Monasteries are not neglected**; Ganden, one of the historic "Big Three" in Lhasa, has just had the biggest repair job for 554 years, the costs being borne by the Lhasa

municipality. Three other big monasteries got substantial repairs in 1963. But the number of lamas has much decreased. For under the decree of "freedom of person" a lot of them went back to their villages to take up land.

In the West the picture of Tibet given out by the runaway rebel serf-owners in 1959 and by their Indian supporters, still persists.

Anna Louise Strong

Letter Number 14

U.S. IMPERIALISM IN INDO-CHINA

January 15, 1964

Dear friends,

Two good snowfalls in the first half of January cheer everyone in Peking; they are good for the winter wheat. But as I start south for a rest in "tropical China", I know that this same cold wave that blankets most of the country brings to Southeast Asia the dry season, the season for jungle war. The U.S. forces, which illegally intrude by cash and violence in all these lands, are organizing and paying for battles and victims.

I shall note only three: Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, all of which were guaranteed sovereignty, unified integrity and freedom from foreign military bases by the 1954 Geneva Agreements. Into all of them U.S. imperialism intrudes, violating its own pledges:

- In South Vietnam by "special war";**
- In Laos by paid gangsters and assassinations;**
- In Cambodia by subversion.**

In all of these the people resist and the Pentagon gains victims but not victories. In all one recalls Mao Tse-tung's parable of the "Noose", stated some years ago. Whenever U.S. imperialism sets up a military base in a

foreign land, it puts a noose around its own neck, and hands the end of the noose to the people of that country. Then the people begin to pull at the noose.

PENTAGON BUYS VICTIMS, NOT VICTORIES, IN VIETNAM

President Johnson's first foreign policy directive in 1964 was to tell the U.S. forces in South Vietnam to "win the war". This was for the public. Two years ago the Pentagon dropped commandos into North Vietnam; a year ago it talked of bombing Hanoi. Today the anti-American "Liberation Front" claims three-fourths of South Vietnam. The Pentagon's problem now is to hold Saigon.

This is not for want of trying. Washington spends a million and a half daily to kill Vietnamese peasants. It tries out on this unhappy land all the new, nasty ways of slaughter. Thousands of acres of crops are poisoned by potent chemicals dropped from the air, thousands of villages bombed or burned with napalm and their inhabitants confined behind barbed wire in "strategic villages" to "pacify Vietnam in 18 months". American tax-payers, told that they are "giving aid", may think this is winning friends and influencing people!

At the year's end Washington admitted that its war was going badly. U.S. Defense Secretary McNamara, whose whirlwind trip to Saigon in early October before Diem was overthrown and killed, produced the report that the war could be won by 1965, shuttled to Saigon again in December and found the facts "depressing". He still

hoped to "blunt the Communist drive in 1964". There was no talk of "victory".

General James Van Fleet, who once ran the Korean War, spoke more frankly to an AP man in Seoul, Dec. 19: "I don't think we're winning now and it's absolutely impossible to win by 1965." He said the Korean Armistice had been "a defeat for the U.S.A." and that in South Vietnam "the battleground is less favorable".

The officially inspired U.S. press spread a pall of gloom which might be preparing for a change of policy. A vivid, detailed account by David Halberstam filled almost a full page of the *NY Times*, Dec. 23 with what he had seen in fifteen months in Vietnam.

"The communist guerillas hold the initiative, militarily and psychologically, in most rural areas. They levy taxes, obtain food . . . recruit reinforcements. . . With considerable skill . . . they are slowly driving the government forces back into district capitals. . . There are district capitals where government troops do not move from their posts and face the night uneasily."

After analyzing the three main areas — central coastal area, central highlands and Mekong delta — Halberstam found "considerable political turbulence" in the coastal area, where the big anti-government student and Buddhist demonstrations occurred. In the highlands, inhabited by many national minorities, Saigon's "control is much weaker than had originally been thought" and "the Viet Cong are gradually . . . increasing pressure".

In the delta that situation was described as "desperate". This area contains 60 to 70 percent of South Vietnam's rural population; it is where "most of the war takes place". The "communist guerillas" are considered "stronger than they ever were during the French-Indo-

China war". It was here Halberstam found "the Viet Cong flag" flying over a Catholic church not far from Saigon. "It is very simple," said the priest to the U.S. officer and newsman. "You and the Saigon authorities come every three or four months and have tea with me and leave. The Viet Cong are here every night."

Halberstam put his finger on the problem. "Unless the military junta in Saigon takes drastic action in the coming dry season, (which begins in January and lasts four months) it may lose its last chance." Are the generals willing "to pay the price for victory"? They "must accept casualties far heavier than the Diem regime would accept". If they fail, the only alternative is either a use of U.S. combat troops or a "neutralist settlement".

Since President Johnson cannot well face either a catastrophic defeat or a call for more U.S. troops in an election year, the press prepares a way out. The *Washington Post*, Dec. 24 admits that "none of the forms the war might take has long-range promise", and suggests "a settlement based on American strength". This arrogant assumption that Washington can gain at the conference what it has lost in the war is all but incredible.

The simple, decent solution, to get out of a country whose people never wanted them, where the very presence of U.S. troops is a violation of the Geneva Agreements and an increasing aggression, never seems to occur to Washington or the U.S. press. **Certainly any settlement now will not be based on "American strength" that has committed atrocities from end to end of this land, but on the strength of the Vietnamese people.** They have fought victoriously for national independence for 20 years. Twice they won, in 1945 against the Japanese, in 1954 against the French; both times they were cheated of

their victory. If now for the third time they win against the Americans, will they be cheated now?

Here is no space to tell past history of 20 years. **Let us start with December 22, 1960, when there was set up in South Vietnam the "National Liberation Front".**

This is no organization of "communist guerillas", no "Viet Cong"; those are names the Americans give, in ignorance or despite. The **Liberation Front** was formed by three political parties and over twenty social, professional or religious organizations and representatives of minority nationalities. It adopted a program, a flag, and chose an organizing committee. Over a year later the First National Congress was held "somewhere in South Vietnam", Feb. 16 to March 2, 1961. Over 100 regularly elected representatives attended, from regional congresses and national organizations throughout South Vietnam.

Today the flag of the Liberation Front claims three-fourths of the soil of South Vietnam. It was flown even in Saigon in many theaters and restaurants and at one crowded street-crossing on the third anniversary of the Liberation Front, Dec. 22, 1963. It shows a gold star on a horizontally divided ground, half red, half blue. This is the flag Halberstam saw over the Catholic church near Saigon. It flies over local governments democratically elected, which collect taxes, maintain order, set up schools, increase production, and run a "Liberation Press". They defend their "liberated areas" by locally recruited "people's armies" whom the Americans call "Viet Cong", but who beat the American-paid armies by superior morale. For they fight for the independence of their country, and their local leaders are men who have

risen to command in their home districts by abilities shown in twenty years.

The first plank in the Liberation Front's program is "to overthrow . . . the colonial regime of the U.S. imperialists". Other planks demand "a broad, progressive democracy", equality between sexes and among ethnic groups, rent reduction advancing towards land reform, elimination of foreign military bases on Vietnamese soil.

These are the slogans under which they win.

Big victories were claimed by them in 1963, which they call the "Ap Bak Year", naming it for a village unheard of by the outside world. On Jan. 2, 1963, they say, "the U.S. aggressors and their puppets" sent 2,000 armed men, supported by aircraft, armed trucks and artillery, against a small village south of Saigon, named Ap Bak. **They were routed by Ap Bak's 200 armed defenders!**

Ap Bak became a signal! "Study Ap Bak" went the word all over South Vietnam. Today they call Ap Bak the "turning-point" after which people really believed that they could beat the superior U.S. arms.

Their most celebrated victory in 1963 was the destruction of the Soc Trang air-base, the third major U.S. equipped military air-base in South Vietnam, defended by fortifications, heavy machine-guns and a full battalion on guard with another battalion in Soc Trang city, less than two miles away. Armed units of the "people's forces" encircled it on the night of Sept. 9, 1963, cut its communications with the city and "within seconds" destroyed 50 planes on the ground together with an estimated 100 of the enemy troops with accurate mortar fire, and got away before the government forces from the city came. The participants were "officially commended" by the "Regional Committee of the Liberation Front".

I have no way of checking this or any other statements of the "Liberation Press", which claims that 80,000 government troops were "put out of action" in 1963, "as many as in 1961 and 1962 combined"; and that "40,000 puppet troops came over to the people's side". I cannot check the 13,000 "weapons captured" or the hundreds of planes and helicopters downed or even the claim that they "wiped out most of the strategic hamlets — 1,000 of them in November alone". (General McNamara, concedes that a lot of those hamlets were destroyed.)

Nor can I check the *Voice of America's* tale of a "massive air-strike" in the first week of January 1964, by "the biggest concentration of planes ever used in Vietnam", which blasted an area twenty miles south of Saigon and "killed at least 100 Viet Cong". From what I know of similar strikes in China in 1947, I judge the victims were probably women handicapped by babies or old men crippled; experienced young warriors usually got away. But Johnson asked for action, and his new man-in-Vietnam, whom the Americans call "Big Minh", gave him victims. But victims are not victories.

For even while the *Voice of America* gloated over the air-strike, the first big drive on the ground in 1964 against the "Viet Cong" went wrong. Ten battalions set out from Saigon on New Year's Eve to crush the "Communist forces" in Ben Suc region, forty miles to the west. On Jan. 5 the AP reported that the operation was a total failure in the eyes of the American advisers. These said that one battalion just missed annihilation at the start, that the government troops had no morale, while "the Viet Cong are becoming unbelievably cocky".

On the final night of the operation for example, a guerrilla unit lobbed mortar shells "right into the division

command post. They would not have given their positions away so obviously a few months ago," said the American ruefully. **"Now they do it and laugh."**

The Pentagon begins to find itself "caught in the noose" in Vietnam. It cannot win nor easily get out.

LAOS: WIDOWED BY CASH AND VIOLENCE

Thirty to forty "political murders" in Laos in 1963 are locally charged against "the Americans" but only half a dozen made the foreign news. Of these the most important by far was Quinim Pholsena, Foreign Minister in Prince Souvanna Phouma's coalition government, and chairman of the "Party for Peace and Neutrality", chief link between the "neutralists" and the left. He was shot down on the threshold of his home at 9.30 p.m. on April 1, 1963 and his wife fell wounded beside him, as they returned from a party given by the king.

Pholsena was an abler and more militant "neutralist" than Phouma, but he was a commoner who rose by ability. Laos, still feudal, needed as premier a prince. Pholsena saved Phouma's government for him in December 1960 when Washington for the third time kicked Phouma out. The artillery of General Nosavan, America's man, was pounding the capital so Prince Phouma fled to Cambodia and most of his cabinet went along. But when Washington indecently recognized Nosavan two days before he got the capital, Quinim Pholsena went on the official "Voice of Laos" as Minister of Information to tell the world that Phouma's government was still the

legal government and that he himself, as senior cabinet minister, was acting premier till Phouma's return. In the two days of Vientiane's fall, he rallied the civil servants and took enough of them north to form a new capital, still equipped with the "Voice of Laos" transmitter to rally the people.

Then the Pathet Lao joined in and the "united patriotic front" beat Nosavan back, bringing about a "Fourteen Nations Conference on Laos" in Geneva to which Pholsena went as head of the neutralists' delegation. He became foreign minister in the "Government of National Union" that emerged. He had to fight the Americans, point by point, for the sovereignty of Laos. So the Americans were against him from the first.

The assassin, a 19-year-old soldier named Cong, was one of Pholsena's house-guards who didn't even try to run away. He took refuge in the house of Prince Phouma and bragged of his deed. Pholsena's friends and widow believe that he was seduced and trained for the murder by Major Sing, commander of the guards on Pholsena's house, who "sold out to the Americans", but is still considered "one of Phouma's men".

The 42-year-old widow, mother of twelve children, and also president of the Laotian Women's Association, is still recovering from her wounds in a small ground floor apartment in Peking where she gave me a memorable interview. Eight of her children are with her in China; I heard the cheerful bustle as some of them came back from primary school in the afternoon. She intends to return to her work in Laos as soon as she can; she says there is "much to do". The doctors say that she — her feet were shattered by bullets so that she could not stand — will be walking normally in about two years.

She is a short, plump woman with black hair close about a motherly face; her black skirt and sweater suggest practical work rather than mourning. She discusses calmly the causes of the murder that wrecked her family life. Her husband's murder had been preceded by other "political murders", one of a Col. Ketsana, a right-wing neutralist. His assassin was never known but rumors were spread that Pholsena was to blame.

"I think the Americans did it," said Mrs. Pholsena. "Ketsana was known as their man but had become very unpopular and hence useless. I think they wanted to get rid of him and thus provoke murders of the real neutralists." Nobody really knows.

When Mrs. Pholsena fell by her husband's body, she lay in anguish, unable to rise for both feet were shattered. She shouted until the terrified servants gained courage to open the door. An aged man-servant carried her in and laid her on the cement floor of the dining-room. Since blood from her feet was drenching the floor he got a mattress and laid her on it. When the mattress was soaked with blood, he brought a sheet and then another sheet. Meantime the servants carried her husband's body past her into the room beyond.

She wanted to send or phone for aid but the house-guards said that Major Sing, their commander, had gone away, leaving word to admit nobody and phone to nobody until he returned. Outside the house her neighbor, Minister of Information Vongvichit, heard the shots and tried to enter but the guards prevented. Vongvichit wondered whether the entire household, including the children, had been slain. Mrs. Pholsena later learned that before the murder, Sing had been drinking with

rightist colleagues to its success. She wanted him brought to trial but this was not done.

She did not mention the children until I asked her. Then she said: "Four of them were in the house, the youngest. I shouted for them: 'Children, your father is killed, come to your mother.' The girl of six and the boy of five came; the youngest two remained in bed. After a time the nurse took the others back again."

Major Sing returned at midnight bringing with him Prince Phouma and four cabinet ministers, three of them neutralists and the fourth Vongvichit, her neighbor, of the Pathet Lao. The wounded woman at once asked Phouma for medical aid but he went past her to the room where her husband's body lay and the others followed. "It seemed they wanted to know if he was really dead." After a time they returned and she again demanded a doctor. Then Phouma turned to Keola, Minister of Health, and said: "Perhaps you can arrange something."

"Prince Phouma then went away and I never saw him again," said the widow with a touch of bitterness. "Eleven days I lay in Vientiane before I left and had no word or help from Phouma or his government."

At two in the morning they finally took her to the hospital for a brief operation on her feet and brought her home at 4.30 a.m. where the guards again made trouble about letting her in. I asked in surprise why she had not stayed in the hospital. "It was Nosavan's hospital," she said. "If I stayed there alone they might kill me. If I came home I could borrow guards from Vongvichit. The Pathet Lao are reliable."

When daylight followed that night of horror the relatives that came to help were still not admitted to the

house. Not until a cabinet meeting was held and had ruled on the matter were Pholsena's relatives permitted to go to his widow and arrange his funeral. He was cremated and the ashes buried seven days after his death.

"After this it was very unsafe to stay in Vientiane so I considered where to go and on whom to rely. And since the Chinese showed concern, I applied to go for medical care to China, since they are the most reliable."

For a Chinese plane to come to Laos for her would have made a scandal, though American planes fly all the time to help Nosavan's war campaigns. Mrs. Pholsena was taken to Hanoi on a plane of the International Control Commission, paying her own way since her government gave no help. In Hanoi a special plane from China came for her "with a bed and well equipped". Hanoi supplied an accompanying doctor. She reached Peking at two in the morning and was taken direct to hospital. Her baby daughter, less than two years old, travelled with her; seven other children joined her in Peking.

Her belief that Vientiane was unsafe for her was well founded. Quinim's murder was followed by thirty more, for which it almost seemed the signal. The most important was the neutralist police chief of Vientiane, whose murder on April 12th left the capital entirely in Nosavan's hands, so that both Vongvichit and Prince Souphanouvong, though cabinet ministers, felt obliged to go north for safety.

Meantime 27 officers and men of the "Youth Battalion" were murdered April 5th in the Plain of Jars, in what became known as "the confusion". Facts will be long in coming. Averill Harriman, U.S. Asst. Secretary of State, spoke cynically of "neutralists killing each other". The Pathet Lao radio revealed that "5 U.S. officers,

6 Australian officers, over 20 French officers, 8 Kuomintang officers went north with some of Nosavan's gangsters to cause trouble'. Wilfred Burchett, the Australian writer, reported that contingents of Nosavan's forces "deserted" to Kong Le's "neutralists" and then took control from within, killing the real neutralists. This type of "trouble" is publicized in CIA manuals. Nor is the trouble over. On Dec. 6, 1963, the neutralist intelligence chief in Vientiane was shot down as he came home at midnight. The assassin blocked him by a car with blazing headlights; he was never caught.

I asked Mrs. Pholsena what she meant by saying "the Americans" caused her husband's murder. Was it any special organization such as the CIA? She replied that it was the "Joint Office", a large building in Vientiane "where many armed men come and go".

The word "joint", she explained, meant that it handled armed forces of many nations, all paid by the Americans. I thus identified the Military Aid Advisory Group (M.A.A.G.) alleged to include 1,600 U.S. "advisers", controlling 3,500 Thai military, 1,000 KMT troops, 500 Filipino agents, several hundred South Vietnamese troops. "All these and Nosavan's gangs are paid by the Americans," she said.

"Is this legal in Laos?" I asked in surprise.

"Of course it is not legal; it is against the Geneva Agreements. But Prince Phouma never disputes the Americans. The 'Joint Office' is more powerful than his government. They have the money and arms. They buy up many of the upper strata in Laos. At first they offered Quinim a million U.S. dollars as 'aid' to his 'Party of Peace and Neutrality'. He knew what they meant; he

refused. He was killed because he would not sell the sovereignty of Laos and become vassal to the Americans."

"Why then did he support Prince Phouma, who yields always to the Americans? Why do you support him still?"

"This Phouma government is the best we could get in Geneva," she replied. "It is better than we had before. Under Nosavan in Pakse, my brother-in-law was killed openly by a U.S. soldier with a grenade because he was head of the Pakse Committee for Peace and Neutrality. When Nosavan ruled Vientiane unchallenged in 1961, and we went north with our government, American soldiers came openly to our Vientiane house and killed the 18-year-old nephew we left in charge.

"Now the Americans no longer dare kill openly; they assassinate through hirelings. This is already a gain. Even if Prince Phouma is weak and his government and the Agreements are little more than a name, yet in this name we awaken and educate the people. We demand that the U.S. military get out of Laos, that assassins be brought to justice, that Vientiane have a joint police of all three parties and not be run by Nosavan's gangsters, that honest elections be held. We do not get these demands, but we agitate in the name of the promised sovereignty and neutrality of Laos, and teach the people what is right and what is wrong.

"Meantime we build in the countryside our 'liberated areas' with village elections and schools. Nosavan keeps attacking them with U.S. aid, but we defend."

She gave me a map and showed me the "Liberated Areas". They hold four-fifths of Laos. The long narrow strip of rice-lands along the Mekong with the chief cities is held by Phouma's government under constant U.S.

pressure; but the great bulk of Laos, the hills and jungles with forty-odd national minorities is "liberated". It acknowledges Phouma's government but defends against Nosavan's troops. Into it Americans penetrate by clearly illegal air-flights.

It is a complex struggle but better than when "the Americans" dared kill openly.

CAMBODIA REJECTS U.S. AID AND ENTERTAINS THE NEIGHBORS

Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia continues to instruct and entertain the neighbors at Uncle Sam's expense. In Letter No. 12 I told how he proved by testimony in a mass rally that the U.S. was planning and financing the attempt by the "Free Khmer" conspiracy to overthrow his government and assassinate the prince himself. (Two plots to assassinate were discovered in recent years with indications that implicated the U.S.A.) Cambodia therefore demanded the withdrawal of all American military, economic and cultural aid and asked that its organizations get out of the country. However, **in view of its friendship and respect for the "American people", Cambodia would "continue diplomatic relations"**.

Washington, embarrassed, began to placate little Cambodia; neighbor nations looked on.

When the shot fired in Dallas was heard around the world, Cambodia declared three days mourning, a gesture only surpassed by Moscow's thirty days. But when Thailand's Premier Sarit died soon after, Cambodians celebrated this passing of an inveterate enemy by vaca-

tions in offices and schools. An American monitor claimed that the Cambodian radio had hailed not only the deaths of Sarit and of Ngo Dinh Diem, but of "their great boss". Cambodia denied this, but a Mr. Post of U.S. State denounced Cambodia's "barbarism", and the U.S. Embassy demanded a flat statement of whether Cambodia rejoiced over Pres. Kennedy's death. At these "insults", **Cambodia withdrew its diplomatic personnel from Washington, demanding apologies!** There have been sundry exchanges since.

Meantime, Sihanouk, in "rallies" and journals, tells Cambodians and anyone who cares to listen, the facts of "American aid".

He says it is only \$20 million, not \$34 million as the Western press declares. Two-thirds is economic, the rest military. The military aid is second-class arms, much worse than the U.S. gives the enemies, Thailand and South Vietnam, who harass Cambodia on both sides.

The economic aid is chiefly in commodities the U.S. wants to sell; the U.S. must approve the list. The U.S. approves the luxuries rich Cambodians want but not the factories the nation needs. Some "aid" is in cash dollars, but most of this goes for "expenses" of U.S. personnel to rent big villas from the rich at expanded prices. The rich profit but not the nation.

The *Voice of America*, on the defensive, says that Sihanouk is a "brash, immature young man" but "we must be patient with little Cambodia". Cambodia is little, all right, only six million people under pressures by the Great Colossus on all sides. But "immature" seems hardly the word for Sihanouk. He delights Cambodians by his wit and courage, instructs all Asia in the nature of "U.S. aid", gets China's pledge of "all-out support" against any

invasion by "U.S. vassals", and meantime gets offers of military and economic aid "on generous terms" from de Gaulle! *Reuters* and *AFP* on Jan. 6, 7 reported from Cambodia's capital French offers of "substantial aid", including a loan to finance economic projects, and "a complete armored squadron of latest type, and 18 planes".

Not bad for a "brash" young prince of a poor country.

Yours,

Anna Louise Strong

Letter Number 15

LONG VIEW FROM HAINAN ISLAND

February 20, 1964

Dear friends,

I am writing from a coconut grove on the south tip of Hainan Island, where I swim almost daily in the clear water of the South Pacific on a sandy tropical beach. Mail is a week late: world news comes thinly by radio. Deprived of detail, one seeks the long view.

Chou En-lai's African tour (*see below*), worldwide cheers for **Panamanians** (*see page 83*), and **French recognition of China** were major January events indicating that 1964 may see decisive change in the line-up of world forces. Many other lesser signs appear.

- 1) **Lamas in Tibet in prayer for Panamanians.**
- 2) **Presidents of Togo, Niger, Ivory Coast** send cordial notes to Chou En-lai.
- 3) Cairo paper *Al Ahram* runs front-page banner headline: "**The U.S. is not God's shadow on the earth.**"
- 4) Brash President of **Zanzibar's new People's Republic** personally arrests U.S. Embassy official.

Some items may seem trifles but they are what Chinese call "spring thunder", the prelude to spring. All indicate U.S. imperialism's decline.

Togo, Niger, Ivory Coast became nations in 1960. They may not be on your map but they have U.N. votes. They hardly knew China existed: they followed France and recognized Taiwan. When Chou, en route to Mali, flew over these countries, he radioed a courteous greeting. The presidents, also courteous, answered. This might be how "recognitions" begin.

Zanzibar, east African island, 300,000 people, threw out its sultan and set up a "people's republic"; its president arrested a U.S. Embassy official for "subversive acts". This is an old port of the Arab slave trade which hunted African slaves in lands that are now Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika.

Paris-Peking Diplomatic Exchange came at the end of January. It clearly marks decline of U.S. influence even among its allies. Washington deplored but tried to steer it into "recognition of two Chinas"—and failed completely. Moscow welcomed it coolly. Laos, Cambodia, Burma, Indonesia greeted it as stabilizing peace in South-east Asia. Japan, Canada and others are watching to see if they want to follow. Shrewd Europeans comment that France, as well as China, thus "re-emerges" as an independent "great power".

Hainan Island, Feb. 10, 1964

CHOU EN-LAI SEEKS FRIENDSHIP AND KNOWLEDGE

It was in Cairo December 20 at his first press conference that Premier Chou En-lai told correspondents of many nations that "the purpose of our African trip is to

seek friendship and cooperation, to understand more and learn more". Like most of Chou's statements, this was honest, modest, yet meant very much.

Commentators in Europe were quick to recognize this African trip as a "major international event". Those are the words of Alvarez del Vayo, himself a diplomat of note in the days of the Spanish Republic, writing now in the *National Guardian*. "No trip of this magnitude has ever been undertaken by a Chinese leader. It has broken the isolation imposed by Washington. It is publicized by every radio station and newspaper of consequence in Europe."

The British press, in del Vayo's analysis, saw "a new offensive phase in China's postwar history". The French said: "From now on, all countries that have interests in Africa will have to take China into account." The Italians commented: "**No one should underestimate the diplomatic capabilities of Chou En-lai.**" The Swiss judged: "The entire policy of other great powers towards Arab, African and Asian countries will have to be reappraised in the light of this tour and its vast consequences."

The American press generally tended to slight the trip, picking out supposed failures in gaining supposed "aims". It was quick to note a "coolness" in the Tunis reception, yet the diplomatic recognition gained in Tunis was headlined as "the first tangible gain" of the tour. From China's view the "gains" began with the first hour.

First let me note that all my Chinese friends felt "sympathy" with Chou En-lai in his "many ordeals". Chinese are realists; they like Chou En-lai and they know that this tour was no easy junket. The many unfamiliar foods and drinks he was required to appreciate were a hazard in themselves. The number of factories, dams, con-

structions and banquets he had to take in every day was enough to exhaust a major league athlete. Yet Premier Chou had at all times to be tactful, gracious, appreciative and at his best, for the sake not only of China. For the sake of Afro-Asian unity in the forward march of man.

Chou En-lai is China's leading expert in finding common ground. This is the great, difficult task of diplomats. You recall how in 1936, when Chiang Kai-shek was kidnapped by some of his own forces in Sian and many people clamored for his death, it was Chou who hastened down from the Red areas — against which Chiang was fighting — to secure both Chiang's release and, with it, an anti-Japanese coalition to resist Japan's invasion and occupation of China.

You recall how, much later, Chou helped create Afro-Asian unity against imperialism in Bandung in April 1955. That famous conference opened in conflicts, incited by the U.S.A. Romulo, from the Philippines, attacked "the imperialism of socialist nations", a taunt aimed at Chou En-lai, and the world's reporters rushed to Chou for an answer to put into headlines. Chou's calm reply: "I did not come to quarrel; I came for the success of all the people here," set the tone that became the unity of Bandung.

On the present African tour, Chou's first stop was **Cairo**. Here the West hoped for friction; and the press conference hurled provocative questions from all the world. This was duck soup for Chou; he answers questions easily. He also held several talks with Nasser, was cheered by the populace of Port Said, and workers on the Aswan Dam. Some words he spoke to educational workers on "Education Day", are worth recording for history.

He reminded Egyptian educators of the past two thousand years in which "the Chinese people, the Arab

people and other peoples of Africa and Asia made valuable contributions by their diligence and wisdom to the development of human civilization". Only in recent times "were our civilizations trampled upon" by Western imperialism. "Once the Asian and African people have taken destiny into their own hands, they will catch up with Western countries and even surpass them and contribute to a new civilization of mankind."

Al Ahram of Cairo commented Dec. 16: "Despite differences of social and political systems, (we found) common objectives . . . crushing imperialism in all its forms, banishing racial discrimination and danger of nuclear war. These objectives are still the axis of Sino-U.A.R. friendship."

In the very long joint statement issued by the U.A.R. and China one notes that the Bandung Conference was hailed as "the major turning-point in the history of Afro-Asian peoples, with its ten principles laying the foundation of peaceful coexistence among them and opening the way to — cooperation against imperialism and . . . for world peace". Another such conference was discussed. Chou told the press that "Nasser and myself agreed" that good preparations were needed to make such a conference succeed. The methods, said Chou, that made Bandung a success, would apply also to any second conference. These are: 1) to seek common ground, while keeping our differences; 2) let Asian and African countries settle their own problems without intervention by imperialism.

So much was taken from Cairo; a good base.

* * *

The welcome in **Algeria** was informal and enthusiastic. The London *Observer*, Dec. 29, called Chou's visit there

“an outstanding success”, adding that Chou “managed to establish an easy intimacy with President Ben Bella as the two tramped side by side through factories, farms and orphans’ homes”.

This is not surprising, for China was the first country outside the Arab bloc to recognize revolutionary Algeria in the days when Moscow refused to do so, while French Communists fought in the army against the Algerian Liberation Front. So now Algiers made Chou En-lai an “honorary citizen” and rechristened a main boulevard formerly named for a French governor, as “Avenue Pekin”. People leaped for joy in the streets while women from balconies shouted the traditional welcome, “Yu, yu, yu”, an unforgettable scene.

“China is an example for all young nations” was the theme of an article in the newspaper of the Liberation Front, which called the Chinese “the people of miracles”. And though the Algerian Communist Party is banned because of its history of opposition to the Algerian armed struggle, Chou En-lai was invited to speak to a special gathering of the cadres of the ruling Liberation Front to give them the benefit of China’s experiences and principles.

In **Morocco**, a monarchy normally aligned with the West, Chou found common ground in “the struggle of the Afro-Asian people against colonialism and racism, for economic independence and prosperity, for the prohibition of nuclear weapons and for general disarmament”. After two days in which he agreed with King Hassan and his prime minister on all these basic matters, Chou flew to **Albania** on the last day of 1963, in time for New Year’s Eve.

Chou danced and drank 1964 in at three different parties in Tirana, first with the Textile Workers, then at the Army Officers Club, then the Writers and Artists Union — all this in addition to the airport welcome, the cheers in the streets and the formal banquet. It was a good record even for Chou! But he is an excellent dancer and could do Albanian folk dances on sight; he is also an experienced drinker of toasts. Albania, though small, is a staunch ally in the ideological struggle and Chou owed them — and gave them — a really hilarious New Year.

In the next eight days he visited mining towns, border cities, factories. If any Albanian remained of its million and a half population who failed to cheer Chou personally, he was probably unable to walk. It is alleged that Chou also “rested” in Albania. I can’t imagine when.

Tunis was arranged suddenly; Chou stopped two days on his way to Ghana. Western reporters noted with triumph that President Bourguiba in his greeting mentioned “differences” with China on the Test Ban and the Indian border. Chou took the “differences” as cheerfully as if they were a distinction. “We have differences,” he agreed, “but we have also common ground.” He proved this by establishing diplomatic relations. The tour of North Africa was complete!

Black Africa began for Chou with **Ghana**, where Chou noted “the enthusiasm, courage and vigor” with which the African people are “taking their destiny into their own hands”. He commented also on their “industrial and cultural progress. He said: “To win full independence, we African and Asian countries must first of all rely on the efforts of our own people.” Ghana newspapers noted that it was quite nice of Chou to visit President Nkrumah

just after the latter had almost been killed by an assassin's bullet, "instigated by imperialism".

The joint communique from Ghana seemed an advance on all that went before. Agreement was stated on imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, general disarmament, the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons, the settlement of international issues through negotiation and Afro-Asian solidarity. It was agreed that an Afro-Asian conference of nations like that of Bandung was not only desirable, but "necessary", and that "active preparations for it should begin". China and Ghana also agreed "to explore" the chances of a joint Afro-Asian-Latin American anti-imperialist conference.

When I left Peking on January 22 for Hainan Island, Chou was just leaving **Mali**. This country, which may not even be on your map, gained both name and independence only in 1960. It has four million people and a very intelligent president named Keita who said that "in Africa we need to make haste for we stand at the crossroads between two worlds, the under-developed world to which we belong, and the developed world which rushes towards the conquest of space before having solved the problems of subsistence and development of mankind on this planet".

President Keita welcomed Chou with a 21-gun salute and Chou was able to mention "the ancient culture" of Mali before the colonialists came. Keita, in reply, chose to publicize for all West Africa that "China understands the two aspects of the great battle for liberation, the political and the economic", and to praise "the low cost of China's technical aid, the speed and competence with which the projects undertaken are carried out, the readiness of the Chinese technicians to adapt to the life of the

country" and the fact that Chinese aid is "without the slightest interference in our internal affairs".

When Ben Bella, in Algiers thanked China for "being the first to give aid", Chou replied: "It was our duty . . . it was mutual; your victory helps ours. . . ." In Mali after President Keita spoke at such length of China's aid, Chou explained in greater detail: "We never consider such aid as unilateral. It is reciprocal. By using this aid the friendly new emerging countries gradually develop their national economy, free themselves from colonialist domination and increase the strength of the anti-imperialist forces of the world — this is a great support and aid to China."

This is an important statement of policy. It is also revolutionary diplomacy of a high order. It makes clear the common ground between China and the national liberation movements of the world.

WORLDWIDE CHEERS FOR PANAMANIAN

For 60 years it seemed most biddable of nations. Historians, looking back, trace resentment all the years. It flared Jan. 9 when U.S. troops shot Panamanians for raising their flag in the Canal Zone. It became worldwide. It is impressive that nobody supported Washington. Egypt cheered Panama, recalling Suez. Even Britain was pleased to see Uncle Sam in similar trouble.

China at once backed Panama: cheers re-echoed, linked everywhere with local issues. In Japan, with protests against U.S. bases; in Indonesia with protests against

the U.S. Seventh Fleet. In Laos and South Vietnam the "people's armies" greet Panamanians as comrades-in-arms against U.S. intervention. One notes typical differences: Moscow's response was a university rally and resolution to the U.N.; Chinese boiled into the streets and cabled Panamanians direct.

When sixteen million Chinese, twenty times Panama's population, came out in parades and rallies from Canton to Harbin, Shanghai to Sinkiang, I personally thought it excessive: after all, people must work. But when the big monasteries of Lhasa said prayers for the Panamanian martyrs, I was really awed. How fast human thought can echo around our planet! How fast the world's people, white, black, brown, yellow, become "conscious" of their role as "makers of history"! It seemed to strengthen Panama and embarrass the Colossus.

EAST RIVER ADVENTURE

I reached East River in South China by misadventure or decision of heaven, according to view. I had no intent to visit it when we took off from Peking at noon January 21, due in Canton about 9 p.m. But black fog struck Canton in our hour of arrival, the thickest in years. We circled, plunged, longed for a sign that our universe existed, some light of star, of street-lamp, of peasant home.

Then floodlights changed this black of outer space to fantastic confusion of brown and yellow forms like radio-active ruins of a planet. Into this we dived. Twice I felt we landed, once we really did, but took off at once when

the pilot saw we were not on a runway but almost on top of a station building. Radio-chat said earth could be found in Hweiyang, 150 km. away.

By the time we found wet, misty but visible earth in Hweiyang, it was nearly eleven. A big county bus was alongside, the district chief was coming by car to the rescue. By the time we rearranged the passengers' plans, and got the luggage for six "foreign guests" who had to take the Hongkong train next morning, but whose tickets and documents were in Canton, we reached our county guest-house beds at 2 a.m.

Meantime we learned geography. So, when our hostess came at seven to say that the plane would leave for Canton at eight, I replied that I would spend the day in Hweiyang and reach Canton by auto. For already I knew that this was the new capital of a "special district" of 11 counties with 4 million people, formed last June for the purpose of taming the notorious East River, to turn the most disaster-prone section of Kwangtung Province into a prosperous area.

Hweiyang had been handed to me by heaven. District chairman Kuo had come all the way to the airport at midnight to help; he was available for interview.

Said Kuo: "This is a disaster area almost every year. Under natural conditions, if we lack rain for a month, one-fifth of our five million *mou* of rice land shrivels; but if it rains hard, our low-lying areas are flooded. In a normal year, one-fifth of our land suffers from drought while one-tenth is inundated."

Such are the "natural conditions" which the "special district" was formed last year to correct, with the county town of Hweiyang as district capital, because it is cen-

trally located on East River, convenient for communications. The task, of course, will take years.

Before Liberation, said Kuo, **some localities along the river protected themselves by dykes but there was no unified plan.** After Liberation, these dykes were connected and built higher and stronger; by 1956 the area could resist a minor flood. Some reservoirs were then built against flood, some also for irrigation and a few for power. Of these the chief was Sinfunkiang, a big provincial project, begun in 1958 and finished in 1960; it impounds ten billion cu. meters of water at the northern end of the area, helps check floods and also gives power for Canton and other cities. None of this much helps irrigation.

The boom in "water projects" began in 1958 with the communes. Most reservoirs in the area date from 1958-60. They were built by local communes or counties for their own irrigation needs, with some aid from the province in materials like steel and cement. Local enterprise in the East River District built from 1956 to June 1963 one "large" reservoir of 100 million cu. meters capacity, 20 "medium" reservoirs from 10 to 100 million cu. meters, 203 "small" reservoirs, of 1 to 10 million capacity, and 13,743 "ponds" below a million cu. meters in size.

The total capacity of these local reservoirs comes to **1,300,000,000 cu. meters, a sizable achievement for peasant enterprise.** But this is only enough to irrigate some 335,000 acres of rice paddy; in a dry year the district needs irrigation for twice that area. This cannot all be reached by gravity irrigation: it needs pumps. "Only by 1962," said Kuo, "did we begin to have considerable rural electrification. Now we have 473 electric pumping and draining stations with a total of 24,100 kilowatts of power besides 235 diesel stations with 7,431 horsepower. Electric

power will now rapidly increase. So it becomes possible to plan the entire area."

Meantime the district twice had to battle with nature, in 1959 against flood, in 1963 against drought. Each time the communes' new strength and facilities won a victory; in neither case was it complete.

The East River flood of 1959 was historic: the record of centuries shows no such flood. A typhoon from the sea was halted by a cold front in the mountains and dropped 700 mm. (28 in) of water over most of Hweiyang County in a day, followed by seven more days of heavy rain. "The rivers rose out of their beds and came into the second storeys of the houses in the county town. Over 334,000 acres of crops were inundated," said Kuo. "We had no reservoir protection at the time."

This flood brought out the Chinese airforce to drop rafts and relief to people in the water. It came in mid-June, and destroyed over 200,000 tons of early rice just ready to harvest. In earlier days the ruined crop would have remained on the land for months, preventing autumn sowing. The communes fought back; they succeeded in draining the land in 20 to 30 days and got in a good crop of late rice. This was hailed as a significant victory.

Drought smote Kwangtung in 1963. East River was one of the two worst areas. In places the drought lasted 270 days, from autumn 1962 till late summer 1963. In nine months the rainfall was 209 mm. against a normal rainfall of 652 mm. and the evaporation was 961 mm. The same drought hit Hongkong, which borders Hweiyang District. Hongkong brought water by tankers from Kwangtung Province, and gave its city people three hours of water every four days; the farms in the Hongkong area reported only a 25 percent crop.

"Our communes fought that drought from early March till late autumn harvest," said Kuo. "When reservoirs and streams ran dry, they made temporary dams on rivers to raise the water level, they dug wells, they used water carefully to water every shoot. Our early rice ran well below that of 1962, but our late crop in part made up for it. Taking both crops, we had 90 percent of a normal year. The province came to our aid, declared us a disaster area, cut grain deliveries 40 percent and helped our hungriest spots plant sweet potatoes for extra food.

"We fed ourselves and delivered grain to the state and even had a surplus," said Kuo.

Kuo admits that not everyone fed very well. "But we drew contrasts with the past when, in lesser drought, whole villages ate bark, and families sold homes and children. We also looked across the border and saw the earth cracking in Kowloon. **We saw that our system is better than the system in Hongkong.**"

It was victory, but not good enough. This is why the "special district" was created in June 1963, combining eleven counties and one township with Hweiyang county town as the capital. These counties contain the entire East River system from its mountain sources to the sea. They have made a five-year plan to solve permanently the problem of drought, waterlogging and normal flood control. This involves building three more "big" reservoirs, 20 "medium", 94 "small" and over 10,000 "ponds".

"Will it handle a flood like that of 1959?" I asked. Kuo replied flatly: "No." A flood like that of 1959 has come only once in centuries. The system now planned would relieve it, but to handle it fully would require very serious reconstruction of the upper river basin. It would be very costly and perhaps unsafe. The area is subject to

earthquakes and the weight of water would be heavy. This is being studied but will not be included in present plans. It is not yet considered prudent.

Under the present plan the district will have spent by 1968 from **\$120 to \$170 per acre for permanent water-control** of its cultivated lands. This is a tremendous investment in any nation. How can a "disaster area" like Hweiyang afford so much? Kuo gave the answer:

"Only about 30 percent of this cost is cash. Some 70 percent is labor, at the ordinary commune rate per labor day, done by the peasants in slack time."

The economics behind this seemed even more impressive than the investment! Each working peasant is paid by his commune with an extra share of the crop. Each commune is paid by its permanent investment in irrigation and drainage. This is China's invention, her economic secret by which the peasants of a disaster area can invest \$120 per acre to secure their fields.

* * *

I thought of a delta further south where the third puppet regime in months is installed in Saigon, trying even harder than its predecessors to blast its own countryside with poisonous chemicals from the air at Washington's orders. Thousands of tons of more potent chemicals came recently, with orders to step up the killing. I thought of the U.S. Seventh Fleet prowling the China Seas.

I wondered how the East River farmers could work so calmly. What a target they make for the Pentagon! Where else can the sustenance of so many people be so quickly blasted, with their dykes, reservoirs, power lines and close-planted crops?

The Chinese know all this but they work right on without even any fall-out shelters, building up soil and water and livelihood for the generations. They trust the joint, persistent labor of men, the clear, non-aggressive policies of their government, the conscience of the world's people. In what else can men trust?

Anna Louise Strong

Letter Number 16

COMING NORTH

April 25, 1964

Dear friends,

The south shore of Hainan grows hot in March. So I left the beautiful cocoanut grove and the tropic beach and came north by auto on the eastern road to Haiko, the island's capital and northern port. Within two hours we rose over the east slope of the Five Finger Mountain which guards the south shore from the northern air-currents, and dropped through a drenching fog and rain to Shinlung State Farm, a tropical farm that seemed chilly after the dry warm south shore.

Shinlung runs a hostel for guests with a hot spring that one day is expected to become a workers' sanatorium. One stops there for the night and takes a look at the farm. It is owned by the National Overseas Chinese Commission, through which the state put up some 11 million yuan and 20,000 acres of undeveloped jungle with a climate suitable for tropical crops. The labor was done largely by Overseas Chinese coming back from lands to which their ancestors went as contract labor.

The first group of pioneers came in 1951 from Malaya, jailed and deported by the British. They were in such hurry to start work that they reached the spot in a

rainstorm and stood up all night in the rain afraid to lie down for fear of snakes. At dawn they began cutting long jungle grass, tying it in bundles to make roofs on poles.

And now there are 12,000 people here, operating a prosperous farm of 15,000 reclaimed acres, with buildings, roads and tropical crops and another 5,000 acres of jungle yet to reclaim. They have hospital, clinics, assembly hall, and schools for everyone from nurseries for babies up to an agricultural technical school whose graduates go right into jobs or higher education. They have twice the population and cultivated land that I saw here in 1960. There are other such farms on Hainan; Shinlung, as pioneer, provides experience and nursery stock for all.

Next day we reached Haiko by five hours' drive and spent the night, awaiting the morning plane to Canton. I had a talk with two workers from the local Rubber Goods Factory who were just back from a visit they had made to Shanghai to gain "advanced technique"; I shall tell about them when I write about Shanghai. I also picked up facts about Hainan Island's agriculture.

The tropical weather here favors all-year farming, but double-cropping in the past was difficult for lack of water, since rains are uneven and irrigation lacked. Since Liberation many reservoirs and canals have been made, four-fifths of them by the communes in the past five years. Irrigation now reaches 532,500 acres, some 53.5 percent of the cultivated land; the work done this past winter will bring the irrigated area up to 56 percent.

The island's reservoirs held reserves of water through six months of drought and this brought a 1963 rice crop that totalled ten percent higher than in 1962, despite

the worst drought since the turn of the century. Hainan peasants feed themselves but do not try to feed the city or industrial population even on the island; these are more rationally supplied from the grain reserves of Kwangtung Province. For Hainan is a treasure house for tropical crops.

Next day we flew to Canton and spent a week, mostly visiting communes. Much of this may be told in later letters but bits will enliven the comments below.

SOME COMMENTS ON THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S COMMUNES

It seems time for some comments on the communes. They form the base of China's rural life today but are badly understood abroad. A Latin American friend just back from Cuba tells me that people everywhere asked about the communes, and many thought they had failed and been abandoned. When U.S. press and Khrushchov both sneer at communes, what are Cubans to believe?

So it must be said flatly:

First, the communes exist; they arose in 1958 and are now in their sixth year; **with every year they have grown stronger** and more adapted to their tasks.

Second, they exist in basically the same form in which they appeared which was hailed by the Communist Party's resolution in Wuhan in December 1958 as "a new social organization fresh as the morning sun above the broad horizon of East Asia". They survived three years of the worst natural disasters of the century which struck when the communes had just been organized and

were still hardly stabilized and hence most vulnerable. Foreign critics try to blame the bad crops on the communes, but the Chinese know that, while some mistakes of some communes in some areas added to the difficulties, **the communes basically were the force that saved the country, preventing disasters from becoming widespread famine.**

Changes of course have occurred in the communes; all living forms change. What is surprising and what I only realized recently is that none of the changes make it necessary to retract a single paragraph of the first Party resolutions that described the communes in 1958. I have just been asked to prepare a second edition of my book on "The Rise of the Chinese People's Communes" written in early 1959. To my surprise the only change I had to make was to put a footnote to the 1958 grain statistics, which were long ago admitted to be wrong. The basic form and basic aims remain.

Even more, the communes not only still fulfill the description and purposes outlined in 1958 by the two historic resolutions of the Chinese Communist Party — in Peitaiho on August 29th, 1958 and in Wuhan in December of the same year — but they still embody all the aspirations which the peasants at that time expressed in their wildest dreams.

The view that men by community organization can prevail over heaven was expressed in the ringing peasant slogan, "Man's will, not heaven, decides." This is still the profound faith, but is sought more clearly in terms of years of steady mechanization, more fertilizer and increased water-control. The women still seek freedom from the ancient household drudgery and find it in the fact that the commune's processing of grain relieves the farm-

wife from substituting for the donkey at the old dizzy task of dragging the heavy grinding stones around and around. Other household drudgery is lessened by the increasing electrification and the better handling of water which no longer has to be carried so far on shoulder-poles. Nurseries and kindergartens maintained by the communes are also a liberation for the women. Only the public dining-rooms which in 1958 swept the rural areas have been greatly diminished, for the family kitchens were found to be needed, especially in the north where the same heat cooks and warms the home, but public meals for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, workshops and seasonally for field gangs still lighten the household burden and collective kitchens are organized on a small scale by neighbors, a tendency likely to increase.

Even the shout for "free grain" which in late 1958 swept the rural areas, expressing the faith that famine was conquered, and that now in the communes nobody would ever starve — a demand which most peasants at the time felt more essential than even their own personal wages — was never really given up. For while the actual free distribution of grain led to much waste and was soon stopped, usually within a few months, it is replaced today by a careful handling of a "welfare fund" to ensure that nobody in the "team" shall lack food.

Since each change in the commune, made by its members for improvement, has been greeted abroad as a "liquidation", I must briefly define what the Chinese People's Commune was, and is, how it differs from all other forms of farm collectivization and what the changes were in the past six years.

Some attacks first describe the commune incorrectly and then attack the form they have described. Khrush-

chov's attacks are of this type; probably the first open criticism of China he ever expressed was his remark to Senator Humphrey in late 1958 which sneered at the commune as a form which had been tried in the Soviet Union and failed. The communes that existed in the USSR in early days were, as I myself saw them and as everyone knew them, a type of collective that held property in common with equal distribution to all; they were highly thought of theoretically but had to be dropped as "premature". Attributing this equalitarian form to China, Khrushchov then attacks it as a departure from Marxism-Leninism, etc., etc. But the Chinese Communists never advocated that equalitarian form.

People's Communes in China arose, not as an experiment in equalitarianism, but as a merger of agricultural cooperatives to create a larger unit for better control of the rural environment, and especially, but not exclusively, for water-control and irrigation. In early 1958 most of China's more than half billion peasants were in 740,000 agricultural cooperatives with an average membership of 160 families. When the year ended, they had merged into 26,000 communes, usually on the scale of a township, with an average of several thousand families. (The number of communes was later increased threefold by subdivision in some provinces to fit local conditions, but the commune throughout remains the form which merges all the cooperative farming in the country, and to which practically all peasants belong.)

This merger took place in a great drive of peasant enthusiasm based on the realization that the cooperatives were not big enough to handle irrigation projects, in which every canal was at the expense of somebody's land but that, by pooling resources and making joint plans,

they could "conquer nature" and insure that nobody in the future need starve. This was a sound hope and it has proved true.

A second feature of the communes, in addition to size, is its wider function. It assumed the handling, not only of agriculture but of local industry, commerce, education, home defense on a township scale. One of the "excesses" that occurred was that some communes, in enthusiasm, launched too many local industries, using up resources and labor wastefully in occupations not suited to their area. One commune in Honan boasted of making synthetic rubber from sweet potatoes; there were many such inventive ideas. Hence one of the natural changes was that they eventually dropped many of the small industries but expanded occupations and enterprises correlated with agriculture, such as livestock, orchards, forestry, the grinding of grain, processing of peanuts into edible oil, sugar refining, local truck transport and the making of farm implements and machinery.

The third aspect of the Chinese People's Commune, in which it differs most sharply from all other forms of farm collectivization anywhere, is that it combines government power with production. The commune is both the upper level of the combined farming cooperatives and also the lowest level of state power. The peasants of the township survey the total resources of their township and have the state power to use them.

This is still the basic difference of the Chinese Communes from all other forms of farm collectivization. What first recommended it locally was that improvements like local roads, reservoirs and irrigation canals could be done with authority at once by local initiative. One husky commune chairman from Manchuria told me

in 1958 when I asked who paid for local roads: "Nobody pays for roads. We just make them!" He was utterly unaware of cost accounting; the peasants have learned much about it since. But basically, while roads and irrigation projects are always taken up with the county and even with the province for large constructions, the smaller projects are really "just made" by the peasants whose villages they serve. The merging of commune with "state power" also gives authority and connections with upper branches of government, in seeking priorities for electrification and pumps.

The Chinese believe that this merger at basic level will also enable an easier transition to Communism when the time comes. The form of farm collectives practised in the USSR and elsewhere creates a duality in which the collectives are separate from the state. The state power may favor the collective and control it by law, but a contradiction of interests remains which will some day have to be bridged. **In China, state power is inside the organization** at township level. As the commune's economic strength increases, so does the share of the state within it. This, it is believed, will make possible a future transition to "ownership by the whole people" with less contradiction. Still later, the commune itself may survive as a basic cell in a Communist Society.

These three basic characteristics of the Chinese People's Commune were given by the first resolutions of the Communist Party in 1958; they still remain. It was also specified in those resolutions that, in the distribution of income, the basic principle should be payment for work done, and any diversion of funds for other purposes, such as an accumulation fund or "free supply", should be

strictly limited. In practise this at first was not always done.

For the first demand that swept the country with enthusiasm was that everyone should be fed, that the hunger of generations should be conquered at last. This took the form of "free grain" in public dining-rooms, in many places "free dishes" of other kinds were added and competitions arose as to the number of "free services", from tailoring to barbering and theater tickets. In some places — Kwangsi among others — competitions took place among husky young men as to who could eat the most grain.

Some people in China today tend to avoid mentioning these "excesses". But I myself agree with an old peasant in Kwangsi who said: **"We just had to do it once, just once in order to break down the centuries in which every family concentrated on its own small plot."** When foreign critics in malice express the hope that the Chinese Communists will now "let the peasants" drift back to their ancient ways of agriculture, I think of this old man in Kwangsi.

For the Big Leap in 1958 and the communes with it broke the "old ways of farming" forever. A new type of peasant awoke to life, conscious of collective power. No peasant that I meet wants to go back. He wants to go forward; he wants various adjustments and changes. He does not want the old feudal, mediaeval village, most of whose people were illiterate. Foreign comments describe China's rural areas as "80 percent illiterate with antediluvian tools"; this is no longer true. Most peasants under 30 read and write and take an interest in their country and the world. Illiteracy is higher among the aged, but the overall percentage is now very low.

While it is true that very primitive tools still remain, and the ancient shoulder-pole has not everywhere given place even to the wheel-barrow, much less to motor power, the urgent needs of irrigation and water-control are already covering much of the countryside with high-tension lines and power pumps. Mechanization of agriculture for one-fourth of earth's people is a long task, requiring much investment of cash with labor; but with the pressure of the communes behind it, this advances fast.

CHANGES OVER SIX YEARS

What then are the changes in the Communes in the past six years? I must preface this by stating how changes take place. People abroad seem to think that somebody in Mao Tse-tung's office sends them out as binding decrees. Nothing of the kind. Neither the origin of the Commune nor any of its changes began as a decree by the state or even as a resolution by the Communist Party. The rise of the Communes was a mass movement which the Party summed up and promoted. The first Party resolution about it was issued on August 29th, 1958 when 30 percent of the peasants had already formed communes; the second resolution in Wuhan in December, with the modest title "Some Questions Concerning the People's Communes", was adopted after 99 percent of the peasants had joined.

Most of the changes came similarly, by local actions to meet local problems, followed at intervals by a summary or analysis from the Central Committee or perhaps merely a reference in the *People's Daily*, noting that such practises had appeared and making comments about them. Any summing-up by the Central Committee, any

"suggestion" made with approval of the *People's Daily*, at once became a strong indication to all the Party members that this was a policy to be regarded with favor. In no case were they legally binding or passed as laws. The final word in every commune lies with its members.

Roughly one may say that in the past six years the most obvious change was the tripling of communes in number with consequent reduction in size; the most spectacular change was the brief adoption of "free grain" which in some places never occurred, in others lasted from a few months to a year; the most important change politically is the decentralization of the "accounting unit" which at first tended to be the commune as a whole, but quickly became its larger subdivision, the "production brigade", and by 1962 was in most places transferred to the smaller subdivision, the "production team".

None of these changes took place suddenly or universally. In Canton I learned with surprise that even the tripling of communes by subdivision into smaller units was not at all general throughout China, but largely confined to mountainous areas with minority nationalities where difficult communications and different languages made smaller commune-townships better. Thus in Kwangtung Province the number and size of communes had hardly changed, but in Kwangsi, its neighbor province, there had been only 1,000 communes in 1958 and there are now nearly 10,000! The "tripling of communes" is not general but an average.

The chief change I saw in the communes, in visits near Canton was the increase in prosperity, confidence and especially in better accounting since my last visits in 1962. The change to the "team" as accounting unit

concentrates responsibility for production and distribution in one place, the original natural village, the oldest, most stable unit in the countryside where everybody knows everybody else. This "team" averages 20 to 40 households, and seldom goes above 100. When the early cooperatives developed, they had their limits in this village; when the higher forms appeared, the village remained one of its "production teams" but the distribution of income was made at the higher level, which even then led to contradictions between production and distribution that are now resolved.

This is the change that is held abroad to have "liquidated the commune", "retreating" further back even than the higher cooperatives to "local initiative" and hence, it is assumed, towards capitalism. In China it is held to have affirmed more clearly the "socialist" principle of "to each according to his work". It gives each small village full control of and responsibility for its own produce. The small team "owns" the crop, divides it, pays the taxes; these, incidentally are much smaller now than in 1962, being only some five percent of the basic crop.

In Team No. 2 of Tungching Brigade of Hsinhua Commune, over an hour out from Canton, I heard how the change was made and what it meant. "The small teams always handled production," said Hsu, the commune chairman, who accompanied us, "but when it came to payment, this was done by the brigade, and every labor day was equal in the area. But some teams have better land and better conditions and hence better crops; they were sharing with teams that produced less. We discussed this during winter of 1961-62; some were for the team and some thought the brigade distribution 'more ad-

vanced'. When we saw in the *People's Daily* that teams were good then everyone went for the team."

The immediate result of the change is to make a clear distinction between the "better-off" villages and the "hard-up" villages. The backward villages are "pin-pointed" by their own accounting. This enables the commune and the brigade to give immediate attention to helping the backward villages change their conditions and methods, and raise their income by their own efforts, instead of glossing it over by sharing the crops of better teams. In Hsinhua Commune, for instance, there had been 98 teams classed as "poor" in 1958, but 96 of these had advanced by 1963. Tungching Brigade, with 20 teams, had been counted a "poor area", but by 1963 it became a "thousand-catty brigade" (1,000 catties of rice per *mou*, 6,600 pounds per acre), a good crop anywhere and higher now than the Hsinhua Commune average, but achieved with commune aid.

I was surprised to learn that Team No. 2, after paying taxes and selling grain to the state, kept its entire income and did not even give a token contribution to the commune. This is certainly not universal and was probably because this entire brigade had been a poor area. But when I asked Chairman Hsu how the commune then got its income, he laughed and said that the commune had 160,000 yuan (\$64,000) gross income from its enterprises and since the county paid some of the salaries at commune level, which was also the township level, the commune costs were small and its net income had been 120,000 yuan (\$48,000).

Commune enterprises include a small transport fleet of trucks, some tractors, a farm implement works, two grain processing units, a peanut-into-oil processing unit,

a sugar refinery. Commune income went partly to roads and canals and partly to helping the poorer teams. This help required some money but was mainly done by commune advice. The backward team studied the methods and conditions of better teams, determined the causes for its poor condition and was helped to remedy this by aid from the better-off teams which would be repaid on the basis of "equivalent exchange". This combination of mutual aid with self-reliance had brought 96 of the 98 "poor teams" into the ranks of good teams by 1963.

I asked: "Does the commune have the same power to deploy labor for irrigation that it had in 1958?"

"Of course," said Hsu, "but we do it differently now. Instead of calling on everyone for labor, we ask the teams that will benefit by the project to supply labor in proportion to the benefit they will get. Each team pays its own labor by crediting it as done for the team, payable from the joint crop. If the team cannot furnish enough labor, we ask another team, and they must then be paid either by the commune office or by the benefited team, on the principle of 'equivalent exchange'."

I had already seen in Hweiyang (Letter No. 15) that labor can be mobilized for large construction on the level of eleven counties for the taming of the whole East River by the communes in its basin. I learned in Canton that in all the tremendous increase in irrigation in the province in recent years, only 30 percent of the cost is borne by the state, and the rest is contributed by the communes in labor.

Communes, it is clear, are hardly "liquidated"; they are an ever-stronger section of the forces that remake the Chinese land.

PRIVATE PLOT

The "private plot" is given abroad as one proof of the commune's decline. Chinese aren't worried; they have it in hand. Private plots normally exist in agricultural cooperatives and even on state farms; China limits them to 5 percent of the collective area, far less than is given to private plots in the USSR.

The 1958 Party resolutions warned against abolishing private plots prematurely; they were never abolished by decree. Most localities gave them up in the first enthusiasm for "the big collective" and later restored them after a friendly recommendation by the *People's Daily*. Private plots supply individual tastes; one person wants garlic, another tobacco, another some maize to feed chickens. The plots are small, far less than one-sixth of an acre. But I can testify that plots only 8 feet square, in the Peace Committee's compound in Peking, were big enough to grow corn to feed hens that gave eggs. We stopped two years ago; our yard is now covered with grass and Peking markets are flooded with eggs.

Rural private plots will continue to annoy statisticians. They are untaxed and unlisted so nobody will ever get precise grain statistics. If private plots grow grain they might add 5 percent to 180 million tons, a pretty big swing. But they may not grow grain!

NYLON BLANKETS FOR RICE

To me, in the past, nylon meant luxury and expense. This was even more true in China. Just after the war,

in Shanghai, people would bring a couple of suitcases of nylon stockings from America and get such fantastic prices that they would make profit above the cost of their trip.

Today you see nylon fish-nets on Hainan Island. The fishing fleet comes in and pulls the vast nets that go from ship to ship and then to shore, all nylon. It is much stronger and lighter than hemp and does not rot so quickly in water. It is made in Canton for nets!

And now they make nylon blankets for rice seedlings! I saw them on my way to the airport as I left Canton. We were passing the fields of the Ta Li Commune, well kept and dotted at intervals with brick and stucco buildings that were clearly electric pumping and draining stations, from the high tension wires that connected them. Then someone called: "Look over there," and I saw the commune members taking off the nylon blankets for the sunny day.

They were big sheets of nylon plastic at least ten feet wide and three times as long, which protected the seedlings from the cold, making it possible to plant two weeks earlier. So I chatted about them with Mayor Chen Sun who was seeing his wife off to Shanghai by the same plane on which I left.

The nylon coverings, he told me, had been tried out last year in the agricultural colleges and were this year being tried on 670 acres scattered in many communes. Not very much in land — 670 acres — but quite a lot in nylon. "About as much as we could make for this in our Canton Plastic Enterprises." (Shanghai now sends machinery for manufacture of plastics to 180 factories throughout China.)

Seedlings when transplanted cover many times the area. Two weeks gain by early planting makes taller plants to resist the heavy rains in May, and also avoids late-developing insect pests. An early first harvest in rice gives more time to prepare soil for the second planting. These are gains expected around Canton.

Anna Louise Strong

Letter Number 17

SPRING PANORAMA

May 20, 1964

Dear friends,

All the way north from Canton to Hangchow, Shanghai and Peking there was confident well-being in the land. Food was not only plentiful but surplus; the number of pigs coming into market raised problems of refrigeration and canning and led to considerable sales in the Canton Export Fair in April where quantities of frozen meat and five hundred kinds of canned foods were offered for export to visiting merchants from forty nations, along with a dazzling variety of 3,000 patterns of new textiles, ten types of bicycles and forty types of sewing-machines. (Direct sales of frozen and canned meats to the USSR are over 30,000 tons.)

While critical foreign experts still deduce grain shortage from the continuing purchase of wheat from Canada, Australia and the Argentine, the *Far Eastern Economic Review* in Hongkong notes that China offers to sell Japan as much rice as she wants, and is discussing also a steady sale of maize. My Chinese friends are relaxed about it. They say wheat on the world market is much cheaper than rice, and since North China prefers wheat, it is bet-

ter to import it by sea and export rice. If normal trade continues, this trend might prevail.

Indications are that peasants are storing some surplus grain in villages and that the state does not object to this but considers it an element in stability. No less an authority than Mao is quoted as having said: "Our peasants are thrifty; they will not waste grain." The idea seems to be that the local production teams, having paid their taxes and sold their contracted grain to the state, are free to keep or sell any extra supply. It is safe with them; as soon as they feel they have safeguarded themselves against any future bad crop, they will sell any surplus for goods.

In Shanghai I dropped into the Seamen's Club and learned that there were 18 foreign ships in port from nine countries — Britain, Norway, Poland, Italy, Greece, Holland, West Germany, Lebanon, Japan. "We send invitations to invite crews of foreign ships to our Club, which offers rooms, meals, sight-seeing trips and all kinds of services such as barbering, tailoring, theater tickets, repair of clothes or watches. We have ten interpreters in English, German and Japanese."

The manager told me that the Club averages 200 to 300 foreign guests daily. "Tonight we are taking 95 foreign seamen to theater programs. Most of them want to see acrobats, a few want opera. Sometimes we arrange ball games between a foreign team and ours."

Chief aspect of life in Shanghai just now is the training of workers to improve technical standards all over China. In Haiko I had met two workers who were being sent from the Haiko Rubber Works to learn Shanghai tech-

niques by which, for instance, Shanghai cut 10,000 rubber soles in a shift by machine while in Haiko they cut 500 by hand. The Haiko workers came back with several new machines made by themselves under direction. In Shanghai I learned that in the past year 22,000 workers and technicians, all carefully chosen by their localities, have visited Shanghai for greater or shorter periods, to learn "advanced technique". Shanghai, once famous for kidnappings, has become famous as "tutor to the working class". Shanghai people modestly tell you that knowledge is a two-way street; they also learn from their visitors. Shanghai sent 500 workers and engineers to exchange knowledge with Peking, Tientsin, and Shenyang.

All of this is part of a campaign now sweeping China in which working groups compare their own work with that of others, and try to overtake the more advanced and help the backward.

In Peking also one finds the sense of well-being and surplus. Meat, fish, poultry and eggs are no longer rationed; they are plentiful in shops and on street-stands and the price steadily goes down. Chickens are not only plentiful but fat; in the hard years they were scrawny and difficult to get. Great baskets of eggs are for sale in residential areas.

A favorite breakfast in Peking has always been a cup of soy-bean milk with a long twist of dough fried in deep peanut oil. It is called an "oil-strip" (*yutiao*) and is eaten much as the West eats doughnuts. You buy them on the street for between-meal snacks, and a taxi-driver boasts: "I had five *yutiao* for breakfast." This means that not only grain but cooking oil is plentiful; this was one of the items in which the shortage lasted longest.

The sense of well-being is noticed also in the office breaks of fifteen minutes in mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Five years ago people did exercises in these periods, and the radio supplied music. During the hard years, for a year or two only a few people came out for exercises; nobody was urged to physical exertion, which consumed energy. But now they leap from their desks and come out with a violent rush for a brief game of basket-ball or a Chinese sword-dance.

Consumer goods also are plentiful and grow steadily cheaper and of better quality. Last summer a plastic raincoat of medium size with a hood and a carrying bag cost 18 yuan (\$7.20) and needed an "industrial goods ticket". Yesterday some friends bought one without a ration ticket for only 5.80 yuan (\$2.32). These come in blue, red, gray, green and other colors. When goods are carried on hand-carts or pulled behind tricycles they are provided with plastic covers. In the April rains the streets of Peking were bright with these colored plastic coats and covers.

Everywhere across the land one felt the undertones of a boom, of a "Big Leap" that hesitated to declare itself but that noted already how rural electrification had grown nineteenfold since 1957; how sugar output had doubled in a single year; how the Canton Export Fair was the biggest in its history; how recognition by France and new airlines to Cambodia and via Pakistan direct to London were widening world contacts; and how the meat and egg surplus made exports possible to the USSR and other socialist countries to help their shortages and to pay China's debt a year ahead of time.

HANGCHOW — “FRAGRANCE OF THE NATION”!

“They call it ‘Fragrance of the Nation’,” said the head of the Hangchow Nursery, as he seated us at tea-table in one of his larger pavilions where I noted a heady perfume. Lifting a potted plant from the earthen floor, he showed me one of the flowers from which the odor came.

A small Chinese lily, star-like, modestly hiding its pendant yellow and green under leaves, it was discovered a century ago in the hills near Hangchow and given this fanciful name. This is now inscribed above us on a plaque in the calligraphy of no less distinguished a visitor than Chu Teh, whom history knows as Commander-in-Chief of the revolutionary armies from the 1927 uprising in which they were born to the 1949 “Liberation”, but whose friends know him also as a connoisseur-cultivator of orchids.

Despite Chu Teh, I do not think that little lily deserves the name. But Hangchow deserves it. Hangchow distills the fragrance of two thousand years.

* * *

Where but in Hangchow would Emperor Kang Hsi, probably the ablest of the Ching Dynasty, be remembered not for deeds of state or war but for “admiring the autumn moon” by the waters of West Lake and rebuilding a ruined pavilion there. And when I asked: “Why especially the **autumn** moon?”, they replied that spring-time is fitful, but the autumn moon is always golden and bright.

Where but in Hangchow would they cherish for a thousand years the plum-trees on Solitary Hill planted by a

hermit-poet? Where else would they keep a large “Gold Fish Pool” where bright fish swim since 482 A.D. when the Yu Chuan Temple was built? The tablet inscribed “Happy Kingdom of Fishes” by a painter of the Ming Dynasty when the pool was already a thousand years old still hangs in the many-times rebuilt pavilion where I bought a sack of crumbs and fed the fish. I do not know if the “kingdom of fishes” is happy, but I know they make a beautiful golden pattern in their rush for food. And the architect left the central roof open so that sunlight illuminates them.

* * *

I went to Hangchow for the plum-blossoms, hailed by Chinese poets, including Mao Tse-tung, as heralds of the spring. Twice we phoned from Canton to check the weather but when we arrived, it was misty and cold. At the spot where an emperor “admired the autumn moon” in 1699 A.D., a bitter blast splashed waves over the edges of the empty tea-pavilion. On the slope where Lin Fu planted 300 plum-trees long ago, the wind scattered blossoms on wet ground. I pulled my coat close and went to the 70-acre nursery to learn about plum-blossoms there (P.S. A month later I saw them in their glory in Peking!)

“The top of the plum-tree dies,” they said at the nursery, “but the root survives and puts forth branches incessantly. Many trees from the Sung Dynasty are blooming still. There was one from the Tang Dynasty that lived more than a thousand years and died not long before Liberation.” Did the tone hint that Liberation might have saved it? Who knows?

Hangchow cherishes in a "Pavilion of Literary Up-surge" one of the three remaining sets of the Chinese classics. Emperor Chien Lung had seven sets made, each of 36,000 volumes, each entrusted to a different city. Four sets are gone; Hangchow has one of those left.

Hangchow's beauty declined in the century of imperialist penetration and under the Kuomintang. The present government dredged the West Lake, restored the beautiful pagodas, and built many workers' sanatoria in the hills. They told me at the nursery that students and inhabitants of Hangchow now make winter trips to the hills to collect pine cones which are used to expand the pine forest on the road towards Lin Yin Temple.

* * *

I went again to Lin Yin which I first saw four years ago. It is worth revisiting for the beauty of setting and the fine modern Buddha in camphorwood. First built in 326 A.D. by the monk Hui Li, the temple has many times fallen into disrepair and been rebuilt.

A story attends its last renovation, when Premier Chou En-lai found time in the midst of the Korean War to settle a dispute between the monks and the artists who were carving the new Buddha to replace the battered one. The figure, 60 feet high, sits cross-legged in the "Buddha-posture"; the monks wanted the soles of the feet turned upward, which the artists said "defied anatomy". The controversy reached Chou.

Chou asked: "For what is the image, a temple or a museum?" They replied: "A temple."

"Then make it as the monks wish," said Chou. He studied the model and added: "And change his hair. Buddha was an Indian; you have made his hair-do Chi-

nese." The monk-curator tells the story as he shows you the fine large image of the "Compassionate One", looking down at our "Wheel of Change" through centuries.

Taking tea just outside by a cool, bubbling pool, you learn that the mountain near by came from India, and was identified by an Indian monk centuries ago. It is called "The Peak That Flew from Afar". Mr. Nehru has not claimed it.

PEKING'S MAY DAY

How long will journals like *US News and World Report* fake Peking's May Day with "Red Chinese troops marching past pictures of Stalin"? Literate news-organs know by now that **no troops march in Peking's May Day**. There hasn't been a parade on May Day in Peking for years.

Peking celebrates May Day as an international workers' festival by merriment in the parks in the morning and fireworks in the evening in Tien An Men Square. In the Children's Park I saw thousands of school-children, gay in red scarves and tissue paper garlands, scattered all over the place in groups of ten to two hundred, singing, dancing, watching puppet shows, acrobats or opera, putting on amateur shows of their own for parents and neighbors and playing hundreds of kinds of games. I didn't see a child quarrel or cry. This went on in eight big neighborhood parks; an estimated three million came out.

In the evening — fireworks! Chinese invented fireworks; they invent new ones every year. These shoot

up on all sides of the great square and break in the sky into drifting stars and figures in all colors. Over 1,500 foreign guests watch from Tien An Men or the tribunes, but the Peking populace is down in the Square in thousands of groups, singing, playing musical instruments, dancing and putting on amateur stunts in the interval between periods of fireworks.

Two visitors from London, just arrived by the new Pakistan airline, representing travel agencies, were talking in the tribune near a British friend of mine.

"What you do think those fireworks cost?" said one.

"I don't know," replied the other, "but I know our government would spend ten times as much and not get half as good a show."

They asked my friend how many people were down in the Square watching the fireworks and having fun. He replied that, counting the adjoining boulevard space that was cleared for spectators, there were about half a million. They thought this likely. Then one of them, looking over the singing and dancing crowd, said:

"No, you can't buck 'em. Better join 'em!"

"They're too many!"

"They're too happy!"

"They're too solid!"

SEVEN LETTERS BETWEEN MOSCOW AND PEKING

The seven letters between Central Committees of Communist Parties in Moscow and Peking are important for people around the world. At last my friends who write,

"Why can't they get together?", may find preliminary reply. The letters are tough and sharp but reveal both the depth and type of differences, the main aims both claim in common and proposals of each for "ending the split". In this lies hope.

As published by *Peking Review* May 8, they are not in sequence; one must re-arrange them. They give China's first direct reply to many charges spread against her for a year and also China's view of how the polemics may be brought to an end. No easy way is given but the fact that **China expects eventual unity in the Socialist Camp and the world communist movement is evident and is hopeful to know.**

The earliest letter, some 3,400 words, was sent by the CPSU to China November 29, 1963. It proposed to end public polemics, which it said "did great harm to the communist movement"; it offered to increase trade, send "whole sets of equipment" and even send Soviet experts back to help China's reconstruction. The tone was conciliatory, and clearly meant to impress other Parties. The CPSU claims to speak for the "world's Communists" and holds China responsible for all difficulties and splits. The Chinese did not reply till February 29 when they took up all questions in a letter of 5,000 words. Moscow replied in 4,000 words on March 7, and China sent a shorter reply May 7, and then published the letters on the ground that Moscow had published parts and distorted them.

Besides these four main letters there were three short ones, February 20, 22 and 27, in which Moscow rebuked China for not answering the Nov. 29 letter and China rebuked the CPSU for "pretending" to want to end polemics while actually sending an anti-China letter to the

world's Communist Parties and not even sending China a copy. I shall not pause to discuss these irritations. I shall take up rather the two types of material with which the four main letters deal: first, the differences between China and the USSR as nations — boundary, aid, experts, trade — and second, the question of the worldwide polemics.

SINO-SOVIET BOUNDARY

It is world news when Peking states flatly that “although the old treaties relating to the Sino-Soviet boundary are unequal treaties . . . the Chinese Government is . . . willing to respect them and take them as basis for a reasonable settlement”. Western commentators as careful as Walter Lippmann have assumed the boundary difficulty comes from China's claims to the vast territories which the Russian tsars detached by force and/or fraud from China a century ago and which are now parts of the USSR. **This is not the case!** China has written those off though she would like it on the record that they were taken from her by “unequal treaties”. What China wants to negotiate is the additional territory that the USSR has been taking, right down to the present day, by pushing fences forward on the great plains and mountains and occupying lands without treaty. These encroachments are considerable. China wants the border settled so that encroachments may stop. China charges that the USSR has provoked unrest among the border peoples within China.

AID, EXPERTS, TRADE

China states that she benefited from Soviet aid in the past and appreciated it. But when *Pravda* “keeps beat-

ing the drum about selfless assistance”, China wants it known that **Soviet aid was not gratis but “paid for in goods, gold, and foreign exchange” . . . “often at much higher than world prices”**. **“Most of the Soviet loans went for war materiel used in resisting US aggression in Korea.”** “Even this was not given gratis. For many years we have been paying on it, both principal and interest.” This accounts for “a considerable part of our yearly exports to the USSR”.

“Aid”, moreover, is not a “one-way street”. The Chinese think their exports have also been of help to the USSR. They note that prior to 1962 they sent over two billion dollars worth of grain, edible oils and other food-stuffs; and a billion and a half dollars worth of minerals, especially rare minerals useful for rockets and nuclear power. (Note by A.L.S. China's large exports in 1963 will now pay off her debt in 1964 instead of 1965.)

Soviet Experts were useful and much appreciated, says China's letter. “But when you unscrupulously withdrew the 1,390 experts and tore up 343 contracts . . . you were well aware that they were posted in 250 enterprises in the economy and in national defense. . . . Many construction projects had to stop halfway; some factories and mines closed down. . . . This disrupted our economic plan and inflicted enormous losses.” This is the first time China makes so complete a statement. People in Peking knew how serious the withdrawal of experts was; only now is the world allowed to know.

As for sending experts again, “to be frank, the Chinese people cannot trust you”. In international custom, a nation that unilaterally breaks such contracts must make good the damage before it is trusted again, says China.

The CPSU has charged that trade fell off because China stopped buying complete sets of equipment and cut down on deliveries of agricultural products. China replies that when the specialists withdrew, China could no longer use all that Soviet equipment. Moreover, the Soviets had a habit of sending only the machines that China could make, and refusing to send the key machines. As for agricultural exports from China, these were cut by the natural disasters and the crop failures.

The Chinese conclude their remarks on trade with a plea for a truly "socialist" trade policy, not only between the USSR and China, but generally in the "Socialist Camp". They charge that Comecom (Council of Mutual Economic Assistance) is "solely controlled by the leaders of the USSR" in their own interests and "bullies" fraternal countries, "infringing their sovereignty". **They plead for trade on the basis of "equality and mutual benefit", not dominance.** This may win approval among some East European nations which disagree with China's ideology but approve her emphasis on "mutual benefit" in trade.

HOW SHALL POLEMICS STOP?

The most important part of this exchange of letters for the world is: "How shall the polemics stop?" This is what my friends write to me about; it is also what experienced leaders like Aidit in Indonesia and Togliatti in Italy, discuss: What happens to the world communist movement? Unity or final split?

The CPSU proposes, in its March 7 letter: 1) that the representatives of the Soviet and Chinese Parties meet in Peking in May 1964 to agree on this; 2) that a preparatory committee of the 26 Parties that called the 1960

Conference of eighty-one Parties, be held in June-July; and 3) a world conference of Communist Parties be held in autumn of 1964.

Peking's reply is categorical: Such a hastily called world conference would not be a conference for "unity" but a conference for "a worldwide split". China will have none of it. China believes that worldwide unity can eventually be reached "on the basis of Marxism-Leninism", a basis which the CPSU also claims.

China notes that the CPSU also stated, in its Nov. 29 letter, that "conditions should be created so that the meeting should lead not to a split in the world communist movement but to a genuine unity and solidarity of all fraternal Parties and all forces of peace and socialism". How shall this be done? Certainly not, say the Chinese, by the hasty calling of a world conference. Long preparations are needed that may take several years. Of what nature shall these preparations be?

Last summer the representatives of the Soviet and Chinese Parties met and disagreed. Neither has changed its position since. On the contrary, the CPSU in its February 1964 plenum resolved "to come out openly and strongly against the incorrect views and dangerous actions of the Communist Party of China". Yet the CPSU has not even published China's actual views so that the Soviet people may know what these are.

The CPSU also proposes that the preparatory conference be held by the 26 Parties that called the world conference in 1960. But several of those Parties have now split into two Parties. Which will be invited to this conference?

China concludes that the proposals of the CPSU are not intended for unity. They mean "that you have pushed

the cartridge into the chamber and are ready to pull the trigger". Others than China agree with this interpretation. The *UPI* puts it roughly, saying that Khrushchov wants a conference "to kick China out". There are, however, many Communist Parties in the Socialist Camp and in the world movement who, while they disagree with China, do not want to go so far. One may cite Poland, Rumania, Italy among them.

What do the Chinese propose as the way to unity? They propose long, worldwide ideological discussion until unity "on a basis of Marxism-Leninism" is reached.

The Chinese say: We did not start this open polemic. Khrushchov started it by his attack on Stalin in the 20th Congress of the CPSU; this caused much demoralization in the world communist movement. Khrushchov continued it with his open expulsion of Albania and then by open discussions attacking China. All of this did harm to the world movement, and aided the imperialists. As early as January 1962 the Parties of Viet Nam, Indonesia and New Zealand proposed stopping the open polemics; China agreed but the CPSU did not. It continued public attacks for a year and a half until in July 1963, when the two Parties' representatives were meeting in Moscow, the CPSU sent out everywhere a long attack on China and followed this by "an anti-China campaign on unprecedented scale". From July 13 to the end of October the Soviet press carried nearly 2,000 anti-China articles, not counting the attacks against China by other Communist Parties influenced by the USSR.

"And now you say: 'The polemics is doing harm to the world movement.' Quite so. The harm is done; you did it. But now good begins to come of it." China replied to the attacks, and discussion widened around the world.

People everywhere now discuss Marxism; this discussion is becoming a worldwide school. What was a bad thing is becoming a good thing; it is educating the world's people. Now is no time to stop; now the discussion must go on till all the arguments are heard by all the people. Only thus can a sound basic unity then come.

In the *NY Times* view (May 9) China wants to delay the world conference until she can get a majority. This, I think, is an over-simplification. No doubt China believes that time is on her side. But she banks not on empty time, but on the daily experiences of a world at present engaged in much revolution and on the analysis which serious Marxists will make of events around the world. China does not set her own ideas as final; she also expects to be learning. She proposes concrete ways.

It would be well, the Chinese say in the letters, if every Party published all sides of the discussion. China publishes all the attacks against her; she has issued four volumes of them already to supplement wide publication in her press. She advises the USSR to do the same. There should be many conferences between parties, a few at a time on a scale permitting active discussion. Out of such discussion, and out of the experiences of the worldwide anti-imperialist struggle, truth and enlightenment will come. There should be no world conference until a base of unity begins to appear. Otherwise a world conference will finalize a split.

China **concretely proposes** that a meeting of Soviet and Chinese representatives be held in October 1964—or even in May of 1965—as a necessary preparatory step; that these Sino-Soviet talks be followed by a preparatory conference of seventeen Parties, including all the Parties of the Socialist Camp plus Italy, France, Japan and Indo-

nesia — thus involving no parties that have split in two. Meantime for the cessation of public polemics, this cannot be done by the demand of one side or the other, which permits one side to attack and then prevent replies. This must be done by talks between the Chinese and Soviet Parties and other fraternal Parties to find a “reasonable formula acceptable to all”. In this China clearly includes the many good Marxists around the world that have been “expelled” and/or have organized new Parties.

Many of my friends who have been hoping that polemics may stop tomorrow will sigh that this seems a long way around. Many others will find in it the way to a world conference that will neither formalize a split nor paper it over, but may produce a wider, sounder, more militant unity than the forces of anti-imperialism, socialism and peace have yet known.

Anna Louise Strong

Letter Number 18

THE PEOPLE RESIST

June 15, 1964

Dear friends,

Despite Lyndon Johnson's boast June 3 to the Coast Guard Academy in Connecticut of “marked progress in preparations for nuclear war, limited war and special warfare” and his claim that the **USA is “stronger than the combined might of all the nations in the history of the world”**, this matchless military monster is defied by small cut-in-half nations in Asia: South Vietnamese, Laotians, South Koreans.

The Honolulu Conference of top US brass plus diplomacy brought forth a decision to kill all, burn all, destroy all in South Vietnam without yet attacking the North; thus Johnson courts both peace votes and war votes in the USA. But in dispensing “aid” in Saigon, Defense Chief McNamara needs a bullet-proof vest.

In Laos a Rightist coup in April, covertly blessed by Washington from Thailand, made Prince Souvanna Phouma its prisoner, de facto dissolving the National Union Government in Vientiane. Patriot forces in the countryside refuse to be thus swallowed. In the Plain of Jars the “true neutralists” rose up May 16 and threw out the Rightist infiltrators, an action falsely called by the West a

Pathet Lao invasion with Vietminh help. A French correspondent was kicked out of Vientiane for correctly reporting it. The Pathet Lao and its allied neutralists, who hold about the same territory they held by the 1962 "cease-fire line", will not be easily kicked out. Nor will attempts to take Laos by an international conference omitting China and North Vietnam, succeed.

The South Korean explosion again shows that imperialist hirelings cannot forever withstand determined people. Four years ago, student demonstrations toppled Syngman Rhee, whom the USA earlier tried by bloody, unsuccessful war to make its "strong man" over all Korea. Now a greater student anger shakes Rhee's successor. Early in June students fought police in twenty cities, both sides suffering casualties. Police occupied universities and closed down all schools including primary schools. Such student strikes are harbingers of revolution.

Against this background note a strange attempt by Khrushchov to gate-crash the coming Afro-Asian Conference of heads of states set for next March in Africa. If he succeeds, this long-awaited conference will not be a "second Bandung". Afro-Asians seek freedom from imperialist domination; Khrushchov wants them as backers of his fight against China and as chips for his poker-game with Lyndon Johnson to divide and run the world. This struggle is worth attention in coming months.

GATE-CRASHING THE AFRO-ASIAN CONFERENCE

Is the USSR an "Asian country"? Look before you leap to reply. This has been raised to an international con-

troversy by one of the most unusual notes in recent history, in which Moscow threatens "rebuff" to anyone who questions her right to join the Afro-Asian Conference of heads of states, set for March 10, 1965 in Africa. The attack is launched chiefly at China, but includes by implication the 22 Afro-Asian nations whose foreign ministers, meeting in Djakarta April 10 to 15, failed to invite the USSR. They are assumed to act under China's "hegemony".

Moscow apparently means to go all out to gate-crash the coming conference, to write its policies if invited and to smash it if not invited. **Why all this?**

My first indication was a Tokyo *AFP* despatch May 2 that the Soviet ambassador had given a note to Japanese Foreign Office "denouncing China" for the failure of the Afro-Asian Preparatory Conference in Djakarta to invite the USSR. *AFP* observed that this was the first anti-China note sent by Moscow to a foreign government. I thought it more unusual that a major power should publicly show pique over not being invited.

The display of wrath soon widened. On May 7 *Pravda* published the note and the fact that it had been sent to the Afro-Asian nations. The Soviet press attacked China's Foreign Minister Chen Yi, personally and at length, for having allegedly blocked the invitation. It accused him of everything from "racism" to "isolating the Afro-Asians". The idea that anyone **could** isolate the Afro-Asians, who are more than half mankind, seems even funnier than the old British joke about "isolating the continent". In Djakarta they thanked Chen Yi for helping to bring harmony. What were the facts?

Moscow's attack swept on to a "Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference" in Baku, May 8-10, where Chen

Yi was denounced by an Indian guest speaker as well as by local talent. Then Khrushchov carried it to Cairo where he gained a joint communiqué with Nasser mentioning the USSR as a "Eurasian power". The London *Times* noticed the unusual wording and judged that Khrushchov did not get "the publicly declared support" he wanted for "his claims to a place . . . at coming conclaves". It found Russia's "preoccupation with recognition as an Asian power . . . disproportionate considering her place in world affairs". The *Times* failed to realize that precisely Russia's "place in world affairs" might now demand a ruling spot among the Afro-Asians, who have grown in world importance in recent years.

When Mikoyan then invited himself to Tokyo for fifteen chaotic days, in which he seemed to talk trade while the Japanese talked the return of two Kurile islands, experts guessed at once that he came to get Japan's support to Moscow's claim as an "Asian power"; most experts thought he failed. Similar "inside dope" on Ben Bella's previous visit to Moscow said that he "sat the fence" by saying that the question of "Asian powers" should be settled by the Asians, and Algeria is African. Then Mikoyan proposed a trip to Djakarta, where President Sukarno had been host and keynoter. Since Nasser had been given hundreds of millions of rubles and 2,000 Soviet experts for his Aswan Dam, and Ben Bella over a hundred million in a new loan and Sukarno some recent warships, even the non-experts knew by this time that the pressure was on.

Why should Moscow want to get into an Afro-Asian conference that failed to invite. I picked up an Indonesian paper and saw the light. **"Over 60 heads of states**

to take part" ran the headline. The First Bandung Conference in 1955 had only 29 nations, yet it made history. It became a watershed in the fight for independence of Afro-Asian states. More than thirty Afro-Asian nations gained independence in the nine years after Bandung. In these nine years the Afro-Asian nations became the vanguard in mankind's struggle against colonialism and neo-colonialism, matched in Latin America by Cuba. And now when the heads of states in Africa and Asia pull off a conference next March despite the many attempts of imperialists to prevent, it will be a summit conference unique in history, representing 1,700,000,000 people, mankind's majority, uncontrolled by either of the two great power blocs, but with more population than both of them combined.

No wonder the USSR wants in! Before we discuss its purpose, let us glance back at the aims and history of that first conference in Bandung.

★★★★★★★★★
 ★ **THE**
 ★ **FIRST**
 ★ **BANDUNG**
 ★
 The First Bandung Conference was called by the five "Colombo powers", with Nehru as the best-known leader, and Sukarno as host. China was invited but was not one of the sponsors. The USSR was not invited. Nehru of India told why in a press conference in Djakarta, Dec. 30, 1954:

"Soviet Asia was not invited because politically it was part of a European unit, namely, the Soviet Union."

Nobody in Moscow objected to this statement or asked for an invitation. Moscow considered Bandung none of its business and not very important though later Moscow endorsed its principles. China, though not one of the originators, became through the actions of Chou En-lai,

as head of the Chinese delegation, one of the chief creators of the greatness of Bandung.

What made Bandung important was that it was the first time in world history that the representatives of Afro-Asian nations conferred on their mutual affairs without the presence of any foreign overlords. This freedom was not absolute for many of these nations were still only partly independent and most were still penetrated by imperialist influences, while some African nations were represented by Europeans in their government administration. Romulo, from the Philippines, came primed to attack the socialist countries; he declared that "communist imperialism" was worse than capitalist imperialism, and intimated that China was a satellite of the USSR.

When reporters rushed to Chou En-lai, leader of the Chinese delegation, for his answer, Chou replied: "I did not come to quarrel. I came for the success of all the people here." This idea was later formulated in Chou's speech:

"The Chinese delegation has come here to seek common ground, not to create divergences. . . . We Communists do not hide the fact that we believe in communism, but this is not the place to publicize our ideologies. Differences exist among us but there is also common ground. The overwhelming majority of the Asian and African countries and people have suffered and are still suffering from the calamities of colonialism. If we seek common ground in doing away with these sufferings . . . it will be easy for us to have mutual understanding and respect." The Chinese delegation, said Chou, accepts the proposals of the sponsors and adds none of its own. He added that China's claim to Taiwan, to recognition, to a seat in the

United Nations, "are China's affair; she will not burden the other nations with them".

Thus Chou En-lai laid a unique base for the Bandung Conference—the seeking of common ground and the laying aside of differences. This policy became the strength of Bandung. Every nation has special demands and differences; most Afro-Asian countries have border problems with their neighbors. Had the conference tried to handle such problems, it might have split on the first day. Instead, the Bandung nations found unity in their common struggle against imperialism. They promoted mutual knowledge, mutual visits, mutual trade and aid on a basis of "equality and mutual benefit". They adopted the policy of deciding questions not by majority vote but by "consultations until unanimity is reached", dropping all questions that could not be thus resolved.

Out of this came the Bandung "principles of coexistence" and the "Bandung spirit" which gave strength to all Afro-Asian nations in their struggle for independence, disallowed interference in any nation's internal affairs, yet encouraged every nation to advance from political independence to economic self-reliance and assertion of cultural dignity.

The more than thirty new nations that gained independence in the next nine years unquestionably owed much to Bandung.

The imperialists hated this. Having failed to disrupt the First Bandung Conference, they set themselves to prevent a second. India soon yielded to their influence. Nehru sabotaged the calling of a second Afro-Asian conference; he organized with Tito a "Non-Aligned Conference", to have an organization without China, which India might dominate. But the African and Asian nations

starts with the world situation in the light of Bandung, the anti-imperialist struggle, and includes world peace and the U.N. Conference on Trade, as it affects Afro-Asians.

All this was done quickly and unanimously in a single day, a good record for any conference, indicating fruitful previous discussion in committee and in private talks.

★★★★★★★★★
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★ **ONE**
★ **DISPUTED**
★ **QUESTION**
★

On April 14 they took up the only disputed question, the invitation to the USSR and to Malaysia, both proposed by India. They discussed all day in plenary sessions, subcommittees and private talk. This might have wrecked the conference had it come earlier. Many thought this was what India intended; others thought India introduced Malaysia in order to trade with Indonesia for a vote for the USSR. The session was a closed one but I had reports from three delegations that gave its essence. (I shall respect the anonymity of all nations that were not publicly given.)

No delegation except India, with Ceylon seconding, spoke for inviting the USSR. Very few spoke directly against it. Delegates voiced disquiet in statements like: "Let them move the capital to Vladivostok and we'll accept them as Asian," or: "We have to have criteria or Spain might demand to get in by Spanish Morocco." Delegates in private talk feared the entrance of the USSR lest it bring the Sino-Soviet dispute into the conference, or lest Moscow try to dominate as a great power. But many were receiving Soviet aid and worried about offending a benefactor; some did not wish even to offend India by voting her down.

Chen Yi made the clearest, most complete argument against the invitation. He stated:

Though the USSR holds much territory in Asia, and even Asian Republics, its political center, three-fourths of its population and its past tradition have always made it a European power. For this reason the USSR was not invited to the First Bandung Conference, and the USSR made no complaint of this.

In the United Nations, the USSR had never joined the Afro-Asian bloc, nor indicated any desire to join it; on the other hand it had joined with the USA to oppose giving more representation to the Afro-Asians in the U.N. bodies.

Some Afro-Asian organizations admit Soviet members, some do not; these are people's organizations. But the Afro-Asian Conference is a body of states. As a state, the USSR is European.

China's position, said Chen Yi, is based on principle not on whether its relation with the USSR is good or bad at the moment. In 1955, Sino-Soviet relations were very good but China did not suggest that the USSR be invited to Bandung. Today relations are not so good, but even so, if the USSR should be attacked by imperialism, China would at once fight by her side. In future China hopes that the relations may be even better than in the past. But even then China will not consider that the USSR should take part in an Afro-Asian conference of states.

All through the night of the 14th they sought a formula that might avoid inviting the USSR without insulting her. The task was referred to a subcommittee of six "neutrals" appointed by the chairman; when this failed to produce an acceptable formula, the subcommittee was enlarged to

twelve by adding India, Ceylon, China, Guinea and two others. This second subcommittee finally reported success shortly before 3 a.m. the next morning. The delegates all came out smiling. Romulo of the Philippines, who had baited Chou En-lai in the first Bandung, embraced Chen Yi with tears in his eyes. Even the Philippines fight pressures of US imperialism, and appreciate the strength of the Afro-Asians expressed in Bandung.

The formula that brought unanimous acceptance from everyone, including India, read as follows:

"It was proposed that an invitation be extended to the USSR. Some delegations supported and others opposed the proposal. . . . A number of delegations stated that they needed consultation with their governments. After discussion no consensus could be reached. Some delegations were of the view that the matter may be placed before the heads of states and governments at the Second Afro-Asian Conference for their consideration. Some other delegations were against submitting this matter to the heads of states and governments at the Second Afro-Asian Conference for their consideration. Therefore, no agreement was reached."

The final plenary session in the afternoon of the 15th passed everything unanimously. No provision was made for raising the question of the USSR again. The integrity and unity of Bandung seemed saved. The Indonesian Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Suwito, who had acted as secretary of the conference, later gave credit to Chen Yi in the words: "Marshal Chen Yi is wonderful. I would like to take off my hat to him. He is wise and capable. He has treated all the delegates well and convinced others

with reason and thus made a great contribution to the meeting."

Moscow at once attacked Chen Yi and China for her failure to gate-crash in Djakarta and began to prepare to gate-crash next March.

★★★★★★★★

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★ **MOSCOW**

★ **ATTACKS**

Moscow's note to the Afro-Asian nations drips with arrogance, vituperation and wrath. The actual argument is short and can be quickly given. It is that the USSR is both a European and an Asian power; that its Asian part contains two-thirds of its territory and 40 percent of all Asia; that it thus has by right a seat at the Afro-Asian Conference and any attempt to deprive it of an invitation is a "splitting of the Afro-Asian states" by China.

That the USSR has much territory in Asia, nobody denies. But when Moscow announces that its Asian territory is "nearly twice the size of China" and big enough to hold in its vast expanse "not only China, but also India, Burma, Pakistan, Indonesia and Japan", this hardly seems a way to win votes, but a tactless brag.

Nor is the mention of Soviet Asian Republics convincing. These republics exist but when the USSR entered the United Nations, she insisted on a vote for Russia, for the Ukraine and for White Russia and got these three votes. She did not insist on a vote for any of her Asian Republics. **She showed herself not only European but triply European by her own choice.** Her relation to the Afro-Asian bloc in the U.N. is noted above in Chen Yi's remarks.

In contrast to Chen Yi's calmly reasoned argument in Djakarta, which did not in any way attack the USSR,

Moscow's note bears shocking resemblance to the methods formerly used by colonial powers towards "lesser breeds without the law". It assumes that the 22 nations in Djakarta were incapable of thought but could only follow a master-mind, in this case, China. It tells the Afro-Asian nations that Moscow will support their conference "If its purpose is to unite all forces combating imperialism . . . and no purpose of disuniting these forces is pursued." This is either an insult, implying that the conference is not held in good faith, or a threat to wreck it if the USSR cannot write the policy.

What follows is a reminder of the Soviet power to make or break. "Being one of the major powers of Asia", the Soviet Union is "prepared to do everything in its power to promote **such** a conference, and those who would divide the Afro-Asian countries must be given a rebuff".

WHO is to be given a rebuff? All who oppose inviting the USSR. By what means? The withdrawal of specialists and deliveries from China shows how quickly "aid" can be turned into sabotage. This is a crass warning to all those nations who are getting aid from the USSR and must still get spare parts.

Having thus threatened, Moscow proceeds to rewrite the script for the conference to which it is not yet invited. The Afro-Asian Conference began its objectives with the solidarity and emancipation of Afro-Asian nations as a base for a just and lasting world peace. Moscow reverses the order and changes the emphasis, saying: "When such questions as world peace and disarmament, peaceful co-existence and the fight against colonialism are on the agenda, who can say that the voice of the Soviet Union would be out of place?"

More flagrant is the rewriting of the final communiqué over which the Afro-Asians worked so hard in Djakarta. Moscow claims that it was decided "to resume discussion at the (later) conference". Everyone that was in Djakarta knows that this is a fabrication. The proposal to refer the question to the coming March conference was the final trap set by India and avoided in the final wording by the subcommittee of twelve. For if this invitation had been referred by Djakarta to the later conference, it would be a first order of business and would disrupt the March conference. The avoidance of this trap was why the delegates came out smiling. Does Moscow think they will fall in the same trap now?

Unfortunately this is only one of the many misstatements that all participants at Djakarta will recognize as lies. *Pravda* claims that China threatened to bolt the conference if it invited the USSR; everyone who was present knows that this is untrue. *Pravda* asserts that China tried to rush the date to get the Afro-Asian Conference ahead of the Conference of Non-Aligned Nations; everyone in Djakarta knows that China, on the contrary, thought it better for the Afro-Asians to meet later. To see so many falsifications from Moscow is sad.

The worst is the charge of "racism" against China, which Moscow often repeats, always by false quotations. China has never based the political unity of the Afro-Asians on "color of skin", or "rallied the black and yellow races against all whites", as Soviet propagandists claim. The unity of the Afro-Asians has always been based on their common sufferings under more than a century of colonialist oppression, and their common struggle for emancipation from this suffering. In China itself the People's Liberation Army Ballet on the Negro struggle in America

shows progressive white people fighting heroically alongside the Negroes; this is carried on film and television to educate the Chinese people. In all of China today a chief example of working-class internationalism is the Canadian Doctor Bethune, for whom hospitals are named and whom all are taught to emulate and admire.

★★★★★★★★★
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★ IF
★ MOSCOW
★ REALLY
★ CARED
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In the next ten months until the Afro-Asian Conference meets, the people in Africa and Asia will be watching their governments to see when the Soviet pressures start, and what officials, if any, tend to yield.

It is a pity they should have to do it. There seems a basic insincerity in the Soviet case.

If the Soviet leaders truly believe, as they say, that their own great diplomatic task is to establish peaceful coexistence with the USA and thus prevent nuclear world war, and that this will provide suitable climate for nations struggling for independence and not yet entirely free, should they not prefer to stay out of the Afro-Asian Conference, blessing it from outside as with the first Bandung, and not sharing responsibility for its decisions?

Is not the strength of the Bandung powers precisely this: that while they are committed to the fight against imperialism in all its forms, and hence are natural allies of the socialist countries, they fight as rising peoples for their own emancipation and not in subordination to the courtship or the duel of the super-powers? This freedom to struggle in their own interests is what the rising peoples need. It is also what the peace and progress of the world require. For without it the strength of imperialism

cannot be worn down except by great-power clashes pregnant with nuclear war.

This freedom and strength of the Bandung nations must not be bartered or shackled. This threatens if Khrushchov's gate-crashing succeeds. For the USSR cannot join the discussions of the Afro-Asian nations without making their decisions a subject for the bargaining of the super-powers. Is this then Moscow's aim?

Anna Louise Strong

Letter Number 19

MIDSUMMER

July 25, 1964

Dear friends,

Main midsummer events in 1964 in China are these:

- 1) Wide boom in all kinds of food and consumer goods creates problems of surplus.
- 2) While Washington heats up war in Vietnam and Laos and hints at bombing China, Chinese promote Tenth Anniversary Meetings for 1954 Geneva Agreements.
- 3) "Ninth Comment" in Sino-Soviet Dispute charges Khrushchov leads USSR towards capitalism, and discusses how socialist lands may avoid such retrogression.
- 4) Major campaign for socialist education and cultural revolution to forestall back-sliding.

SURPLUS BRINGS PROBLEMS

In major Chinese cities and in rural markets food of all kinds and consumer goods appear in quantity and enjoy brisk sales at prices lower than a year ago. Shanghai's

150 markets offer 700 kinds of vegetables. Luscious ripe tomatoes come on the Peking streets at a few fen per catty (one cent a pound). Fruit of all kinds is positively clogging the street-stands; it is super-abundant from the millions of fruit trees planted in the "Big Leap" of 1958. Water-melons piled in long ridges, block the sidewalks. Milk and eggs are urged from house to house on consumers; meat and fish in all cuts are widely available at lower prices.

Consumer goods are also abundant of good quality and variety. Canton's biggest department store reports 20,000 customers daily, with sales for the first five months of 1964 in textiles, knitwear, clothing, enamelware, etc., running 42.5 percent above the same period in 1963, while sales of radios and bicycles have doubled. A glance into shops in Peking indicates the same situation here.

From Shanghai the correspondent of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* wrote in June: "Unrationed pork is flooding the market with pork ex-cold-storage at 70 fen a catty, the cheapest in ten years."

Cow's milk has not in the past been an article of China's diet; babies were given a kind of milk made from soybeans. Milk is now promoted. Peking's milk supply from 50 suburban dairy farms is 4 times what it was in 1957 and 16 times what it was in 1949.

Surplus brings problems. Evergreen Commune had a bigger crop of vegetables in 1963 than in 1962 but got less for it, because so many vegetables were produced. This loss is cushioned for the farmers by advance contracts with the municipality. Some communes adjust meat surplus by giving each brigade a different day to take its pigs and poultry to the local market. Meantime

refrigeration and canning facilities are growing to take care of surplus seasonal foods.

TWO OPPOSING STRATEGIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

While Washington heats up war in Vietnam and Laos and talks of bombing North Vietnam and even China, the Chinese hold a week of mass meetings all over the country to commemorate the Tenth Anniversary of the Geneva Agreements, and demand that the conference reconvene to get these Agreements fulfilled.

The contrast is striking and not accidental. These are two different strategies in conflict.

Washington's strategy is based on cash and violence, on increased slaughter in South Vietnam, on bombings and burnings in Laos, on border raids into Cambodia, on commando raids into North Vietnam where Hanoi has caught and brought to trial no less than thirteen invading commando groups within the year. It is based on continuous provocative intrusions by warships and planes into China's air and waters; Peking has noted 304 such intrusions by "serious warnings" since 1958, and has brought down ten planes that intruded too far into China's interior, including three U-2s.

In late spring and early summer the war talk in the U.S. press grew fantastic. While sober commentators like Hanson Baldwin of the *NY Times* held that the appointment of Maxwell Taylor, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as ambassador to Saigon, merely meant a "hold-the-fort operation, a continuation and in-

tensification of present policies, at least until after the election", a despatch from Saigon to the *NY Herald Tribune* July 10 spoke of "detailed plans" for bombing North Vietnamese villages on the principle of obliterating one village in the North for every village taken by the "Vietcong" in the South. This type of retaliation against the innocent, for which 200 villages were already pinpointed by reconnaissance planes, would destroy, along with the villages, anything that may be left of America's reputation in Asia. Even more fantastic was an article I saw in a magazine called *Electronics* of February, which suggested that China be destroyed wholesale, not merely by missiles, but by massive flights of supersonic bombers, all dropping nuclear bombs, bacteriological and chemical materiel and radio-active wastes all over the country.

The extravagant malevolence of these proposals so scared my American friends that some of them wrote me almost in panic, urging me "not to let China" do anything rash or provocative because "China has no nuclear deterrent and you couldn't expect Khrushchov to save her". At which my friends in Peking ironically smiled.

For China has at no time been rash or given provocation. She hasn't had a soldier in Indo-China in these ten years. This did not keep Washington from deliberate attack. Six U.S. planes, flying deep into Laos on June 11 to bomb the "Liberated Areas", circled several times over Khang Khay, once a royal capital of Phouma, carefully picked out the Chinese Economic and Cultural Mission, where it stood on a hill, openly waving its flag as a diplomatic agency sent to Laos at Phouma's own request, and then demolished it with bombs and napalm, killing one and wounding five members of the mission. What is China then supposed to do?

What China did was first to issue several official statements to make her position very clear, such as the statement sent to Hanoi July 19, saying that, despite the tens of thousands of American military in South Vietnam, China had not sent a single soldier in these ten years. "But there are limits to everything. . . . We would frankly tell the United States: The Chinese people will by no means sit idly by while the United States extends its acts of aggression. . . . It is not yet too late to return to the 1954 Geneva Agreements. Extension of the war will definitely bring no good to the United States." This the *NY Times* headlined on its front page as China's "threat of intervention". Primarily it was a demand to observe the Geneva Agreements of 1954.

Then China, in common with Vietnam and many Asian countries and organizations, held a week of mass-meetings about those Geneva Agreements. Was all this empty talk? No, China's long-range strategy is based on the awakening of the people against the strategy of the bomb; its tactics uses historic facts against Washington's Big Lies.

China sees a Beast that sits on the Potomac and threatens the survival of man. It has many names. We Western Progressives once called it the Octopus; Eisenhower, in leaving the presidency, warned against the "military-industrial complex" that might destroy American democracy. He understated: this Beast boasts that it can overkill the Human Race! The Chinese call it "U.S. Imperialism", its technical Marxist name. Most Americans resent this name, but no peace-promotion that fails to face it amounts to anything more than idle dreaming. Until the American people fight this Beast as their own worst foe, they will be taxed for their own destruction and sent as cannon fodder to ravage the world.

How is this Beast to be conquered that mankind may be saved? Mao Tse-tung told me his views eighteen years ago in Yenan, when Washington already brandished what was then its monopoly of the nuclear bomb. In what became a famous interview Mao said that even the atom bomb was a "paper tiger". In the end the people of the world would destroy it; the bomb would not destroy mankind. The strength of the reactionaries lies, he said, "in the unconsciousness of the people". The people's consciousness must be aroused.

Something very like this was said last month by my friend Stephen Fritchman in his sermon of the month on "What Scares You Most?" He said what scared him most was not the nuclear bomb and not the nerve gas, but the "apathy of the American people". The apathy of people facing a mechanism of death which they have created and do not know how to control.

Mao called this Beast a "paper tiger" despite its mechanism that can overkill mankind. For the Beast has an inner weakness, its actions must be launched by men. No sane man anywhere, whether Chinese or American, will willingly destroy the human race. Hence the Beast must act through deception. Its first, most dangerous weapon is not the Bomb, but the Big Lie.

The first attack must therefore be by facts against force, by historic data against Big Lies. For this the 1954 Geneva Agreements are excellent weapons.

China takes millions of people in mass meetings back to those Geneva Agreements. On July 20, 1954 (actually a bit after midnight on early July 21st but July 20 is the usually given date) the rule of France in Indo-China ended. In nine years' bitter struggle, the peoples of Indo-China had won their independence. **Three reborn nations**

emerged: Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos. Of these by far the strongest was Vietnam; the final victory was won by the Vietminh at Dienbienphu.

America refused to sign the Agreements but pledged not to use force or the threat of force to disturb them. **That was the First Big Lie.** For immediately Washington moved by cash and violence to take the place of France in Indo-China. For ten years Washington has broken the Geneva Agreements, Washington pre-eminently and alone.

All American publicity repeats that Vietnam was split into two nations by the Geneva Agreements. That is **the Second Big Lie.** Vietnam, like Laos and Cambodia, was recognized as an independent, sovereign, unified nation. In fact, the chief nation that won against France! The Vietminh as victors took power at once in Hanoi, till then the capital of all French Indo-China. The French, withdrawing, went out through Saigon. To facilitate this withdrawal, a temporary military demarcation line was set at the 17th Parallel, which was not to last beyond two years. "This military line shall in no way be considered a political or territorial boundary," said the Agreement. Communication across it was to be kept open by an International Control Commission; and within two years, by July 20, 1956, joint elections supervised by the Commission were to elect the joint government for all Vietnam. Nobody doubted that this unified government would be that of the victorious President Ho Chi Minh!

Washington, not the Geneva Agreements, broke Vietnam into two nations. Twelve days after the signing of the Agreements, a mass meeting held in Saigon to celebrate the achievement of victory and peace, was broken up by the guns of Ngo Dinh Diem, America's hireling.

On the date of July 20, 1956, when elections under the International Commission were to have been held, 20 truckloads of Diem's troops wrecked the headquarters of the Commission in Saigon. Thus America established itself by violence in Indo-China, violating the Geneva-agreed peace.

The **Third Big Lie** is the plaintive refrain by Dean Rusk and others: "If only Hanoi and Peking would not interfere in the south, the American troops could all go home." Neither Hanoi nor Peking have intervened with troops or military bases in the south. Washington was, and is, the sole aggressor.

Big Lie Number Four is that Washington seeks "democracy" in South Vietnam. Persecuted, jailed, slaughtered to the estimated number of a million victims, the people of South Vietnam have spoken their will by armed revolt. Today their **National Liberation Front controls** and administers at least **three-fourths of the territory and eight out of fourteen million of the South Vietnamese people**, and wins increasing victories over the American-propped forces of Saigon. "Democracy" demands that the U.S. forces let the National Liberation Front take over as the majority.

Big Lie Number Five is that Washington "gives aid" to South Vietnam. The American tax-payers are indeed pouring out money at a rate that has reached nearly two million dollars a day. This money is spent, not to "aid" but to slaughter the South Vietnamese people, to destroy their crops by chemical and insect warfare, to herd them into concentration camps known as "strategic villages". . . . Americans paid for 8,000 such "strategic hamlets"; all but 1,000 have now been destroyed by the Vietnamese people.

Big Lie Number Six is that Washington is in Indo-China by some kind of "legal right". The Geneva Agreements provided that Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia should be neutral states, admitting **no foreign military forces and no foreign military bases**. Washington moved in, set up military bases. Its agreements with its own hirelings have no more legality than a gangsters' pact.

When Washington claims to do this in resistance to intervention by Peking or Hanoi, this is **Big Lie Number Seven**. Peking, despite much provocation, has not sent a soldier into Indo-China. As for Hanoi, Defense Secretary McNamara admitted in news conference in Washington July 15 that "he knows of no instance of infiltration of organized North Vietnam troops into the south".

Such are the facts that China uses as weapons. Ten years ago fourteen Nations meeting in Geneva promised peace, independence, sovereignty to the peoples of Indo-China. Yet for ten years the gunfire has not ceased; it has grown. Washington has been the sole aggressor, robbing the people of their fruits of victory:

In Vietnam by "special warfare";

In Laos by paid gangsters and now by direct war;

In Cambodia by subversion and border raids.

* * *

How will it end? Let us be brief. Ten years of intervention shows that Washington's policy gets victims but not victories. In South Vietnam and in Laos the victories of the people's forces increase. In both these countries they hold three-fourths of the territory. Even in Saigon, according to the *NY Herald Tribune's* correspondent, most merchants "pay taxes to the Vietcong". When the South Vietnam Liberation Front celebrated the

July 20 anniversary by telling the truckers and busses that the highway from Saigon to the delta rice-bowl was mined, no trucks or busses took that road and several food markets in Saigon closed for lack of rice. Probably the Liberation forces could take Saigon, but refrain lest the city be destroyed since America still controls the violence of the upper air. But America's power on the ground in Vietnam and Laos rests on shaky hirelings who may at any moment fall to other coups.

Two ways are proposed out of this stalemate, escalation of war, or neutralization by conference. Neither is likely before the American elections; but one or the other seems likely soon after. Which?

Despite big talk of escalation, sober elements in the U.S. Military do not advise it. Again, as in Korea, this is the "wrong war in the wrong place", this time without allies. If the U.S. cannot smash the "Vietcong" will it help to take on also the crack army of North Vietnam which beat the French at Dienbienphu? To expand war here lights fires in the world's most explosive powder-keg that might sweep all Southeast Asia. And even if nuclear bombs were hurled all over China, would this guarantee submission by the Vietcong or Pathet Lao?

Senator Wayne Morse saw this danger when on June 23 Secretary McNamara and General Maxwell Taylor briefed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the war. Said Morse: "I am now convinced that the greatest threat to the peace of the world is the United States. I am convinced that if the U.S. continues to follow (this plan) we are headed for a major war in Asia and we will be hated by the overwhelming majority of mankind for the next 500 years."

The consensus of opinion grows across the world for negotiation. One nation after another says it: Cambodia, Burma, Pakistan and now De Gaulle and Uthant. Even in America 5,000 professors in early July sent a petition to President Johnson to negotiate for neutralization, but they still hoped to eat their cake and keep it, for they spoke of "militancy" to "negotiate from strength".

Let the Americans make no mistake. Their position is one of weakness. Their allies desert them; the Vietcong wins. Any conference now convened in Geneva will consist of nations most of which are saying: "Yankees must go home." Nor will Americans be allowed to play with these decisions again.

So negotiation will be hard; Washington will not soon agree. But sooner or later, that is the order the U.S. troops must obey. The sooner the American people understand this, the better for their own survival and that of the world.

COUNTING ON THE NEXT GENERATION

Delegates from the more than 20,000,000 members of the **Chinese Communist Youth League** — aged 15 to 25 or slightly more — held their Congress in Peking the last two weeks of June. Eloquent leaders urged them to be "revolutionaries forever" in the "three major revolutionary movements at home — class struggle, production and scientific experiment" and "also in class struggles on an international scale". An important, stirring Congress, described in *Peking Review*, July 10th.

People outside China will better understand its meaning from **young people in two of my friends' families**. Shirley Wood Huang, once of Michigan State College, knows much more about China's education than I. She teaches English in the Teacher-Training College in Kaifeng, Honan, and brings up six children of her own. She somehow got time to write an excellent article on Chinese education, in London *Times* May 15, 1964.

Shirley tells how her 17-year-old son Limin, hearing in school that "we should **learn from the Liberation Army and mend our own clothes**", got a needle and thread from the family work-basket and rose early next morning to mend a tear in his jacket. Her ten-year-old Ann "once a week demands torn shirts and stockings to mend in labor class" and goes on fine days to the pond with the class to do her laundry.

"As a mother of six," writes Shirley, "I might take the short view and welcome the children repairing their own wear and tear. . . . As a national policy, this is part of the socialist education of youth, whose cornerstones are diligence, thrift, self-reliance and service of the people.

"Underlying everything is the collective idea and the struggle against individualism. This is not suppression of individuality. Nowhere is the opportunity for individuality so ample as in a nation beginning rapid development in agriculture, industry, science and culture. It means that revolutionary ambition is combined with humility and unostentatious hard work, with the theme of **stand up to difficulties yourself and leave glory to others**. The songs we sing, the films we see, the books we read extol simplicity, hard work, responsibility, quick thinking and unselfishness and keep fresh the memory of the

suffering of the past and the heroism of the men and women who built the present.”

The reading habits of Chinese children begin with pre-school pictorials and “work through fairy and folk tales and children’s books until by the sixth grade they are reading modern novels, with old language classics soon after”. The *Children’s News*, published twice a week, is eagerly read; it carries current news, editorials, stories, poems, riddles, pictorial strips. “The children know as soon as I do that Zanzibar has a new government.” In middle school—7th to 12th grade—each class subscribes to the *People’s Daily*, the local newspaper, and the fortnightly *China Youth*, which discusses the additional subjects of love, marriage and the choice of profession.

Group labor with the surrounding peasants holds a very important place. “Last year, when East Honan had heavy rains that destroyed both spring and autumn crops, and the new planting was hindered by shortage of draught animals due to several years of drought, and the tractors could not get through the deep mud of the roads, the colleges and schools from the ninth through the twelfth grades hiked out to the country as their labor stint and for a week drew ploughs, harrows and seeders, saving a large area from loss.

“The youngsters lived and ate with the villagers, took their share of family chores, listened to lectures by the brigade leader. Limin returned speaking of ‘my production brigade’, ‘my family’. The commune members saw the young folks back for miles on their way.” Shirley herself has been on several such labor weeks with students and speaks of “the grand struggle against nature, the crying necessity for modernization of the countryside,

the glorious fun of collective labor, and the deep fraternity that springs up between the youth and the peasants”.

Successive stages of responsibility are described in which children join the Young Pioneers, and later perhaps the Communist Youth. “All these experiences are linked by cradle-to-grave education.” “We cannot expect spontaneous ethical evolution” to keep pace with the tremendous changes “in the structure of the economy and of society”. We must also “foster the accompanying ideological growth”.

Parents outside China will find Shirley’s description of China’s teen-agers hard to believe. “As a mother” she felt this socialist education “**solved the adolescent problem.** Children become more reliable, more reasonable, more steady as they grow older. **Adolescence is the age when they start dressing simply,** paying attention to cleanliness and neatness, keeping their things in order. They spend less money, having outgrown childish trivia. . . . They even call their parents to account for extravagance in the family budget. They voluntarily take over a share in the household organization. By 12 they can carry out responsible tasks; Limin in the 6th grade went after dark to a village to bring back equipment for the school’s puddling furnace. They are strict in their demands on themselves and can think their way through difficult decisions and social relationships”.

* * *

I supplement this with an anecdote told by a Chinese friend, who is a member of the National People’s Congress, about his ten-year-old daughter.

When Washington politicians had recently been commenting on China, the little girl remarked after school: "Daddy, teacher says the American imperialists say they are **counting on my generation.**" She waited for her father's nod of confirmation and then went on:

"So I'm going to study hard — and disappoint them."

NINTH COMMENT

Under title "On Khrushchov's Phoney Communism and Its Historical Lessons for the World", the two leading organs of the Chinese Communist Party, *People's Daily* and *Red Flag*, issued on July 14th their "Comment Number Nine" in the series of answers to the "Open Letter of the CPSU" put out by Moscow just a year ago. The most sweeping condemnation thus far of Khrushchov and the present Soviet leadership, it charges them with building a "privileged stratum" of less than ten percent of the people, divorced from the needs of the masses and, in the name of communism, really leading back to capitalism. Hope is expressed that the Soviet people and the "Party founded by Lenin" will eventually take the right road. I shall not attempt to review this comment; it may be found in full in *Peking Review*, July 17, 1964. The comment concludes with a fifteen-point statement, attributed to Mao Tse-tung, on how to prevent the restoration of capitalism in a socialist country, **a question whose importance goes far beyond any relevance to the USSR.** It states that historically, all revolutions have their twists and turns and even reverses, that even in a socialist country after the taking of political power, a struggle con-

tinues between those forces that seek to build socialism and those that threaten return to capitalism, and this is a long struggle which may run into centuries.

The debate which this opens cannot be quickly disposed of; it will spread over years. The Chinese are giving major attention to a study of their own history and also the "positive and negative aspects" of other socialist countries, especially the USSR, in an effort to understand how socialism can be kept from back-sliding in future generations and carried forward into communism. This will not occur automatically by mere increase of commodities, they believe. They think the USSR is not developing in that direction but in the reverse.

Among the fifteen basic principles one notes especially: the "mass line", in which Mao sees the Central Committee as a "processing plant", discovering and collecting the opinions of the masses, sifting them, formulating them into policies and testing these in practise. Close contact must be maintained between leaders and people in many ways: by leaders taking part in actual physical labor, by constant reference of all policies to popular discussion. Class struggle continues and socialist education must continue against "remnants of bourgeois tendencies". Among other things, Comment Nine takes issue with the wide gap of wages between leaders and workers, as begun under Stalin and developed under Khrushchov. I hope to say more on this and other principles in later letters.

From questions like these, basic to the future of socialism and hence to the future of mankind, it becomes clear why China feels that any hasty worldwide conference of Communist Parties at present would only finalize a split and weaken the world communist movement. But if basic

discussion of such questions can go on based on concrete practise, a discussion which the USSR does not yet permit, then the world's progressive forces have much to gain.

Anna Louise Strong

Letter Number 20

CALM CENTER AMID STORMS

September 20, 1964

Dear friends,

As autumn again brings the Harvest Moon Festival, China is seen to have progressed in all fields. Despite excessive rains in some places and two unseasonal recent typhoons, this is the best of three good harvests for three successive years in grain, industrial crops, vegetables, fruit. Livestock has multiplied notably. Industry also advanced faster than expected so that the **stage of "Re-adjustment" is already considered over, and some spectacular increases appear on the new, self-reliant, soundly balanced base.** These matters I leave to the following letter which I hope to bring out quickly on the basis of data now appearing for the celebration of National Day.

For two months **the world's attention**, as well as China's, has been turning to the war which Washington steadily escalates in Indo-China, an area which, as the *NY Times* notes Sept. 20, "could spark a catastrophic conflict". In precisely this area — as well as in the Congo and the Caribbean — war provocations increase by the U.S. and its puppets.

Cambodia reports repeated attacks on its frontier by raiders from South Vietnam; three cases belatedly checked

by the International Control Commission confirmed these accusations. Cambodia's press unearthed Sept. 16 a "U.S. plot to assassinate Prince Sihanouk, disrupt the country from within and attack at the same time from without by forces from South Vietnam and Thailand".

In Laos the right-wing troops, with U.S. air-cover, continue to attack the "liberated areas"; ten such attacks, by more than ten battalions, occurred in the first half of September. More happily we note that primary school enrolment reached 36,000 in the liberated areas this autumn, three times what all Laos had in 1945.

The disintegration of South Vietnam is a world scandal which Washington tries to evade by driving the war north. The Aug. 5 air strike against North Vietnam's ports has been followed by continuous intrusions by U.S. planes, singly or in groups, listed in 15 provinces of North Vietnam in the last ten days of August.

On Sept. 18 in the already well-known Tonkin Gulf, **U.S. Destroyers Were Shooting at Ghosts in the Night.** The staid *NY Times*, Sept. 20 expressed "dismay" at the evasive accounts the U.S. authorities gave. Two U.S. destroyers, whose names were withheld, got radar shadows they took for vessels pursuing them, several miles away. Failing to change these shadows by changing direction, they shot at the apparitions, which then "disappeared". Nobody saw any actual ships, still less any actual attack. The *NY Herald Tribune* suggests that the destroyer commanders "got jittery and fired at phantoms in the night". The *Times* suggests they fired "in excessive nervousness" and deplores the "evidence of confusion both in Washington and on the American warships". These are terms used, guardedly, of madness.

Hanoi, taugth by the Aug. 5 air strike, wired the International Control Commission and the two co-chairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference that Washington was "creating a myth" to justify another attack. No new air strike occurred. Was it prevented by Hanoi's warning or by world ridicule of Washington's reports? What is clear is that U.S. warships go eight thousand miles from home to other people's waters and assume the right to shoot anything that crosses their radar screen. Have others no rights on the "high seas"?

The danger of escalating war thus remains. How shall people act when a great power that tried to rule the world by nuclear bombs, fails, grows desperate and shoots at shadows? This is a world problem.

Sanity, courage, restraint are qualities needed. Fortunately Hanoi and Peking have these in good supply. Accurate publicity is also needed. So I spent a month collecting and sifting the facts on Tonkin Gulf.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED IN TONKIN GULF?

For nearly two months Washington has been escalating war in Indo-China, including Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, under cover of President Johnson's vocal tributes to peace.

We start with the U.S. air strike Aug. 5, in which, according to Secretary McNamara, 64 "sorties" of aircraft from two U.S. carriers attacked five North Vietnam ports. President Johnson announced it to "my fellow Americans" at 11.37 p.m., Aug. 4, Washington time, which was

just before noon on Aug. 5 on Tonkin Gulf. He said that "as President and Commander-in-Chief" he had ordered the U.S. forces into action and that "as I speak, the action is in execution". This, he said, was in retaliation for two attacks by North Vietnamese torpedo boats on U.S. destroyers on Aug. 2 and 4, and the punishment was "limited and fitting". He added: "We do not seek to widen war."

Johnson's statement, at once supported by his opponent Barry Goldwater and by the U.S. press, may have convinced many Americans. It did not convince the world. Hanoi declared that the alleged torpedo boat attack on Aug. 4 never took place but was "fabricated" by Washington to excuse the air strike on the 5th. Peking stated that the U.S. has gone beyond the "brinkmanship of John Foster Dulles"; it had gone "over the brink of war".

Even in countries allied to the U.S.A., many editors called the air strike "an act of war", and held that Washington was looking for trouble in patrolling Tonkin Gulf, that a "drive to the north" had been planned in the Honolulu Conference of top brass June 1 and 2, and the tale of attack by North Vietnam was thin.

We shall take up first the two accounts of the alleged attacks by North Vietnam, then the air strike on Aug. 5 and its results, in Vietnam and the world.

The American story, given by AP and UPI from official sources, is that on Sunday, Aug. 2, the U.S. destroyer Maddox, patrolling "in international waters" off the coast of North Vietnam, was attacked by three North Vietnamese torpedo boats, drove them off "in a sharp encounter" and while itself untouched, "damaged and apparently sank" one of the attackers. The Maddox then patrolled the Gulf for two more days, being joined by

another destroyer, the C. Turner Joy. On the night of the 4th, 65 miles from shore, "in a stormy sea with low visibility" these two U.S. warships were attacked by "several torpedo boats" in a three-hour battle in which the U.S. destroyers, themselves untouched, sank two and perhaps three of the attackers.

These "acts of violence against the armed forces of the United States", to use President Johnson's words, were "outrages" demanding punishment. The U.S. Fleet therefore made its air strike on the 5th by "64 sorties", estimated to have destroyed 25 North Vietnamese torpedo boats—"more than half of Hanoi's fleet"—and also "90 percent of the oil storage of Vinh", chief fuel port for Hanoi. The air strike was thus "successful", despite the loss of two U.S. planes shot down and two damaged, which McNamara stated, and which Hanson Baldwin, military expert of the *NY Times*, called a "fairly high rate".

The image thus conveyed of a U.S. navy, policing the world's high seas, punishing all attackers and never itself being hit, and "not wanting to widen war", may have been useful in getting both the "peace" vote and the "war" vote for Johnson. But it was an image in which not even America's allies believed.

The British *Guardian* at once suggested (Aug. 6) that the Tonkin Gulf is "except for its mouth, entirely surrounded by Communist territory" (China and North Vietnam), and "a warship flying the American flag could expect to attract attention"; that the air strike "and the great movement now proceeding of military power into Southeast Asia had long been planned and required only a suitable occasion (easily manufactured) to set it off";

and that "past experience of Washington's 'news management' " raised doubt about those torpedo boat attacks.

The Toronto *Telegram* used blunter words. Its military commentator, Lt. Commander J. B. Lamb, wrote (Aug. 14) that the alleged Aug. 4 torpedo boat attack "just wasn't in the cards" for various military reasons, but was made of "calculated untruths in which the victim became the aggressor". Many well-informed newspapers around the world such as *Le Monde* of Paris, *Asahi* of Japan, the London *Observer*, the Stockholm *Tidningen*, the *Journal d'Egypte* in Cairo, took similar positions and added interesting details. The London *Observer* noted that one reason the U.S. warships patrolled the Tonkin Gulf was "to listen electronically to the communication networks in China and North Vietnam, and to spot for the South Vietnam navy". World opinion generally agreed, as the diplomatic commentator for the Japanese Broadcasting Service stated (Aug. 7): "No matter how much the U.S. insists that Tonkin Gulf is the 'high seas', common sense tells us that it is the inland sea of North Vietnam".

THE ACCOUNT BY HANOI

Hanoi denied Washington's story and gave events for a longer period. For more than a year the U.S. Seventh Fleet has asserted the right to patrol Tonkin Gulf. The U.S. built and maintains a huge air and naval base at Da Nang, a port in South Vietnam just below the Parallel, where U.S. ships have permanent anchorage and from which at intervals they set out to intimidate fishermen in the Gulf. South Vietnam warships also go north to shell the coast and land commando detachments. The U.S. has given Saigon 500 militarized junks for this purpose,

in addition to its regular navy. The U.S. claims that its warships stay outside the three-mile shore limit and do not give special escort to South Vietnam's attacks. But since China and North Vietnam both claim twelve miles as the shore limit, the U.S. habit of patrolling ostentatiously in defiance of North Vietnam's laws is clearly provocative, and the presence of U.S. warships undoubtedly encourages South Vietnam's gunboats. South Vietnam's ships observe no shore limits; they come for open war.

In other provocations, U.S. planes, with or without U.S. pilots, intrude frequently into North Vietnam, both for spying and for attack, coming apparently from South Vietnam, Laos or Thailand. They also drop commando detachments. No less than thirteen commando groups have been captured and brought to trial in the past year.

All these activities, says Hanoi, increased sharply in August, presumably by plans of that Honolulu Conference and by the presence of Maxwell Taylor as the U.S. ambassador in Saigon. On July 30 two South Vietnam gunboats invaded the Gulf and shelled two offshore islands. On the night of the 31st, the USS Maddox entered and cruised two days, "the longest and deepest penetration yet made by a U.S. warship". Two air attacks were made in these same days, by U.S. planes apparently based on Laos, which bombed and strafed a frontier post on the border and a village well inside North Vietnam.

The first torpedo boat incident on Sunday Aug. 2 is given by Hanoi in a laconic statement that the shore patrol encountered the USS Maddox "in territorial waters" not far from the recently shelled islands, that they "drove it out and then returned to base". No mention of casualties or torpedoes. We owe to Senator Wayne Morse the

revelation, made in a speech in California (AP Aug. 30), that the Maddox was "inside the three-mile limit" and "began the shooting, thinking it was going to be attacked". Morse adds that North Vietnamese patrols could easily have taken the Maddox for "part of the raiding party".

So much for the first incident. Now for the sequel. On Aug. 3, says Hanoi, the U.S. "sent four small ships escorted by two big ones", an apparent reference to the Maddox and Turner Joy. These "fired on two areas in Quang Ming Province with 40 mm cannon and 12.7 heavy machine-guns." Hanoi then sent formal complaint to London and Moscow, the co-chairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference, that the U.S. "has made five provocative attacks in four days".

The alleged torpedo boat attack on the two destroyers 65 miles from shore on the dark, stormy night of Aug. 4, never took place, according to Hanoi. "We had no patrols at sea that night; the tale was a fabrication". Hanoi suggests a possible source. "According to reports", U.S. destroyers from Da Nang held conference on the morning of the 4th with some South Vietnamese gunboats. Late that night "people heard gunfire far out at sea, and saw flares and planes circling to the west of Da Nang". This hints joint staging by South Vietnamese and a U.S. agency.

Such is Hanoi's account of the long train of provocations that culminated in the Aug. 5 U.S. air strike.

THE U.S. STRIKE ON AUG. 5

Washington officially boasts of the great destruction their air strike made in North Vietnam's ports. The accounts that came from those ports did not speak of damage; they spoke of **Joy!** "**An atmosphere of Joy reigned over Hongay,**" wrote the local correspondent.

Those words haunted me through the night. I understand those words for I have been in Hongay, a beach resort that will some day be internationally famous, where tourists cruise by launch among fantastic shapes of rock as remarkable as any in the Yellowstone. Hongay has also one of the biggest and best coal mines of Asia, open cut where miners bulldoze coal right off the surface and dump into cars that run to a small port.

I met an engineer in Hongay who is a Southerner. He fought in the Vietminh against France at Dienbienphu. After the victory, he was demobilized in the North and could never get south again because the Americans blocked the parallel that by treaty should have been kept open. He does not dare even to write his family, lest this cause them to be tortured and killed. He works patiently and sadly in the North to build the economy which he hopes will one day serve a united Vietnam. There are thousands like him in the North who have restrained themselves for ten years. On Aug. 5 they had the first chance in ten years to hit the enemy who deprived them of wives and children. Yes! I believe they felt Joy!

As the U.S. planes came over and dropped bombs, some workers leaped to battle posts and shot back. Others kept on cutting coal, proudly fulfilling their daily target under fire. The girl on the telephone lines kept them open, and later got a medal for it. Hongay gunners brought down two U.S. planes and thousands saw them hit the sea. The U.S. pilot bailed out of the first and a fisherman caught him and handed him to the Security Police. The second plane went into the sea afire.

All over North Vietnam they began holding meetings. The keynote was "Victory!" and "Vigilance!" I don't think they would celebrate victory if the U.S. planes had

inflicted all the losses Washington claims. Therefore I think the U.S. claims are wrong.

I asked a Japanese correspondent who visited North Vietnam after the air strike, whether they really felt they won the victory. "They certainly do," she replied.

"Do they think it victory because they got so many planes or because of the way they fought or because of the effect around the world?"

"All three reasons," she said.

Hanoi claims they brought down eight U.S. planes and damaged three more. Hanoi gives the location of every plane brought down, and also gave eight Military Medals Third Class to the crews that downed them. Hanoi exhibited the wreckage of four U.S. planes with their numbers in a public square and showed it on television; the people of Hongay testify to two planes more, and the U.S. admits one plane that went into the sea in another place. That's much better evidence for seven than the U.S. gives for any of its claims! If Baldwin thought "two down and two damaged" a "fairly high rate" of loss, seven proved down was a whale of a victory for Hanoi!

WHAT THEN IS VICTORY?

Victory, however, is more than the difference between two and eight planes. Victory concerns the ultimate aim of both sides. Washington's aim in the air strike was clearly to strengthen its puppet in South Vietnam, to expand U.S. power in Southeast Asia and its status in the world. In all these the U.S. suffered its greatest defeat since the Korean War.

The first result in South Vietnam was chaos, in which Khanh, the U.S. chosen puppet, fell. For weeks power

passed from hand to hand in Saigon as the local warlords fought for control of that two million dollars a day of U.S. aid. Though Maxwell Taylor, by power and cash, got Khanh technically reinstated, even the *NY Times* says the hope is only to keep up appearance until the U.S. elections, and that even this hope is insecure.

The result around the world was a sharp drop in the prestige of the United States and a sharp rise in the prestige of Hanoi. The little half nation of North Vietnam, hitherto disregarded, became the rallying center for the anti-imperialist forces of the world!

Cambodia acted first, hailing the U.S. air strike as a victory for Hanoi. Sihanouk cabled Ho Chi Minh his "firm support". Then, landing in Djakarta, he "levelled a verbal blast at the U.S.A." (*UPI*), in which President Sukarno joined him. Cambodia and Indonesia both established diplomatic relations with Hanoi which meant a break with Saigon. Voices from other nations in Africa and Asia quickly chimed in. Pakistan and Japan were especially significant for both have been allies of the United States. In both the press spoke critically of Washington's air strike, while popular anti-U.S.A. demonstrations ran to tens of thousands of demonstrators in Tokyo and 40,000 in Osaka. Even the Ghana *Spectator* said: "Uncle Sam is a peculiar, arrogant, pushful animal."

TO SUM UP:

- 1) **Washington's Aug. 5 air strike was based on the "Big Lie" technique, and is disbelieved around the world.**
- 2) **The United States lost by the air strike, and North Vietnam gained.**
- 3) **Nonetheless the forces that produced the air strike continue and the danger of escalating war persists.** The

U.S. has no right in Indo-China but will not get out. Defeated, it grows desperate, ready to shoot up the world.

I personally am glad, for the sake of man's survival, that the strategy against this still deadly imperialism is not in the hands of an alternate hot-head and appeaser like Khrushchov, but in the hands first of people like those of North Vietnam, who, having by far the best army in Southeast Asia, restrained themselves under ten years of slander and provocation and fought only when attacked on their own soil; and next of a nation like China, whose leaders plan clearly, act firmly and rely on the strength, intelligence and courage of the people, believing that man is stronger than the bomb.

CHINA'S WARNING—THE CHAT WITH CHEN YI

China's position was several times stated, that war against North Vietnam would be war against China. The most dramatic comment was the off-the-cuff chat by Vice-Premier Chen Yi with delegates from fifteen countries, who stopped in Peking on the way home from the Tokyo Anti-A and H Bomb Conference. These remarks on Aug. 19 by the man who is both Foreign Minister and a former revolutionary commander, a Marshal knowing war, swept Peking's informed circles.

Chen Yi accepted Hanoi's statement that the alleged torpedo boat attack on the U.S. destroyers Aug. 4, was a "fabrication" by Washington to justify its premeditated air strike on Aug. 5. He dealt chiefly with three questions. WHY did the U.S. attack North Vietnam? What will

happen if the war widens? What if the worst comes to the worst?

Chief cause for the air strike, said Chen Yi, was "inner contradiction" in the United States, including the Johnson-Goldwater contest, the collapse in South Vietnam and other contradictions. "Why was President Kennedy murdered and why is this case of murder not yet cleared up? This shows deep contradictions in the ruling group. This creates instability and leads to rash acts."

The air strike failed; it did not improve the position of the U.S. in South Vietnam or in the world. The U.S. pulled back; neither Hanoi nor Peking will let war widen because of a rash slap. But if the U.S. really brings war into North Vietnam, then China will fight. "We cannot permit the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to be made a victim."

If the war thus widens, Chen Yi agrees with the statement of President Johnson that it would cost millions of lives. It would not be like the Korean War; the scope would be wider. "The situation differs, the strategy and tactics also would differ."

"First, eight million people in South Vietnam support the people's forces there. If the U.S. uses the South to attack the North, it will first lose the South."

Second, in Korea the U.S. depended on armies of 14 nations through the United Nations. In Vietnam the U.S. fights alone; no ally offers serious help. Even the Philippines which declared it would enter the war, took it back almost at once. Japan cannot serve as standby ally and arsenal as in Korea, both because of distance and because the Japanese people are unwilling. No place in Southeast Asia has the heavy industry to give the help Japan gave in Korea. To fight the D.R.V. the U.S. has no stable rear.

"Armies also look to their flanks. In Korea, a narrow peninsula, there were no flanks. In Indo-China the flanks are wide and include several countries. The U.S. will find it necessary to occupy Cambodia; this already worries Prince Sihanouk." Chen Yi listed Laos and Thailand as nations that would be drawn in, "ranging as far as Singapore". If the U.S. brings in Japan, this will bring in Korea. The U.S. could devastate widely but "could gain nothing from such a war".

Friends in America who write me that the U.S. "is eager to drop nuclear bombs on China" and that "China cannot count on Khrushchov to come to her aid", should be told that China is well aware of this. Chen Yi's most striking remark envisaged even a worse possibility. "Let us take the worst. The Americans might occupy our southern provinces, Kwangtung, Kwangsi, Yunnan. Even suppose Khrushchov seized Sinkiang and the northeast (Manchuria) and occupied Peking. Much of China remains where millions of people will resist invaders. I personally come from Szechuan; I would continue to fight from the hills of Szechuan."

The warning was clear. China will not widen war, not wishing to see millions dead. But if the U.S. widens it to North Vietnam, China will fight. In that case the U.S. will eventually lose, because China fights stubbornly with a people loyal to the justice of their cause, while the U.S. is unstable, relying on nuclear bombs in an unjust cause. If the U.S. cannot conquer fourteen million people in South Vietnam, can she handle seven hundred million in China?

Chen Yi's warning was intended to restrain the U.S. from escalating war.

PEKING SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM

The 367 scientists from 44 countries on four continents that met in Peking at the end of August had no direct concern with Washington's wars. They were taking up the cause of science in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania, four continents in which live three quarters of the human race. They were fighting for the "dignity of science", a science independent of imperialist control, a science not "criminally abused by the U.S. for purposes of mass slaughter", but dedicated to man's advance.

The Science Symposium was part of a chain reaction that began nearly ten years ago in Bandung, when newly independent African and Asian nations met for the first time to discuss their mutual affairs without the presence of foreign overlords. The "Bandung idea", beginning with political independence, swept into fields of economics, culture, trade and sport, as in the Ganefo Games in Indonesia. Now it was the turn of science. The Peking Symposium had been prepared for a year.

The scientists doubtless knew that Washington had over 200 war bases in Japan, another 200 in South Korea, and hundreds more from Okinawa down to Thailand, with missiles trained on China's cities. They might have heard the recent revelation of deadly nerve gas, stockpiled in South Korea, enough to wipe out half the people in Asia. But these were not their immediate concern.

"The decisive question is 'Who Controls Science?'" said the *People's Daily* in a welcoming editorial. "If the people control it, the result is social and material progress. If imperialism controls it, the result is the atom-bombing of Hiroshima and the chemical warfare now in South Vietnam." Greetings from several heads of state expanded

this idea. "Modern science is no longer the monopoly of the Western powers," said Sihanouk.

A mathematician from Mexico, a metallurgist from Cairo, a New Zealand geologist, biologists from Africa, all agreed that science in Asia and Africa had once been the highest in the world "until imperialist aggression laid the axe to its roots and retarded its growth". Now, by self-reliance and mutual exchange, sciences in these areas would grow for the benefit of the peoples there.

Sessions were held from August 21 for eleven days, and nearly 300 papers were read, chiefly on technical subjects in section meetings — natural science, medical science, agricultural science and other subdivisions. Biologists discussed the preservation and use of natural resources of plants and wild animals in Africa, the handling of malaria in Nigeria, the "pond-culture of tilapia", one of the fish resources in East Africa. On vital crop problems, outstanding papers came from Japan, China, Korea, Burma on rice culture, from Iraq and Pakistan on wheat, from Mexico on cotton. North Korea distinguished itself by telling how it wiped out hog cholera by 1960. China told how syphilis had been brought under control. In the newer sciences there were papers on atomic beam apparatus and neutron spectroscopy from China, on mathematical programming from Vietnam, on three-dimensional problems of elasticity from Jordan.

South Vietnam's National Front of Liberation sent scientists, one of whom presented a paper in the medical section on "the chemicals used by the U.S. in its war against plants", while another read a paper for the social sciences on "Special Warfare as a Method of Neo-Colonialism" and the way the people resist it. Since

everyone wanted to hear this, it was given at a general session to much applause. That single paper, carried by 367 scientists into 44 nations, will probably do more harm to Washington's world aims than the U.S. did on Aug. 5 to North Vietnam.

For the scientists it was only one incident in a long range strategy, which mobilizes the creative mind of man. They set up a secretariat for contacts and will hold their next general Symposium in 1968.

Anna Louise Strong

While this book was in press, two events occurred that may become a watershed in world affairs.

On October 15, 1964 Khrushchov was deposed from leadership in the USSR.

On October 16, China detonated her first A-bomb, pledged never to be the first to use it, and called on all actual and potential nuclear powers to make the same pledge. Premier Chou En-lai sent notes to all nations proposing that all heads of states confer to ban nuclear weapons of every kind and destroy all stockpiles.

These events with their widening repercussions are dealt with in my subsequent letters.

A.L.S.

安娜·路易斯·斯特朗通訊集

(第二集)

安娜·路易斯·斯特朗著

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新世界出版社出版(北京)

1964年第一版

編号: (英)3050-1039

00088

3-E-640P

THE RISE OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S COMMUNES — AND SIX YEARS AFTER

ANNA LOUISE STRONG

Six years have passed since the establishment of the Chinese People's Communes in 1958. Denounced and even declared "dead" by China's enemies, they have in fact demonstrated their unparalleled usefulness and vitality as a form of socialist organization in the rural areas. In this book Anna Louise Strong, the famous American writer, gives an eyewitness account of scores of communes she has visited in various parts of China. Its first part is the full text of her well-received "Rise of the Chinese People's Communes", originally published in 1959. The second, "The Three Hard Years", is her on-the-spot reporting of the cardinal role of the communes in overcoming the natural calamities of 1959-61. The third, "Communes in 1964", is the result of close observation of communes and their brigades and teams on the scale of one province, plus important concluding chapters dealing with the entire national economy and the role of the communes today. Rich in facts, impressions and interviews, the whole book illustrates the author's own remark in her foreword: "A nation's greatness show itself to the world in many ways but always the foundations lie in its internal life. The people's communes are the form of China's rural life today, a base of her internal strength."