

# WORLD OUTLOOK

PERSPECTIVE MONDIALE

*Un service de presse ouvrier*

Vol. 3, No. 6

February 12, 1965

21, rue d'Aboukir - PARIS-2

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Why did Johnson take this maniacal "calculated" risk?

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that the military attack on North Vietnam was not intended as a challenge to the Soviet Union -- which has an effective atomic power equal to that of the United States -- but only as a "reprisal" on the tiny little country of North Vietnam, which the White House has decided to hold responsible for the actions of the freedom fighters in South Vietnam, particularly if they dare to attack any of the 21,000 acknowledged American military "advisers" of the puppet government and its mercenary forces. Such an attack occurred at Pleiku February 7, leaving 116 American casualties. Johnson offered this as an "excuse" for bombing North Vietnam.

Despite the State Department explanations, the bombing was clearly intended not only as "punishment" of North Vietnam but as pressure on Moscow. Soviet Premier Alexei N. Kosygin happened to be in Hanoi when Johnson ordered the assault on North Vietnam. Johnson could hardly have dealt him a more stinging slap unless he had ordered Hanoi itself bombed.

The timing of the assault would thus tend to show that Johnson did not intend to start a course of action that would escalate into atomic war although he took the risk that this might happen.

But why did Kosygin choose to visit Hanoi at this particular moment? The Soviet diplomats, the press has reported, have gone to extraordinary lengths to explain to the White House that the visit in no wise contradicts their policy of "peaceful coexistence" or their hope for a "summit" meeting with Johnson later in the year. In fact Alain Clement, the well-informed Washington correspondent of the Paris daily Le Monde reported February 1 that a "Soviet representative" at a "private meeting, and in his personal name" was reported to have said that "he believed that his government was seeking in the North Vietnam capital to help the Americans retire honorably from South Vietnam."

This ties in with a spate of recent rumors that Washington has decided to seek a "disengagement" in South Vietnam from the military conflict through some kind of negotiated settlement that would provide a "face-saving" formula for the American colossus.

Khrushchev's heirs may well have envisaged this as a shrewd move through which they could deliver something substantial to Johnson, while at the same time demonstrating the realistic nature of the policy of "peaceful coexistence," thus gaining better leverage in their dispute with Peking.

But Johnson, or one of the wings of the policy-makers to whom he lends ear, saw another possibility. The reality in South Vietnam is that American imperialism faces a major defeat. Its position is becoming more and more untenable. If the U.S. withdraws, what is to prevent Moscow from moving in? Kosygin's trip can thus be interpreted as a reassertion of the Soviet stake in Southeast Asia; and

while it is preferable from Washington's view to have Moscow there instead of Peking, it is a defeat for world capitalism in either case.

The bombing of North Vietnam can thus be interpreted as serving a double purpose in Washington's diplomatic game. It serves to strengthen Kosygin's hand in dealing with Hanoi and Peking by flagrantly displaying what madmen the Americans are -- willing to risk atomic war over any kind of "undisciplined" action undertaken by the South Vietnam freedom fighters. And it serves to remind Khrushchev's heirs, too, that they are dealing with the same power that precipitated the crisis in the Caribbean in 1962. With his bombs, Johnson told Kosygin not to try any genuinely independent moves in Southeast Asia.

The bombing of North Vietnam could serve still another purpose. Under cover of this "advance," Johnson ordered the withdrawal of American women and children from South Vietnam. While this fits in with a move to escalate the conflict, it also fits in with the first step in a staged withdrawal. It makes perfect logic to the military mind of the Pentagon to use an attack as a screen for a retreat.

However, some unexpected consequences may arise from Johnson's brinkmanship. First of all, Kosygin may now find it more difficult to push a policy of "peaceful coexistence" with American imperialism. One of the deadliest criticisms levelled against Khrushchev was his failure to provide North Vietnam with adequate military aid and to defend the beleaguered country against American aggression. Johnson's move now places Khrushchev's heirs in the spotlight on this very question. It will not be easy for them to wriggle out of it with mere platitudes. Something much more substantial is now required. Thus Johnson, perhaps inadvertently, strengthened Peking's hand and along with it, most likely, the military defenses of North Vietnam.

On another level, too, Johnson may have miscalculated. What is the effect on world opinion? So soon after his inauguration, Johnson shows that he feels completely free to bomb another country whenever diplomacy requires it -- without a declaration of war, without consulting Congress, simply on his own personal whim. Isn't it high time to call for a strait jacket?

As for the freedom fighters in South Vietnam, they will feel more than ever that their cause is not only a just one. It represents the cause of all humanity against a power that does not hesitate to risk turning our entire planet into a gas chamber.

In the United States itself Johnson's "popularity" can suffer a precipitous decline. The huge vote which he reaped in the election was cast primarily against Goldwater and it was cast in hope of blocking the kind of atomic brinkmanship which Johnson is now engaging in.

## DEFFERRE CAUGHT IN SQUEEZE PLAY

By Pierre Frank

PARIS, Feb. 7 -- The municipal elections in France are a little more than a month off. The slates of candidates have been drawn up almost everywhere. We have previously explained the importance of these elections [see World Outlook December 18, January 15] not only on the local level but also as a prelude to the presidential election toward the end of the year. We likewise explained the aim of the electoral regulations established by the Gaullist government for cities having a population higher than 30,000 -- to compel combinations to be polarized before the first round of votes as much as possible around the Union pour la Nouvelle République [UNR] or the French Communist party [PCF], so as to put greater pressure on the traditional bourgeois parties and to place the Socialist party [SFIO] under the shadow of the PCF.

The Socialist party has sought solutions to fit each local situation in order to maintain its municipal positions. Each departmental federation was authorized to act as it thought best in the light of its local interests. Thus in the Seine an agreement was reached with the PCF. The Socialist Federation of the Seine even imposed this decision on local sections where opposition was registered to the agreement. (Thus at Boulogne-Billancourt, the Socialist mayor Le Gallo was not put on the joint Socialist-Communist slate; at Villejuif, the Socialist section opposed putting its candidates on the same slate as the PCF candidates and so the Federation refused to give it funds to run an independent electoral campaign.) But elsewhere the Socialist leaders have formed alliances with bourgeois parties, refusing any agreement with the PCF. There is the example of Guy Mollet himself, who, to hold the Arras mayor's office, made a common slate with the MRP [Mouvement Républicain Populaire].

All the commentators have poked fun at the "bat" character of the SFIO tactic:

"I'm a bird; see my wings.

"I'm a mouse; hurrah for the rats."

The Communist party is denouncing this policy of the SFIO and advocating slates "of the left"; that is, including bourgeois candidates but excluding parties of the right or supporters of the Gaullist regime. This propaganda has been of little consequence save in one town. But what a town -- Marseille, France's second biggest city. And, still more, against whom -- Defferre, mayor of Marseille and candidate for president of the republic.

Gaston Defferre has refused any kind of dialogue with the PCF since his candidature was announced. He has dealt with all kinds of people and groups, but deliberately ignored the PCF. Re-

solved to seek the maximum number of votes from the right, he has said that in the final analysis the PCF would have to vote for him and that there was no need to pay anything for this even by way of exchange. This general orientation was also expressed in Marseille where he failed to reply to the proposals of the PCF and oriented toward a wide coalition with the Independents, the MRP, representatives of the "pieds-noirs" [reactionary white French born in Algeria], who have settled in large numbers in Marseille, and so on.

But the PCF is not without resources in Marseille, and the leadership of the party, if it does not shine in the field of the class struggle, needs no lessons from the slickest combinationists on the purely electoral level.

The electorate in Marseille is divided in eight sectors. In the 1959 municipal elections, the PCF candidates received around 96,000 votes; the SFIO, 92,000, a total of 68 per cent of the ballots. A Communist-Socialist agreement would thus be certain of a majority in the elections. On November 3, 1964, the Communist Federation made a proposal along these lines to the Socialist Federation, offering in addition to accept a Socialist as candidate for mayor (that is, Defferre), asking only for a fair division of posts and functions in the municipal government. Defferre turned a deaf ear to the proposal although it was twice offered.

But suddenly on January 31 it was announced that an agreement had been reached among "the candidates and leaders of the Marseille Socialists, republican personalities and the Bouches-du-Rhône Federation of the French Communist party" for the purpose "of constituting united slates of the democratic forces in Marseille." In plain language, this meant that the PCF had reached agreement with a wing of the Socialist party of Marseille to present slates claiming to represent a Communist-Socialist agreement against the slates made up by Defferre on which the names of reactionaries, clericals and pieds-noirs appear.

This agreement is of great importance due to the fact that the Socialists who signed it are not obscure individuals or people with a reputation of being more or less crypto-Communists. Quite the contrary. There is D. Matalon, an SFIO deputy, general councillor, town councillor, member of the executive commission of the Socialist Federation of Bouches-du-Rhône; M. Massias, vice-president of the general council, town councillor, secretary of the ninth Socialist section, member of the executive commission of the Federation; F. Sifredi, secretary of the fourth section, former member of the federal bureau; Briole, assistant to the mayor of Marseille. The signed agreement contains the same proposals that were offered to Defferre; namely -- in the first place -- a Socialist as mayor of the town in case of victory.

Why did these Socialist candidates accept this agreement? The question is probably of secondary importance so far as the effect

on the coming elections is concerned, but it is not devoid of interest. Why did men who in all probability were on Defferre's slate accept an agreement that puts them in opposition to him in such an extreme way? We do not know if personal conflicts were involved. The most likely explanation is that these men, as well as the "republican personalities" who placed their stakes on this agreement, belong to a clan among the Free Masons which was offended by Defferre's agreement with the clericals in Marseille and by the equivocal position he has taken, during his presidential campaigning, on the problem of relations between the secular schools and the so-called free (denominational) schools.

Whatever the reason, the announcement of the agreement was a very stiff blow for Defferre, and his reaction was immediate and violent. In a short declaration made the day he heard of it he heaped insults on those who "make pacts" with the Communists -- traitors, cowards, office-seekers, renegades from socialism. One can smile and even laugh at this in view of the fact that Defferre himself, out of "fidelity" to socialism, made an agreement to present a slate including "32 candidates named by the Socialists, 31 candidates named by the Independents, the MRP, the Radicals and repatriated persons." (Defferre in Le Soir, February 1.) Defferre's anger was all the greater because he had been unaware of an operation that had been going on for some weeks in the offices of his own town hall, within the very Socialist Federation which he controls. The following day, he told the press: "The alliance of a few Socialists with the Communists of Marseille has provoked a very favorable reaction in regard to me among the Marseillais Socialists and democrats for whom treason is inadmissible."

A few Socialists? But the Bureau of the Socialist Federation hastened to dissolve the second, fourth and ninth sections of Marseille, to expel the Socialist candidates who supported the agreement with the PCF. And Defferre has rushed to get approval from the national leadership of the Socialist party, from Guy Mollet himself, approval for his sanctions and his electoral policy in Marseille.

At the moment no one can tell what the result of the agreement will be next month in the way of votes at Marseille, what proportion of Socialist voters will cast their ballots for the "united slates of the democratic forces," that is, with the Communists, and what proportion will back Defferre. But what has been scored is a considerable weakening of Defferre's presidential campaign. He presented himself as the only man capable of uniting the entire left in order to beat de Gaulle, the main enemy. But now, in Marseilles, he has turned his guns. The main enemy is no longer the Gaullists but the PCF. "The struggle for the town hall has narrowed," he told the press, "to the slates drawn up by the Socialists and the municipal majority with the exclusion of the UNR and the Communists. . . . It is now clear that we will succeed or that the town hall will fall into the hands of the Communist party and its hostages."

Thus there is a crying contradiction between this tactic in Marseille and the one he has claimed to follow up to now on a national scale for the presidential election.

The PCF move has thus weakened Defferre's candidacy; the results of the municipal elections in Marseille will enable us to see if this is a serious weakening that could force Defferre to give up his candidacy. In any case, it must be said of the PCF move -- a sharp thrust!

### WORKERS, STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE IN SPAIN

More than 1,500 Madrid workers and students joined January 26 in a demonstration, organized by the underground unions, before the headquarters of the government-sponsored unions. They shouted for free trade unions, the right to strike, a minimum daily wage of 175 pesetas [\$2.92] instead of the present 60 pesetas [\$1], a 44-hour week, and the lifting of reprisals against workers fired because of work conflicts in Madrid and Biscay.

The police broke up the demonstration, arresting thirty.

On February 5, some 2,000 students demonstrated in front of the rectorate of the University of Madrid. They chanted slogans against the official student unions, demanding freedom to organize.

Four hundred armed guards were sent to disperse the demonstration but the students put up a stiff battle, holding their ground for an hour and a half, blocking traffic in the principal streets.

In Barcelona on the same day, 3,000 students demonstrated in front of the faculty of political science against the official student union. They had assembled to see a film Viridiana which won a prize at the Cannes Festival three years ago. When they were told that it had been banned by the dean, they began demonstrating.

The leaders of the official unions are alarmed. They recently issued a declaration calling for a "revision" in the minimum wage. They also pleaded for "real powers" in collective bargaining.

The explanation for the rise in social tension is to be found in certain economic facts. Strong injections of American military dollars, a booming tourist trade (some 15,000,000 tourists a year) and industrial expansion have sent profits spiraling in Spain. At the same time, the Franco regime has kept wages in deep freeze. In addition, inflation has cut deeply into an already abysmal standard of living. According to official statistics the cost of living rose last year alone by nine per cent.



AFRICAN STUDENTS IN TORONTO DEFEND CONGOLESE

TORONTO -- The Belgian-American-British-inspired military intervention in the Congo has had a powerful effect upon African students at the University of Toronto. In a hard-hitting, well-documented statement featured in the January 15 issue of the student newspaper Varsity, and reprinted in part in the mass-circulated daily Globe and Mail, the "Committee on the Congo" set up by the African Students' Union of Toronto exposes the role of the imperialist powers in that country, and reveals the real motives behind the so-called "humanitarian rescue operation."

"The real objective of the use of paratroops," the statement says, "was to help suppress a popular uprising of the Congolese people against an un-elected puppet government in Leopoldville, kept in power by foreign interests."

The 4,000-word statement concludes: "The African Students' Union of Toronto therefore declares that the 'humanitarian mission' was ignobly inspired, wrong in essence and premature in execution; that it nullified hopeful efforts already underway to free the hostages and precipitated the death of an estimated 190 whites by the rebels and 2,000 Congolese by the white mercenaries. In the light of the events presented here, we have no alternative but to categorically condemn the US-Belgian mercy mission as a pretext calculated to inflict a military defeat on the revolutionary movement in the hope of propping up a puppet regime in Leopoldville. We therefore reject the barbarous idea of a military solution of an essentially politico-economic problem. We reject all the miracle solutions worked out in Washington and Brussels -- solutions motivated by economic interests and in contradiction with the aspirations of the Congolese people. We opt for a Congolese solution of the Congolese problem under the aegis of, and based on, the constructive resolutions of the O.A.U. [Organization of African Unity]. To this end we demand a cease-fire, the immediate recall of all Belgian and American military personnel, as well as the withdrawal of their transport planes and bombers, white mercenaries and Cuban exile pilots.

"Finally, we call on all foreign powers to respect the right of the Congolese to full self-determination and cooperate with the O.A.U. for the implementation of the recent resolutions of the Security Council."

"AMERICAN EFFICIENCY" is not just an empty boast, as is shown by the arrests of Negroes in Selma, Georgia, for the crime of trying to register as voters -- 3,400 in a few days. Just as impressive is the efficiency with which the number of prospective Negro voters in the same area -- 15,000 -- was kept down to 335.

## THE MISSISSIPPI BATTLEFIELD

By Evelyn Sell

The continuing reign of terror in Mississippi has forced 50,000 to 60,000 Negroes to flee the delta area alone. Violence and threats of violence drive many out. A Negro mother of nine was taken into the woods, stripped and flogged unmercifully. This happened in a town ironically named Liberty.

Even more destructive is the economic pressure. Over fifty-one per cent of the Negroes in Amite County, for example, have yearly incomes below \$1,000 to raise families of 10-20 children. Family breadwinners are lucky to work ten hours a day for \$3 -- but even this luck is running out.\* Negro sharecroppers, long the lowliest of the low in the South, have slipped even lower. It is increasingly difficult for Negroes to rent lands or obtain loans or receive the necessary sales card from the white-dominated agricultural board. Without this card, no cotton can be sold. If a Negro attends a meeting about unionization or civil rights or voter registration, he is in dire trouble with the powers-that-be.

Conditions have grown considerably worse since the upsurge of civil-rights struggles in Mississippi. The murder of the three civil-rights workers was only one of the more highly publicized incidents in the increased terror. [See World Outlook, January 1, January 8.] The deteriorating situation has led to several contradictory movements. On the one hand, many Negroes are afraid to participate in any kind of civil-rights activities, are afraid to register to vote, are afraid to live in Mississippi. On the other hand, many Negroes have been spurred on to greater struggles against their oppressors. The rise of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic party [MFDP] is a good example of this.

The MFDP was formally launched in April 1964 by a coalition of civil-rights groups, the Council of Federated Organization [COFO]. The MFDP is an integrated group but is predominately Negro. It collected more than 50,000 signatures to place its candidates on the ballot; but the Mississippi Election Commission rejected the petitions. When the Democratic party held its national convention in August, the MFDP challenged the political situation in Mississippi, pointing out the abuses against Negro voters and candidates and de-

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\*By way of comparison, the average wage for a 40.3-hour week in "all manufacturing" in the United States is \$101.15. In the automobile industry, the average pay for a 42.2-hour week is \$133.35. Even in the notoriously underpaid hotel trade, the average for a 38.8-hour week is \$47.72.

manding that the Mississippi delegation be replaced by the MFDP. The civil-rights fighters were denied their requested representation but received a tremendous amount of national publicity.

Their next step was to hold a state-wide "Freedom Vote" which ran from October 29 through November 2. Ballot boxes were set up in barber shops, restaurants, churches and even automobiles in order to reach rural areas. The final results showed that 68,029 Negroes from 56 of the state's 82 counties voted. "Underground" ballots were mailed in from those counties where the MFDP could not set up ballot boxes. In 37 counties there were more MFDP ballots cast through the "Freedom Vote" than were cast in the official November 3 election.

A well-organized campaign to challenge the seating of the "legally" elected all-white Mississippi congressmen was then conducted. Support was solicited from Northern congressmen and on the opening day of congress a roll-call vote on the Mississippi representatives was forced onto the House membership. American newspapers expressed great surprise when about one-third of the members (148 in actual number) voted against seating the Mississippians. Many well-known "liberal friends of civil rights" voted with the majority to seat the five "legal" Mississippi representatives.

The MFDP plans to push its challenge through all legal channels possible. Their next step is the House Administration and Elections Committee -- five of the six Democrats on this committee come from Southern states.

The MFDP campaigned for the Johnson-Humphrey ticket and claims that it is a more loyal Democratic party group than the officially recognized Democratic party in Mississippi. Despite its pronouncements of fealty to Johnson and the Democratic party, its very existence threatens long-established political alignments and frightens the power structure in the South. The racists are learning that increased terror breeds fear and flight, yes, but it also breeds the kind of fighters that struggle even harder and more tenaciously than before.

The racists are learning another lesson as a result of their stepped-up campaign of terror. While Jim Crow has been profitable for many years, open war between Jim Crow and its victims scares the profits away in many instances. After the murder of the three civil-rights workers, the highly lucrative tourist business at Gulf Coast resorts dropped fifty per cent. Hotel and motel occupancy in the Gulfport-Biloxi area is only eight per cent the normal level. Travel agents in other parts of the United States inquire worriedly whether it's safe to send their clients to Mississippi. The Syracuse University football team, which trained in Biloxi for many years, decided to switch to Florida this year instead because "they were afraid for the safety of their Negro players if they came to Mississippi."

Business in the state slacked off so much that its 1964 three and one-half per cent sales tax is producing less revenue than a three per cent sales tax the previous year. The state has been forced to borrow \$8 million since March. One factory in the southern part of the state moved a few miles across the state line into Louisiana. They were beginning to lose money because of their Mississippi mailing address.

On January 4 a businessman in Flint, Michigan, announced that his eighteen mass merchandising stores in eight Michigan cities would no longer carry products manufactured or originating in the state of Mississippi. Joseph Megdell, president of Yankee Distributors, Inc., and president of the Urban League of Flint, issued these orders to his buyers because of "the ugly racial situation that exists in the state of Mississippi." His stores do more than \$250,000 annual business with Mississippi firms. One of his Mississippi suppliers called Megdell and asked that he rescind the boycott. When Megdell refused, the supplier asked for a copy of the boycott statement to show Mississippi Governor Paul Johnson.

The situation has been ugly in Mississippi -- and all over the South and all over the North -- for many, many years. Now that Negroes are trying to do something about it, others are stirring a little. Only the continued activity of militant Negroes will keep people stirred up and cause changes.

#### JAPANESE GIRL GETS QUICK EDUCATION IN MISSISSIPPI

Five days in Mississippi proved to be a highly educational experience for a 21-year-old Japanese girl studying at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania.

When Bryn Mawr arranged a five-day student exchange with Tougaloo College in Mississippi, Masako Yamanouchi applied "because I wanted to see more of America." She was one of four chosen.

"I had no idea of the danger," she writes in the January 31 issue of The Asia Magazine.

At Tougaloo, a privately financed school, most of the students are Negro although the president and many of the faculty are white. Located eight miles from Jackson, it has been the target of racists.

"Even while I was there," reports Miss Yamanouchi, "one of the girls' dormitories was threatened with a bombing. The dorm was evacuated; but some of the girls became hysterical with fear. A month before, four White men had driven into the campus and sprayed a dormitory with bullets, hitting one student in the leg. The night

before, a barber shop one mile away had been bombed and that day the city arsenal reported four missing dynamite sticks."

Miss Yamanouchi attended three classes but wished to see more of Mississippi than the Tougaloo campus. She joined a group that went to visit the local newspaper and to interview leaders of the White Citizens' Council. They also attended the trial of Byron de la Beckwith, who was charged with the murder of Medgar Evers, the Mississippi leader of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. There were no Negroes on the jury and Beckwith was turned loose.

"Because we went as an integrated group," says Miss Yamanouchi, "even the policemen cursed us and glared with hostility. We had to register. And we were searched before entering the court. They took our pictures too. Though we didn't do anything otherwise abnormal, the next day newspapers reported that a group of 'outside agitators' were at Tougaloo College and had come to the trial.

"During the following days we learned how subtly the Citizens' Council worked to discourage the civil rights movement, keeping jobs from the families of those involved, for example. We experienced the oppressive atmosphere, the tension, the hatred, the fear, the protests and the distortions of truth which characterize Mississippi today."

Among the educational experiences that made a strong impression on the young Japanese student was the following:

"While we were there, a co-ed from all-Negro Jackson State College was accidentally struck by a car. The driver, who was White, got out not to help her, but to wipe the blood from his vehicle. As he started to get back in to drive away, some of her fellow schoolmates stopped him. The police later released the man. The ensuing student demonstration led to a riot.

"We drove around Jackson next day. Fire engines were circling the block next to the Court House. Mounted police were out and policemen had rifles on their motorcycles. Yet that evening, all the news programs assured us that there were no 'outward signs of tension.'"

Miss Yamanouchi found the civil-rights leaders in the area impressive. She accompanied a group led by Reverend Ed King, a white Mississippian, that sought to attend a concert at a nearby college to which the public had been invited. The mixed group was turned away by the dean who "pointed to an unmarked police car nearby, If we did not leave, it would 'take care' of us, he warned." The group avoided making an incident of it.

"Those five days altered my life," declares Miss Yamanouchi. "As a result, I decided to remain in the United States to complete

my college work. I changed from Far Eastern Studies to Political Science because I felt it would better prepare me for taking up my responsibilities in the world.

"And now I want to go back this spring to work in SNCC's [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee] office in Mississippi, doing whatever I can to help. I am prepared to go to jail, but I wouldn't ask for trouble. If a policeman told me to move, my natural inclination would be to obey. Rape? I'm really afraid of it. I don't know what my thoughts would be after it happened -- if it happened.

"I didn't realize how bad it was until I saw the treatment to my friends. They were treated like dirt. We met many of the Negro leaders in Mississippi. They spoke frankly to us. I felt they were working more out of love for their country than out of bitterness. They wanted not just a better life for Negroes, but a better life for all Americans. It hurt me to think that some of them might be killed this year because of their ideals and all of them are constantly under physical and emotional pressure."

In Asia, says Miss Yamanouchi, the situation is different, although racist prejudices do exist.

"But there are plenty of other problems at home too and when I go back, I will feel more responsible about helping to solve them because of the vital spirit of the American civil rights movement."

#### CHE GUEVARA ON AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA

[The following interview with Che Guevara, which appeared in the December 26 issue of Révolution Africaine, was reported by Josie Fanon, widow of the Algerian revolutionary figure Frantz Fanon, author of Les Damnés de la Terre. The translation is by World Outlook.]

\* \* \*

Josie Fanon: What is the reason for your visit to Algeria?

Che Guevara: The reason for my visit is very simple. In a few days I am going to visit a number of African countries, and to go to Africa, it is necessary for us to come to Algeria first. We are also utilizing the occasion, before we leave, to discuss general international and African problems with our Algerian government brothers. We are thinking of staying two or three days longer in Algeria.

Josie Fanon: Would you indicate in broad outline the position of the Cuban government in relation to Africa as a whole?

Che Guevara: Africa represents one of the most important, if not the most important, fields of battle against all the forms of exploitation existing in the world, against imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism. There are big possibilities for success in Africa, but there are also many dangers. The positive aspects include the youth of the African peoples as modern states, the hate which colonialism has left in the minds of the people, the very clear consciousness which the peoples possess of the profound differences existing between an African man and the colonizer, the conviction that there can never be sincere friendship between them, except after the definitive departure of the colonizer. There are also other positive aspects: the present possibilities of a much more rapid development than even a few years ago due to the aid which some of the capitalist countries can likewise provide under certain conditions (but on this point we must be vigilant).

What we consider to be the principal danger for Africa is the possibility of division among the African peoples which appears to be continually rising. On the one side there are the lackeys of imperialism, on the other the peoples seeking to free themselves along the roads suited to them. We have concrete reasons for fearing this danger. There is the phenomenon of unequal exchanges between the industrialized countries and the economically dependent countries. This relation of inequality is shown in the most brutal way in connection with colonialism. But the completely independent countries also risk finding themselves locked up in the prison of the capitalist market because the big industrialized countries impose this through their high technical development. The big developed countries begin, after independence, to exercise a kind of "suction" on the liberated countries and after a few years the conditions are again ripe for political domination.

We believe that in Africa the bourgeoisie still has a word to say today. This is quite different from Latin America where the national bourgeoisie no longer has any choice but to submit completely to the orders of imperialism. In many independent African countries, the bourgeoisie has, in the beginning, the possibility of developing and of playing a "relatively" progressive role. It can, for a time, mobilize the people and the forces of the left under the slogan of the struggle against imperialism, but inevitably the moment comes when this bourgeoisie and the government representing it end up in an impasse. It is not possible for the bourgeoisie, by its very nature, to follow the road into which the people seek to push it. The only course remaining open to it is collaboration with imperialism and oppression of the people. In brief, it can be said that there are at present big possibilities in Africa because of the effervescence existing in this region of the world but that there are also real dangers which we have to keep in mind. There are important economic problems that must be remembered. Unequal relations in

international exchanges leads to an impasse where it becomes very easy to concede to imperialism and to oppress the people whom, for a short period, they appeared to serve.

Josie Fanon: If you were asked what road of economic development was best suited for the African countries, what would you say?

Che Guevara: If my advice were asked, or rather my opinion, as Cuban Minister of Industry, I would say simply that a country beginning to develop itself must, in the first period, work above all at organization and that one should approach the practical problems by "using your own head." This may seem to be an abstract and rather vague opinion but it's something very important.

In Africa, where many countries have already carried out very extensive nationalizations, there is perhaps the possibility of creating certain enterprises to provide products for other countries lacking them and vice versa. It is necessary to work in the spirit of mutual profit and for that it is necessary to know each other better and to establish relations of confidence. At first this must be limited to very simple things. It may be necessary at times to set up small plants requiring a lot of workers and offering jobs for many unemployed, rather than highly mechanized enterprises employing a reduced number of workers. In certain cases, a sector must be rapidly mechanized; in other cases this is not necessary. In fact, in a country on the road to development most problems involve agriculture and extractive industry, but it is quite evident that these problems are posed in a different way in each country, and that one must pay attention above all to particular realities. That's why it is impossible to give a general formula that could be applied to all the African countries.

Josie Fanon: What are the perspectives, in your opinion, of the revolutionary struggle in Latin America?

Che Guevara: You know, that is something close to my heart; it's my keenest interest. We believe that the revolutionary struggle is a very long struggle, very hard. It is difficult to believe -- difficult, but evidently not impossible -- in the isolated triumph of the revolution in one country. Imperialism has been preparing an organized repression of the peoples of Latin America for some years. In different countries they have formed an international of repression. Right now, in fact, in the Latin-American countries where the last battles were fought for the liberation of America from the Spanish yoke, in Peru, military maneuvers are being held. Various countries are participating in these maneuvers, conducted by the United States, in the Ayacucho region. What we are witnessing in this region is direct preparations for repression. And why are these maneuvers taking place precisely in this mountainous region of Peru, in this jungle zone? It is because Ayacucho is situated close to the place where important revolutionary bases exist. Ayacucho was not chosen by accident.



The Americans are paying a lot of attention to the problem of guerrilla war. They have written some very interesting things on this. They have grasped the quite correct idea that guerrilla war is extremely difficult to liquidate if it is not liquidated as soon as it appears. All their strategy is now oriented on this objective, taking two main forms: first of all, repression; secondly, the isolation of the revolutionists from their main base -- the peasants. I read in an American document the very expression used by Mao Tse-tung: "Among the people, revolutionists are like a fish in water." The Americans have grasped that the power of the guerrilla fighter resides in this, and they have grasped that everything must be done to stop this from continuing.

Clearly, all these factors make the struggle more difficult. But against the international of repression will come the inevitable and natural reply of the international of the struggle of the proletarians and the peasants against the common enemy. That is why we foresee the organization of a continental front of struggle against imperialism and its domestic allies. This front will take a long time to organize, but when it exists it will be a severe blow against imperialism. I don't know if it will be a definitive blow, but it will be a very hard blow. It is for this reason that we pose this fundamental principle: the struggle for freedom must be not only a defensive struggle but likewise an offensive struggle against imperialism.

We will even add that the working class in the United States, because of its high standard of living, does not see in a keen way the contradictions existing in American society. To the American workers, these contradictions appear softened and they cannot gain clear consciousness of their own exploitation as long as they continue to get the crumbs which North American imperialism tosses to them from the feast.

#### ASK CANADIANS TO HELP IN ALEXANDER AND MANDELA CASES

TORONTO -- The African Students' Union here is seeking aid from Canadians for political prisoners in South Africa.

At a recent affair, which they organized on the campus, they circulated copies of a statement by Bertrand Russell condemning the brutal sentences imposed on Dr. Neville Alexander and Nelson Mandela for opposing the apartheid policy of the fascist-like Verwoerd government.

BRITISH ALEXANDER DEFENCE COMMITTEE INTENSIFIES EFFORTS

By Susan Williams

LONDON, Jan. 24 -- The Alexander Defence Committee is intensifying its fund-raising campaign in preparation for the appeal of Dr. Neville Alexander and his ten co-defendants which will be heard March 2 in South Africa.

The projected high point in the campaign will be a demonstration at South Africa House, Trafalgar Square. The plan is to stage the demonstration on Friday, February 26, from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. This will be followed by a march to a central London hall for a public meeting or social evening.

Material which appeared in recent issues of the Times Literary Supplement [see World Outlook January 22] has been reproduced and sent, together with an appeal for financial help, to academic circles that might take an interest in the case.

"It is a great blow to all those interested in academic freedom," the appeal points out, "that this brilliant young man should be denied the opportunity to use his considerable intellectual talents because he places the dignity and freedom of his fellow countrymen higher than personal advancement."

A total of £415 [\$1,162] has been turned over to Defence and Aid, the body responsible for collecting and forwarding money to South Africa to help these victims of Verwoerd's racist laws.

Students at various universities and colleges have raised sums ranging from £1 to more than £20. At Hatfield College, Durham University, students raised £21.3.0 by voting a levy of 1s.6d. [\$.20] a head.

A Newcastle student sent in £27 [\$75.60] on her collection sheets. She raised this through persistently approaching people, primarily students, and explaining the issues involved.

Contributions have come in from factory workers and teachers, Labour party, Young Socialist and trade-union branches, Amnesty, Anti-Apartheid groups and similar organizations. Collections taken at political meetings have ranged from a few shillings to £35. Student groups, debating societies and United Nations groups have also contributed.

A successful social and dance at Africa Unity House in London raised £50 towards the appeal and a group of Nottingham supporters raised eleven guineas [\$32.34] at a similar affair. Smaller, but no less important sums, have been raised by friends through home socials.

The goal of the committee is to double the amount already raised before the date of the appeal.

ROBBEN ISLAND: "HELL HEADQUARTERS"

[The following statement by an African political prisoner was smuggled out of Robben Island prison, South Africa's version of a Nazi concentration camp. It appeared in the January issue of Anti-Apartheid News which is published by the Anti-Apartheid Movement, 89 Charlotte Street, London, W.1.]

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Political prisoner regarded as less human being.

No reason are prisoner assaulted for it is only language used. Warder talk by using their batons.

Complaining prisoners end in punishment and assault.

Chief warder usually heard instructing sub-warders to assault prisoners when parading.

Whichever way you go you are assaulted or insulted usually both at a time. Complainants usually end in being punished so that they hardly complain unless he feels that his case will be reported by warders.

Warders would assault while working with gang and work you near death if possible. Later would report you to Chief Warder who is not going out with gangs. He would impose any sentence ranging from three meals to four week ends without meals.

Prison gangs are group of aggressive young men who wield baton whenever talking to political prisoner.

Criminal prisoners are always incited against political ones. So that they intervene by shooting political one dead. That situation was averted because it was overheard and a warning circulated throughout Island.

Food. Cold porridge in the morning. Cold black coffee. Salt or sugar not in any of these two.

Dinner. Cooked meals to all black prisoners and hint of Marewa.

Evening meal. Porridge and one pint soup. Meals ever cold.

This is regarded by prisoners as attempt to break their spirit. Referred as pigs diet. Force it to live.

No one looks healthy.

Again people are ever cold at night.

Medical care. This item is refused to political prisoners. Usually one takes days reporting this illness before he is attended. One warder would refer you to another till you find yourself forced to go work or locked up in a cell.

If your prison mate is sick no one is allowed to speak for him if he cannot speak. Xamlashe and Putegho are example of this procedure. It was days before they were taken to doctor although they were seen to every one that asthma had overtaken them.

Accommodation. Black cell all cement floor and ceiling. Cold as cold storage. Taking up 80 prisoners. Buildings are new, using prison labour.

Latrine System. Two to a cell of 70-80 prisoners inadequate.

Water all sea water. Even drinking is salty. It does not quench thirst.

Called quarry gang usual count down about 600 to 800 prisoners. Break underground rock with chisels, dig stones for breaking by others. Carry piece broken stones, piles them up to hill height. Work four-day week. Other three days you are locked in your cell. Only go out when fetching your meals.

Treatment is such that one feels we are condemned prisoners.

Brutality of warders, coupled with refusal to consider complaints by higher officials is great dissatisfaction among prisoners.

Prisoners are treated like group of undesirable wild animals.

Insolatorials. Messrs. N. Mandela, W. Sisulu, Mlangeni, Matsoaledi, G.Mbeki, Mhlaba, all Rivonies are isolated each to his cell.

No prisoners allowed to go near them. Occupying block of cells just completed. Its four corner block entrance is a strong iron gate with European warder on guard.

Included are Neville Alexander, Bam and some of their company. Prisoners except Solomon Marcus who is with rest of prisoners.

George Peake also in isolation.

Conditions of these fellow prisoners is not known to others.

Rumours are that they also break stones, which are brought by lorries. But confinement one to a cell for so long a time is inhuman treatment as we all know.

Conditions are such that health of political prisoners will be impaired.

Undisciplined prison guards and incitement by their supporters is such that prisoners' lives are in danger, if no change could come about with great speed.

R.B.I. is referred to as Hell Head Quarters and that if they survive this ordeal one must expect other place like Hell.

Only Robben Island is such a place.

Greatest humiliation is undressing in the presence of every prisoner, when coming from work. Strip naked search through everything ordered to stretch yourself and turned your back towards the guard with your back opened much possible.

#### "SOUTH AFRICAN FREEDOM DAY"

The World Campaign for the Release of South African Political Prisoners has set June 26 as "South African Freedom Day," a day of international solidarity with South African political prisoners.

The form that this will take will be determined by different committees the world over, according to the January issue of Anti-Apartheid News.

It is suggested that the campaign start immediately around the following demands:

- (1) A reliable inspecting body should be allowed to visit political prisoners at regular intervals of three months.
- (2) That political prisoners be given suitable work during which they will work together and be allowed to talk to one another.
- (3) That exercise periods be extended and held in the open air where they can talk to one another.
- (4) That political prisoners should be moved out of category "D"\* within a specified and strictly limited period, or preferably

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\*There are four grades of prisoners in South Africa: "A," "B," "C," "D." Virtually no privileges are allowed prisoners placed in "D," the lowest category. They are permitted only one letter and one visit every six months. Political prisoners are automatically graded as "D" and there appear to be no chances of escaping from it, even with good conduct. Minister of Justice Vorster makes no secret of

that they should not be placed in this category at all.

(5) That political prisoners be granted remission of their sentence on the same basis as other prisoners.

Declarations in support of these or other demands in behalf of the political prisoners in South Africa should be sent to: Minister of Justice, House of Assembly, Cape Town.

The plan is to bring the campaign to a climax on June 26 with actions to ensure maximum publicity everywhere.

Anti-Apartheid News calls special attention to recommendation made by the United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid in its latest report (issued on December 8, 1964). The recommendation is that an International Commission composed of eminent jurists and prison officials be set up to investigate charges of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners in South Africa.

The Commission, says the report, should be authorized to investigate the affidavits by former prisoners, interview present and former prisoners and look into the conditions in the prisons, and report as soon as possible. If the recommendation of the Special Committee is adopted by the United Nations, South Africa will be asked to provide facilities for the investigation.

#### CHRISTOPHE GBENYE GRANTS FIRST PRESS CONFERENCE

[Upon arriving in Algiers, Christophe Gbenye, head of the Revolutionary Congolese Government, which is fighting the puppet Tshombe regime, held a press conference in which he outlined the aims of the freedom fighters. Before answering questions, he made a preliminary statement. We have translated this in full below and added extracts from the questions and answers. The source is the January 30 issue of the Algiers daily Le Peuple.]

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#### Preliminary Statement

Stopping off in Algiers, I have had to meet the Algerian, African and international press. For me this is the first experience of this kind since the beginning of our armed revolution and I

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the fact that he victimizes political prisoners as a matter of policy. All political prisoners are denied remission of sentences, no matter what their conduct in prison, while ordinary prisoners may be given as much as one-fourth time off.

am happy that this first meeting with you has taken place in the capital of a country whose heroic combat reminds one in many ways of the struggle in which the Congolese people are engaged in today to reconquer their sovereignty and their dignity.

My visit to Algiers comes within the framework of our action in Africa. I was pleased to express to President Ben Bella our congratulations for the admirable way in which Algeria feels its duty toward peoples who are struggling for their freedom, toward the African homeland as a whole. And I again express before you here, the full appreciation of the struggling Congolese people for the fraternal understanding and the unwavering support which our cause has always found in Algeria.

Running parallel with the armed aggression of which it is the victim, the Congolese people are likewise the object of a violent, lying, slanderous propaganda campaign.

The Congolese revolution is denigrated, its leaders insulted, while the Congolese traitors are glorified, honored and lavishly received whether at Paris or Bonn, at Brussels or Madrid, at Rome, Washington or London.

But no matter. It is not in Algiers that an African revolutionist need complain of being treated by the imperialists and their press as a criminal, a rebel or . . . peasant.

In any case, my government is going to undertake the necessary measures to directly provide the honest organs of information with news concerning our revolution, concerning the evolution of the situation in the Congo.

Gentlemen, you know the essential elements of the situation.

It can be summed up as follows:

Having been compelled to recognize the formal independence of the Congo, the colonialists never intended to bring their shameless exploitation of our people to an end. That is why they had Patrice Lumumba, the best among us, assassinated, in order to put the assassins themselves at the head of the country.

The traitors who head the Congo in behalf of the imperialist financial powers have closed all the doors of legal action to the nationalists.

We had no choice but to accept the evidence. We either had to accept the humiliation of seeing our country subjected to systematic pillage and our people to misery and repression or end this situation by the sole means at our disposal -- armed struggle. Faithful to the spirit of Patrice Lumumba and the tradition of

African nationalism, we will continue the struggle; the Congolese people have decided to continue the combat to victory, to the realization of the objectives of our revolution.

We expect a long and difficult struggle and we are ready for any sacrifice in order to achieve our aim.

I know, gentlemen, that some will try to interpret the expression of this determination as being extremism. It will be said that "Gbenye wants to continue the war." It will be said that "Gbenye, a disciple of a foreign ideology, is only trying to introduce subversion in Africa," etc.

And nevertheless I say here solemnly that we are Africans, Congolese nationalists faithful to the ideology of Patrice Lumumba and the other great African leaders. In brief we are revolutionists and not political adventurers.

We are fighting for precise objectives and not for the mere pleasure of fighting.

That is, we are ready, so far as we are concerned, to end the combat at any time on condition that the causes that brought us to take up arms in the first place disappear. In particular it is absolutely vain to wait for revolutionists such as we are to agree to negotiate with traitors who have sold their country, who do not hold even the shadow of power, since the decisions are made by their foreign masters and executed by South African, Rhodesian, Belgian, French, Israeli, American, German, Cuban or Italian mercenaries.

Now the imperialists, who are at bay in face of the determination of the Congolese people and the growing solidarity of Africa, periodically have their puppet service present a plan from Madrid, Rome, Brussels or elsewhere before parachuting the lucky one elected for Léopoldville.

The whole world is preoccupied by the situation in the Congo, which is legitimate. Everyone wants to contribute to solving our problems, which is laudable.

But it is well to understand that the individuals responsible for the evils afflicting the Congolese people can never contribute to creating the conditions necessary for their welfare.

In addition it must also be understood that it involves a problem which it is up to the Congolese people alone to resolve with the aid of Africa.

I have not come from Paris, nor from London, nor from Brussels. I have come from the Congo; and the Congolese people also submit to you these proposals, the application of which will permit the Congo



to develop in peace and stability:

- (1) Immediate liberation of Antoine Gizenga, Louis Lumumba and all the other political hostages held by the Léopoldville regime.
- (2) Immediate departure of the mercenaries, of all the armed Belgian and American armed forces.
- (3) Immediate sending of representatives to the Katanga by the ad hoc commission of the OAU [Organization of African Unity] to investigate the maneuvers of the Belgians and Americans to provoke a new Katanga secession.
- (4) Setting up of a commission to apply the sanctions against the assassins of Patrice Lumumba, Maurice Mpolo, Joseph Okito and the other nationalist militants in accordance with the resolution of the Security Council of February 21, 1961, and the report of the UN Commission of Inquiry.
- (5) Enlargement of the Revolutionary Government to introduce other Congolese brothers from the nonliberated areas who continue to enjoy the confidence of the people.
- (6) The Revolutionary Government agrees thereupon to organize elections in the six months following enlargement of the government and invites an OAU commission as observer.

Permit me to again express my satisfaction at being in Algiers. The discussions which my companions and I have had with brother President Ben Bella, with brother Vice-President and Minister of Defense Boumedienne, and with other officials, have been extremely useful.

I can tell you that this visit constitutes in its results an efficacious contribution to our struggle. It also reinforces the solidarity existing between the Algerian and Congolese peoples while at the same time it tightens the bonds of fraternal co-operation between the Algerian and Congolese revolutions.

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Extracts from Questions and Answers

Asked about the taking of hostages, Gbenye told the reporter to put the question to the Americans and Belgians who always need to dominate whole peoples, "because we are neither xenophobes nor colonialists."

On the Red Cross, Gbenye said that he himself had conducted negotiations with the organization before Stanleyville was taken. The Red Cross, he said, "far from being moved by humanitarian considerations was engaged in espionage for the American imperialists,

in whose service, moreover, all the other international organizations are engaged."

"Mr. Gbenye also revealed that he had exchanged telegrams with Mr. Spaak the same night as the tripartite aggression. The Belgian minister told him in a dispatch sent to Stanleyville at three o'clock in the morning that he approved with 'pleasure' his government watching over the security of the Belgians. One hour later, Mr. Gbenye replied that his government had 'the duty' to watch over the security of all persons to be found in the liberated province. At five o'clock the planes in the aggression were flying over the city.

"Recalling next that he had been Minister of the Interior and Vice Prime Minister under Adoula, he stated that the latter was still in power when the revolution began and that the first planes which went into action against the nationalists were sent by him.

"'Was the plan which he advocated,' said Mr. Gbenye, 'African? Was it Congolese? No. And any thinking person will say no. This plan was initiated in Brussels and approved in the United States.'

"'Moreover,' he added, 'the speculation about the death of Lumumba, speculation which they utilize to take advantage of the feelings of the Congolese people, has been utilized once more. Adoula, accused by Tshombe of having participated in the murder of Lumumba, has never defended himself. Instead of talking about punishing the murderers of Lumumba, he now limits himself to suggesting that a town be named after him.'

"'Moreover,' he added with a disillusioned air, 'we have gone beyond the stage of negotiations. If a part of the population holds points of view different from ours, we will do everything in the way of conciliation, but we will never do it with individuals.'"

Relations between his government and other African states are good, said Mr. Gbenye. He said he proposed to visit those that are still hesitant.

"I know that they have their problems. Among them is American aid to underdeveloped countries, aid which is nothing else but a powerful means of pressure."

On relations between the two Congos, he found nothing surprising about the latest turn of events. "Just as with Israel, which they created with their own hands, the American imperialists undertake maneuvers to establish points of tension all around the Congo, a country situated in the heart of Africa, and in this way block temporarily, if not forever, the unity of the continent."

As for the number of mercenaries, Gbenye told the reporter

to ask Brussels or Washington. "The least I can say is that they are very very numerous. Tshombe does not have enough soldiers. The few he found are constantly threatened by the foreign mercenaries who constitute the essential troops of the so-called present government."

In regard to relations with the Catholic church, Gbenye said: "I have nothing against the Church. I am a Catholic myself. But I am against the baneful action of the missionaries in the Congo where they are the agents of imperialism."

Gbenye added: "The Pope did not say a word when Lumumba and the martyrs to the Congolese cause were imprisoned and massacred, but he spoke up when Tshombe was arrested. Tshombe, it is true, is connected with the Union Minière of Katanga which finances the Church."

#### LISBON STUDENTS STAGE 48-HOUR STRIKE

A forty-eight-hour strike called by the university unions in Lisbon was eighty per cent effective January 26 in all departments. It was reported still higher in the schools of medicine and economics.

In the evening a violent conflict broke out when the police sought to block a meeting in front of the Technical Institute.

The strike was called to protest the arrest of 59 students since last September on charges of illegal political activities under the fascist government.

Leaflets were distributed demanding the resignation of the rector. To shouts of "Free the students," "Free the political prisoners," "Down with the PIDE [International Police for the Defense of the Portuguese State]," the students made their way through the streets and assembled in front of the Aljube prison where political prisoners are held. They then tried to see the Minister of Interior.

The police at first did not intervene brutally. Later they moved in with clubs to wound some and arrest others.

The courageous action undertaken by the Lisbon students is an indication of the new winds blowing in fascist Portugal.