

WORLD OUTLOOK

a labor press service

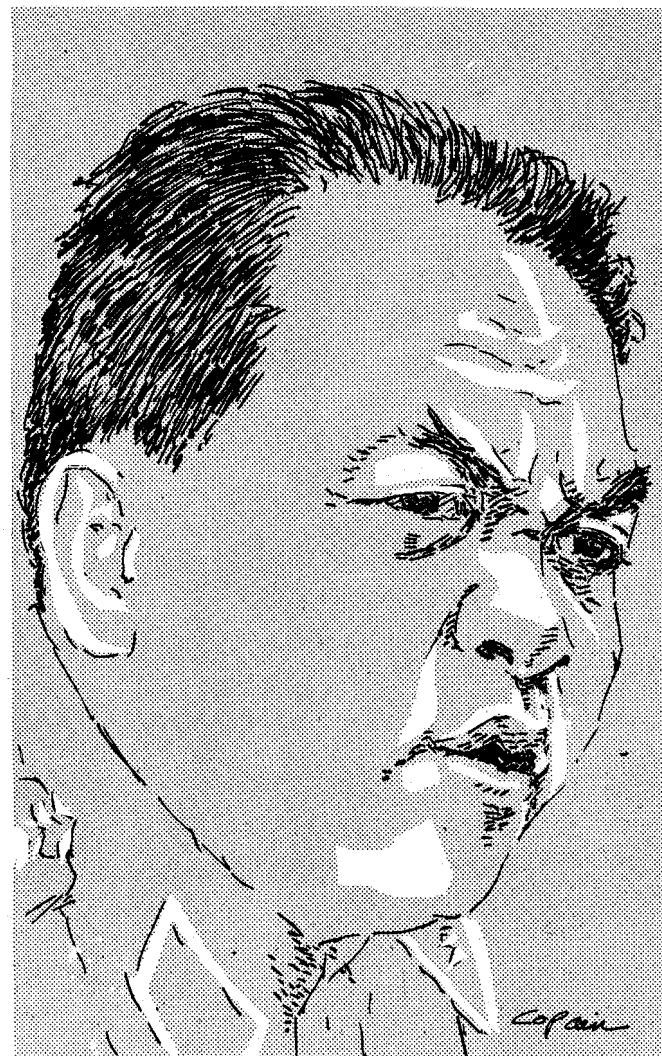
LIVIO MAITAN:

The Case of Anibal Escalante

Vol. 6, No. 7

February 23, 1968

Nuclear Bombs Next in Vietnam?



The Truth About Ben Tre

European Youth Back Vietnamese

Raul Castro's Report on Escalante

VO NGUYEN GIAP, defense minister of North Vietnam. Since the stunning defeat of the U.S. and its Saigon puppet forces at the beginning of February, officials in Washington have been speaking in most respectful tones of General Giap, to whom they ascribe the strategy that assured the victory of the Vietnamese freedom fighters.

50c

WILL JOHNSON USE NUCLEAR BOMBS IN VIETNAM?

By George Novack

Last September the CBS television network in the U.S. refused to allow Pete Seeger to sing his ballad "Waist Deep in the Big Muddy" on the popular "Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour." Its censors wouldn't pass the controversial sixth stanza of the song which is ostensibly about the experiences of an infantry platoon with a reckless bullheaded commander during World War II.

It goes like this:

"Now every time I read the papers
That old feelin's coming on
We're waist deep in the Big Muddy
And the big fool says to push on."

CBS has since lifted the ban and Seeger will be allowed to sing the full lyric on February 25.

This turnaround is a slight sign of the shift in public opinion about President Johnson's handling of the Vietnamese situation, since the shaft of the censored stanza is clearly aimed at the U.S. Commander-in-Chief in the White House. In fact, according to the latest Gallup poll, public approval of Johnson's policy dropped from 39 percent to 35 percent following the recent offensive of the National Liberation Front.

Nevertheless, "the big fool says to push on." In reaction to the unexpected successes of the NLF forces in the cities all over South Vietnam, Saigon included, and their anxiety over the key point of Khesanh, the president and the Pentagon ordered 10,500 more troops to the embattled area February 13. This new deployment raises the total of U.S. forces in South Vietnam to 510,000.

The additions are required, it is said, to reinforce the stretched lines of defense and cope with the threat of another move into provincial capitals and large cities which is expected to coincide with the assault on Khesanh near the demilitarized zone.

New York Times correspondent Max Frankel wrote from Washington February 13: "Senior Administration officials are speaking in the most respectful tones of the strategy of the enemy commander, Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, North Vietnam Defense Minister. They expect him to take South Vietnam's cities by surprise again to demoralize the urban population further, to cripple the best units of South Vietnam's army and thus to unseat the Saigon Government."

This opinion is quite different

from the soothing assurances handed out by the administration and its generals shortly before the recent developments that the situation in Vietnam was completely under control, the NLF was on the run, and the United States and its allies were slowly but surely treading the road to victory.

The decision to provide Westmoreland with more troops will seriously deplete the already frayed forces of active Strategic Reserve divisions now at the Pentagon's disposal.

The New York Times reported from Washington February 14 that "in the event of another emergency outside Vietnam, the Army would not have even one complete infantry division ready for immediate deployment overseas. The depletion of the active Strategic Reserve, military sources believe, has now reached the point where Mr. Johnson may soon have to order a limited mobilization, bring back troops from Europe or institute drastic military personnel actions such as an involuntary extension of enlistments.

"In order to make available the 10,500 men for Vietnam, the Army and Marine Corps had to violate the rule that Vietnam veterans will not be sent back to the war zone without an intervening two years in the United States or in a nonhardship area such as Europe."

As these additional combat troops were being speeded across the Pacific, the Pentagon stealthily started to probe public reaction to the use of tactical nuclear weapons in Vietnam. It planted a rumor to this effect in Washington in connection with the dispatch of three tactical nuclear weapons experts to South Vietnam.

Early in February, Senator Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, had been prompted by similar reports to ask Secretary of State Rusk whether "the Administration believes we have the men and the equipment to handle another ground war on the mainland of Asia without the use of nuclear weapons." Rusk gave an equivocal reply which did not satisfy the suspicions of the members of the Senate committee.

Fulbright wrote a second letter to Rusk February 14 stating that in behalf of the committee he wanted to "ascertain whether tactical nuclear weapons have been or would be deployed in South Vietnam."

The following day, Rusk dictated an angry two-paragraph reply, which he then made public February 15 without consulting Fulbright in advance. Rusk evaded Fulbright's direct query, stating by way of answer: "As George Christian said yesterday in response to a question about whether the President had received a request to use tactical nuclear weapons in Vietnam under certain circumstances: 'I think all of you know that decisions of this nature rest with the President. I might add that irresponsible discussion and speculation are a disservice to the country, and I don't intend to say anything more about the subject.'"

Fulbright thereupon issued a public statement rejecting "the implication that the discussion of the subject of use of nuclear weapons in Vietnam is a disservice to the nation."

"I believe," he said further, "it would be a grave disservice to our country, in truth a disaster, if our leadership should so expose our troops in Vietnam as to require nuclear weapons to prevent their destruction."

Stating that he was "profoundly opposed to having the United States destroy the worldwide psychological barrier against the use of nuclear weapons which has thus far existed since Hiroshima and Nagasaki," Fulbright added:

"Since we are the only nation which has used nuclear weapons in anger to destroy the lives of Asian people, we have a very special responsibility not again to use these weapons, not in effect to take the first step toward a general nuclear conflict in which incalculable destruction would result."

Despite his forebodings over Johnson's intentions, Fulbright, it is clear from his statement, is opposed to the use of nuclear weapons in Vietnam mainly on tactical grounds. Under certain conditions he would not oppose -- although he might decry -- the dumping of nuclear bombs on the Vietnamese freedom fighters.

The exchange served to indicate how frayed tempers are becoming in Washington under the pressure of mounting opposition among the American people to the war in Vietnam.

Senator George Aiken, the ranking Republican in the Foreign Relations Committee, said that Rusk's letter was "about as irresponsible as General Wheeler's statement that he wouldn't use nuclear weapons unless we begin to get the worst of it in the battle of Khesanh." And he suggested, "Maybe we need some fresh new faces downtown."

Meanwhile, Senator McCarthy of

Minnesota, who is challenging Johnson for the Democratic presidential nomination, flatly declared that there have already been demands for permission to use "tactical" nuclear weapons and that these will become more insistent if there is a repetition of recent military setbacks in Vietnam.

Another member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Clark of Pennsylvania, stated on a television program that he was worried lest the administration be tempted to use nuclear weapons if North Vietnamese forces gained the upper hand in the impending battle for Khesanh.

When questioned by reporters two days later, General Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, expressed confidence that Khesanh could be held without nuclear weapons. But he refused to exclude their use in the event that the outpost was in danger of being overrun.

High-ranking officials say, according to the February 15 New York Times, "that the Administration will not make any categorical statements about the use of nuclear weapons since to do so would be to throw away the deterrent threat."

This deterrent is not solely an arm of imperialist psychological warfare. Many in Washington and other capitals are aware that Truman said he was considering use of nuclear weapons in November 1950 during the Korean war and British Prime Minister Attlee had to make a hurried trip to Washington in protest.

It is likewise recalled that Admiral Radford, then head of the Joint Chiefs, urged the use of nuclear weapons in Vietnam in 1954 and that Kennedy was resolved to drop them, as a last resort, in the Caribbean confrontation with the Soviet Union in October 1962.

The danger appears real enough this time to stir even Prime Minister Harold Wilson, who, it is well known, enjoys a special relationship with Johnson and therefore has access to special information. On February 9, after visiting the president, Wilson granted a taped television interview which was shown on CBS two days later. For the U.S. to use nuclear weapons in Vietnam would be "sheer lunacy," Wilson told the American public. "It would run a very, very great risk of escalation for the world." In addition, he said, it would "have a disastrous effect" on the reputation of the United States.

The Labour leader seemed to have been somewhat shaken by his conversation with Johnson, and the coincidence of his bringing up the lunacy of using

nuclear weapons in Vietnam did not pass unobserved in the press.

An article in the February 13 issue of the Paris daily Le Monde discusses plans projected by the U.S. strategists to drop atomic bombs if the NLF and the North Vietnamese commit "the tactical error" of massing their forces in considerable numbers at some distance from the American lines. Up to now the dispersion of the Vietnamese and their close proximity to the U.S. troops have made their use tactically inadvisable. The U.S. army possesses a full panoply of nuclear weapons ranging from international ballistic warheads to "miniaturized" bombs.

The fact that General Wheeler did

not exclude the employment of atomic arms in the present situation shows that the fears voiced by the informed Foreign Relations Committee members are well founded.

In any case, it would be foolhardy to take any statements on this matter from the administration at face value. Four years ago, in Akron, Ohio, a few weeks before the 1964 election, Johnson said: "We are not about to send American boys nine or ten thousand miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves." Today there are 510,000 American boys in Vietnam -- and more to go.

Any promise that might come from the president now that the use of nuclear weapons in Vietnam is out of the question would be equally untrustworthy.

"A SETBACK OF UNPRECEDENTED MAGNITUDE"

The White House and the Pentagon have done their utmost to cover up the extent of the defeat suffered by U.S. imperialism at the beginning of February. At first they claimed it was actually a victory for the U.S. and Saigon, being nothing but a "desperate" move and "last gasp" by "the foe."

It became more and more difficult to maintain this posture in view of the newscasts shown daily on America's ninety million television screens. Finally it had to be given up when the White House approved sending 10,500 more troops and indicated this was only the beginning of a new escalation.

With a few exceptions, the true situation has still not been indicated by the American press. One of the exceptions was the three-part series by Beverly Deepe, a special correspondent in Saigon, which appeared in the February 3, 5 and 7 issues of the Christian Science Monitor.

"The Communists' three-day blitz war -- actually a war within a war -- has opened up the possibility of the United States losing its first major war in history," she stated.

"An American defeat in South Vietnam is not necessarily inevitable, as the Communists have long maintained, nor is it likely to be imminent. But, according to some preliminary Vietnamese analysis, it is no longer an impossibility, as an American officer once predicted.

"The Communist blitz war has pushed, rapidly if perhaps impermanently, the favorable politico-military balance of force within the South from the allied side toward the Communist camp....

"Hence, the internal options open to the United States as seen in Saigon have shifted dramatically in the past week. The original policy choice of fighting for a battlefield victory or negotiating at the conference table has flip-flopped into the choice of either negotiating or being defeated. Also, within the negotiations option, the choice has shifted from negotiating on terms favorable to the allies to negotiating on terms favorable to the Communists.

"Whether this balance of forces can be reversed across the board by American officialdom and the Government of South Vietnam is highly debatable in the opinion of knowledgeable Vietnamese....

"In other words, the Communist blitz has at least temporarily snuffed out the hope of hard-line hawks for an American military victory."

The opinion in Saigon, according to Miss Deepe, is that the National Liberation Front inflicted a "political-psychological setback of unprecedented magnitude for the American-supported South Vietnamese regime.

"The initial assessment of the political damage is of such an order of magnitude that it has changed the entire complexion and character of this many-faced war in the South."

The qualitative difference, as Miss Deepe puts it, is that the struggle "has been extended to the political arena which now is considered the heart of this war within a war.

"The Communist military rampage has definitely surfaced, accelerated, and emphasized the political character

of this conflict as it never has been before -- and has opened the possibility it may become the decisive dimension of the war."

She explains how. The objective is "overthrowing the current anti-Communist-elected President and entire governmental apparatus in a manner described by Western-educated Vietnamese as reminiscent of the blood bath of the French revolution of 1789."

She reports "knowledgeable Vietnamese sources" as viewing the current offensive "as only the beginning of several phases leading to the climax of an all-out popular insurrection."

An anti-Communist Roman Catholic told Miss Deepe that when the attack began, everyone thought it was "another coup d'état, with Ky trying to overthrow Thieu." When it was realized that it was the NLF, everything changed. "The typical reaction among the working-class people was, 'The VC are much stronger than we thought.' And the typical reaction of the upper-class people was, 'This government is incapable of protecting us any more.'"

A week after the fighting began, the NLF was stepping up its recruiting of military supporters in Saigon. Units were still hitting police stations, warehouses, and bridges inside city limits.

"Government outposts surrounding the capital are being overrun and uprooted. All roads leading out of the city are either barricaded or cut by the Communists. Saigon is an island."

Looking at the tactical pattern of the war as a whole, Miss Deepe concluded that the American troops opened an offensive in the jungles "to secure the rear." The Saigon forces, left to hold the populated centers, "irritated the Vietnamese urban population by shakedowns, bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, and kickbacks from bars and brothels, which mushroomed on such a large scale as to seem immoral and un-Vietnamese to the townspeople."

"The Communist blitz has thus in a conventional sense outflanked the American troops along the borders with a lightning, and gigantic maneuver -- a sweep into the urban centers in the rear."

THE TRUTH ABOUT BEN TRE

The February 16 issue of Time magazine included the following paragraph in a roundup of the situation in Vietnam:

"The problem likely to plague South Viet Nam the longest is the widespread destruction of its cities, its towns, its homes. It was the Viet Cong's decision to bring the war into the midst of the cities, and the initial damage was wrought by Communist guns and mortars. But the bulk of the actual destruction occurred during the allied counterattacks to oust the Viet Cong. For allied commanders, these posed a grim dilemma that was summed up bluntly -- and injudiciously -- by a U.S. major involved in the battle for Ben Tre. 'It became necessary to destroy the town to save it,' he said. The Viet Cong had nearly the whole town under their control. The ARVN defenders were pinned down in their barracks, the U.S. advisory compound was in danger of being overrun, and the Viet Cong were within 50 yards of the provincial tactical operations center. 'They are our friends in there,' said one of the Americans ruefully. 'We waited until we had no choice.'"

Other journals also quoted the injudicious U.S. major. Often the quotation was given an inch or so of space with a small heading, like a feature item about the latest penguin count in Antarctica.

Even the New York Times, which

boasts that it provides "All the news that's fit to print," merely mumbled: "In towns such as Hue, Vinhlong, Bentre and Mytho, appalling destruction was wrought when encircled allied forces took the decision to destroy the attacking Vietcong forces by destroying the places they had occupied."

The American press had available details about what happened in these towns but, through the operation of some mysterious judicious consensus, decided not to report them to the American people. To get an idea of the truth, it was necessary to rely on the press of other countries. As an example, we have translated the following article, consisting in the main of an Associated Press dispatch, as it appeared in the Paris daily Le Monde of February 9:

"Can-Tho, My-Tho, Chau-Doc, Ben-Tre... So many towns of the Delta which the Americans have bombed to drive out the Vietcong, who occupied them in a few hours, sometimes even in a few minutes. As the reports come in, the list of civilian victims and destruction gets longer. At Ben-Tre, a small town of 35,000 inhabitants, the special AP correspondent, Peter Arnett, estimated the number of civilians killed at a minimum of 500. According to the UPI, the population suffered a thousand dead and 500 wounded. 'It was necessary to destroy the town to

save it,' an American commander declared.

"Ben-Tre, February 8 (AP) -- At what point must you aim your heavy guns and use your fighter-bombers against your own town? An answer to that question was given in the first hours of the battle of Ben-Tre, up until then a peaceful town of 35,000 inhabitants in the Delta, 75 miles south of the capital.

"The destruction of this provincial capital took 50 hours. A Vietcong force of around 2,500 men had invaded the town and its suburbs. They were finally driven out. All the government forces held up well. But the civilian casualties were very high -- between 500 and 1,000. 'We will never know exactly,' an American officer declared. 'Many families were literally buried in the ruins.'

"Among the arms utilized by the American and government forces were 500-pound bombs, napalm, rockets, various antipersonnel bombs and 105 and 155 millimeter mortars.

"The decision to employ these arms was not taken lightly, the American officers affirmed. 'They are our friends in there,' one of them said, indicating the American advisory compound. 'We waited until we had no choice.'

"The defenders of Ben-Tre stated that the Viet Cong attackers had occupied most of the town, had succeeded in containing the American and government forces and were preparing to dig them out, when it was decided to resort to these arms.

"'We had to plead our cause at headquarters in Can-Tho,' an American captain explained. 'They didn't like the idea. But they were finally convinced when we explained to them that it was either rockets and bombing or the end for us.'

"The bombers dumped napalm on two miles of the residential districts where the houses are thatched with straw. These

were reduced to cinders. Helicopters carried out a number of raids on the market place, at the center of the town, destroying the walls and transforming the roofs into heaps of scrap iron. The Ben-Tre radio station, occupied by the NLF, which had begun broadcasting, was destroyed by the American bombers.

"The poor neighborhoods in the north and west of the town suffered from gunfire. Artillery continued to fire on the town from the American base at Dong-Tam, a few miles to the north. 'The only places left untouched were the headquarters of the American advisers, the headquarters of the provincial chief and the hospital. All the rest came under artillery fire,' an officer said.

"Commander Chester Brown, who flew over the town for several hours in a small plane, directing the artillery fire, declared:

"'I utilized the main street as a base point during the night. The lights had been left on in the streets. We destroyed the radio station, and the helicopters' guns did a good job on the other targets. The civilians are always hurt. In general confusion of that kind, people don't know where to hide. Some of the arms we used were arms designed for zonal attacks instead of specific targets. That was how people got wounded.'

"The Americans stressed that the use of heavy fire power was imposed by the fact that half of the troops of the two government battalions guarding the town were off duty or on leave at the time of the attack. The NLF succeeded in taking over the town in a few hours. The government defenders were nailed down in their barracks. The Vietcong likewise launched a violent assault against the provincial tactical command center. The Communists were within 50 yards when massive fire power was resorted to. According to the government authorities, the Vietcong losses totaled 451 dead. About fifty government troops and twenty Americans were killed."

CALL FOR EUROPEAN ANTIWAR YOUTH DEMONSTRATION IN WEST BERLIN

[A number of youth organizations in various European countries called for a joint mass demonstration in West Berlin February 17 against the role of the U.S. in Vietnam and in support of the Vietnamese freedom fighters. The text of the call, which was widely distributed in Europe, was as follows.]

* * *

For the workers movement, the Viet-

namese people's struggle at bottom represents a decisive confrontation between the world revolution and the world counterrevolution. Imperialism is trying desperately to annihilate all revolutionary movements by means of international alliances like NATO and SEATO.

The victory of the Vietnamese people would necessarily constitute a great encouragement for all the revolutionary movements which are struggling today

against imperialism and its henchmen. The duty of every revolutionist is to work with all his strength for the victory of the Vietnamese revolution, not to demand a compromise peace advantageous to imperialism.

By its offensive operations in Vietnam and in Latin America and its maneuvers in Greece through the generals, imperialism is seeking to change the international relationship of forces in its favor. Its aim is to put an end to the advance of the world revolution and to deal blows to the conquests of the workers movement.

The duty of the world's revolutionary youth organizations is to attack imperialism everywhere by all means possible in order to weaken the international counterrevolution.

The American aggression in Vietnam directly affects the working class in Europe. The USA is anxious for Europe to remain quiet while it conducts its counterrevolutionary wars elsewhere, but for us Europe is a decisive field of battle in the anticapitalist and anti-imperialist struggle.

The European workers movement and the vanguard young socialists are today confronted with duties of international portent. The present focuses of this struggle are:

(1) The fight against the Atlantic Pact and NATO.

(2) An intensification of the class struggle through the rejection by the workers movement of all forms of subordination to the bourgeois state or corporate structure with the aim of striving to pose the problem of the conquest of power.

(3) Combatting Social Democratic ideology, which aids and abets imperialism and seeks to neutralize the workers movement.

The OLAS [Organization of Latin-American Solidarity] has proposed a new strategy of armed struggle in Latin America. The OLAS has expressed profound solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution and with all those who oppose imperialism and have not abandoned the goal of world socialist revolution.

This strategy finds its expression in Guevara's words: "Create two, three, many Vietnams!" And in these words is

contained anew the idea of proletarian revolution.

All organizations which have determined to struggle against imperialism must form a united front to bring about the final victory of the Vietnamese revolution.

To this end these organizations have decided to hold an international assembly and demonstration in West Berlin on February 17.

The following organizations invite all youth organizations in agreement with this call to participate in the demonstration and assembly in Berlin.

Nationale Federatie van Socialistische Jonge Wachten [National Federation of the Socialist Young Guard (Flemish-speaking Belgium)].

Fédération Nationale des Jeunes Gardes Socialistes [National Federation of the Socialist Young Guard (French-speaking Belgium)].

Federatie van Socialistische Studenten van België [Belgian Socialist Students Federation (Flemish-speaking)].

Fédération des Etudiants Socialistes de Belgique [Belgian Socialist Students Federation (French-speaking Belgium)].

Etudiants Socialistes Unifiés [United Socialist Students (France)].

Vietnam Solidarity Campaign -- Youth Section (United Kingdom).

Socialistisk Ungdoms Forum [Young Socialist Forum (Denmark)].

Politeia (Holland).

Socialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund [German Socialist Students League].

Falken [the Falcons (Germany)].

Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire [Revolutionary Communist Youth (France)].

Federazione Giovanile Socialista -- Partito Socialista d'Unità Proletaria [Young Socialist Federation -- Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity (Italy)].

Socialistische Jeugd [Socialist Youth (Holland)].

YSA HAILS VIETNAMESE FREEDOM FIGHTERS

By Elizabeth Barnes

Strong support for the Vietnamese freedom fighters was voiced at the seventh national convention of the Young Socialist Alliance held in Detroit February 9-11. The delegates denounced U.S. intervention in the civil war in Vietnam and demanded the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops.

Pointing out how the war in Vietnam had sparked a wave of radicalization such as has not been seen in the United States since the thirties, Lew Jones, the national chairman of the organization, voiced the feelings of the delegates in pledging the YSA to do its utmost to crystallize this sentiment among the youth in the coming period in the form of an expanding revolutionary socialist youth movement.

With some 350 young people present from 35 different cities and towns in the United States, the convention was the largest in the history of the organization. The size and enthusiasm of the gathering reflected the deepening political radicalization in the U.S. and the opportunities opening up for building a strong revolutionary socialist youth movement in the main bastion of world imperialism.

It was reported that the YSA has already registered a sharp increase in membership in the first six weeks of 1968.

For the first time at a YSA convention, delegates were present from well-established chapters in the South. In addition, for the first time, a significant number of high-school students participated in the deliberations.

The delegates decided to mobilize the YSA for an intensive campaign in support of the Socialist Workers party slate of Fred Halstead for president and Paul Boutelle for vice-president of the United States. In her political report, National Secretary Mary-Alice Waters projected winning thousands of young campaigners for Halstead and Boutelle.

After discussing perspectives for the growing international movement against the Vietnam war, the YSA voted to help build the international student strike for April 26 and to do everything possible to make the April 27 demonstrations around the world a success.

One of the most important contributions to the discussion on the antiwar

movement was made by Pfc. Howard Petrick, a YSAer drafted into the army who was threatened last spring with court-martial for discussing his antiwar and socialist views with other GIs. Petrick described the strong sentiment against the war in the army and said that one of the most important tasks of the antiwar movement is to "bring this out into the open where people can see it."

In the resolution on the Afro-American liberation movement, the YSA's support of the progressive features of black nationalism was reaffirmed.

Derrick Morrison, a member of the National Committee, reported on the resolution. "The awakening of thirty million Afro-Americans to nationalist consciousness," he said, "represents a necessary stage in the development of the American socialist revolution."

The convention decided to help build the Afro-American movement through such activities as defending militants under attack from the government, building campus Afro-American clubs, and campaigning for the formation of an independent black political party.

During the convention, the YSA sponsored a rally with Farrell Dobbs, national secretary of the Socialist Workers party, as the main speaker. Dobbs described the present political situation in the United States as "the opening stages of a new developing process of radicalization in this country that shows more and more promise of becoming very broad in its scope."

Gary Porter, the executive secretary of the Canadian Young Socialists -- Lique des Jeunes Socialistes, told the convention about the encouraging growth of the socialist youth movement in Canada.

A new National Committee, elected by the delegates, met briefly. It chose as officers of the YSA: Lew Jones, national chairman; Mary-Alice Waters, national secretary; and Charles Bolduc, national organizational secretary.

The convention closed with the traditional socialist song, "The Internationale."

At a press conference after the convention, the YSA announced its decisions on building the April 26 international student strike and supporting the SWP presidential campaign.

FRED HALSTEAD'S NAME HEADS COLLEGE "PRIMARY" LIST

[The following is the full text of an article by Tom Stewart, an Associated Press writer, which was carried on the wires of the press agency February 13.]

* * *

WASHINGTON (AP) -- If American college students would rather have Fred Halstead than Lyndon B. Johnson for president, they'll have a chance to let it be known April 24.

That's voting day for Choice 68, a nationwide presidential preference "primary" to be held on more than 1,000 campuses.

The 11 students who make up the project's board of directors unveiled Monday the 14-name ballot that will be used. And, lo, the name of Fred Halstead led all the rest.

While Halstead's name may not ring a bell with the average adult voter, he is well known on many campuses as the candidate of the Socialist Workers party.

The directors said their method of deciding what names to offer the voters was simple: if a man was felt to have a "significant" following among college students they put him on the list.

Since the list is alphabetized and no candidates with names beginning "A" through "G" passed the directors' screening, Halstead's name is at the top.

The full list:

Fred Halstead, Socialist Workers party; Mark O. Hatfield, Republican; Lyndon B. Johnson, Democrat; Robert F. Kennedy, Democrat; Martin L. King, Independ-

dent; John V. Lindsay, Republican; Eugene J. McCarthy, Democrat; Richard M. Nixon, Republican; Charles H. Percy, Republican; Ronald W. Reagan, Republican; Nelson A. Rockefeller, Republican; George W. Romney, Republican; Harold E. Stassen, Republican; George C. Wallace, American Independent party.

Time magazine is paying the bills for Choice 68. The young directors said the magazine has made no attempt to influence their decisions.

Robert G. Harris, a 1965 Michigan State graduate, who conceived the idea and is now the project's executive director, said the poll should destroy the notion that the attitudes of students are known and predictable.

"No one, absolutely no one, knows what college students are thinking," Harris said.

Among the two million or more young people who will participate in the mock election, he said, an impressive number are well informed and, but for the law, would be competent to vote in a real election.

"I feel the number is greater among the 18 to 21 year olds than among the 40 to 50 year olds," he said.

There were several suggestions during the news conference that the project will give support to those who favor lowering the legal voting age.

"We are not very far away from it," said John Kesler, president of the Associated Students at the University of Utah. "Perhaps it needs just a little more emphasis."

EXPLORER GIVES BARRIENTOS THE JITTERS

The French embassy in La Paz has been unable to secure the release of Henri Vial, a French explorer who was tracing the course of the Beni river, one of the tributaries of the Amazon. He was arrested by the Barrientos dicta-

torship on January 20. Vial was obviously suspicious. Besides being French, he is young, a student of philosophy, and wears a beard. He is reported to have gone on a hunger strike to protest his illegal imprisonment.

ONGANIA FLIPS WIG OVER LONG HAIR

In an intensive drive against the flower people, the Ongania dictatorship picked up one of Argentina's outstanding painters, Ernesto Deira, who wears his hair like the Paris artists of the past century. The police whacked it off, tell-

ing him, "It's for your own good because you are one of the glories of the nation that must be protected." A police psychiatrist explained: "The hippies are a social cancer and the police are the hatchet to extirpate it."

VINH LONG, MY THO, AND HUE

The liberal Washington columnist, Clayton Fritchey, pointing to the heavy toll among Vietnamese civilians resulting from American tactics in fighting against the National Liberation Front, noted in his column of February 16:

"Ambassador Robert Komer, the U.S. pacification chief in Vietnam, personally inspected what was left of Vinh Long, another provincial capital, after a series of air strikes which demolished much of the town, leaving 14,000 homeless and 2,000 dead and wounded. 'It was militarily justified,' said Komer, and 'it could have been a lot worse.'

"Viet Cong invaders hid in the residential sector of My Tho, a lovely seaside city of 80,000, but they were blasted out by U.S. bombing which, in the process, destroyed the homes of half the population. It was the same story in Can Tho. In the old, imperial city of Hue, the New York Times reported, the U.S. artillery 'blasted away at brick and mortar walls and reduced homes to rubble in this city of 145,000.' A Marine major said, 'It's the only way to get them, unless you want to risk losing half a platoon to get one sniper.'"

An AP dispatch in the February 14 Paris daily Le Monde described the fighting in Hue. Here are some excerpts:

"After two weeks of exceptionally violent fighting, the Summer Palace on the outskirts of the imperial city, which had stood for two centuries against inclement weather, is no more than shattered ruins. Stone statues have been smashed to bits and bodies float in the ornamental pools of the imperial lawns.

"Bunkers have been dug into the flagstones of the vast courts and machine-guns mounted in the throne rooms and temples where once only princes of the blood were allowed to enter.

"Gunfire crisscrosses the great royal flower beds around the entry ways to the forbidden quarters of the Pavilion of Contemplation, the royal carriage houses and the Pavilion of the Eunuchs.

"On the southern bank of the Perfume River, large numbers of American troops have cleared out the new city, in particular the residential sections and the commercial district up to a canal. On the opposite bank of the canal, North Vietnamese troops are firmly dug in.

"Thousands of refugees -- men, women, and children -- are camping in the lecture halls and corridors of the Uni-

versity of Hue. Filth is piling up. The absence of organization is virtually total....

"An American pacification team headed by Mr. H.L.Koren arrived Monday. According to Koren, the problems of public health and looting are the most urgent. Doctors, nurses and equipment are being awaited. 'But the real task before us,' he said 'is to regain the confidence of the population and show it that the government is able to guarantee their safety.' He added: 'Hue has become a symbol. It is the Berlin of Vietnam.'"

Another AP dispatch in Le Monde of February 15 gives additional details:

"No city in the Far East has been so ravaged since the fighting in Seoul during the Korean War -- although the destruction is less than in Seoul, which was completely destroyed. Virtually no buildings have escaped damage in Hue. Most of them, torn by mortar shells and pockmarked by bullets, could be repaired in a few weeks. But vast districts of this beautiful city, the storehouse of the country's ancient glories, will have to be razed outright....

"Burials have already begun at the University of Hue, where 8,000 have found refuge. A makeshift cemetery already holds thirty dead. Most of the victims were killed by mortar fire, but two perished from cholera on Monday, and other cases of the disease are feared.

"There are bodies rotting all over the city. Some are in civilian clothing, others are North Vietnamese in uniform, local policemen, functionaries, or simply unidentifiable. Many have been rotting for two weeks. The stench would be unbearable were it not for the cold weather. It has been drizzling most of the time.

"Most districts occupied by American and government forces are virtually deserted. Only a few brave souls are to be seen from time to time making furtive sorties in search of food. Afterwards, they come running back down the muddy streets toward the refugee centers.

"Looting is prevalent and even the houses left intact have not escaped -- furniture, lamps, tables, dishes lie broken on the floors.

"American Marines have been complaining -- officers have written official letters on the subject -- that government troops have followed them closely in their house-to-house advance, looting indiscriminately behind them."

THE CONDEMNATION OF ANIBAL ESCALANTE

By Livio Maitan

[The following article was written February 10 on the basis of dispatches from Havana in the European press and the text of Major Raúl Castro's report on January 24 to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba published by Prensa Latina.]

* * *

The condemnation of Aníbal Escalante by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba is only a new episode in the intense struggle that has continued to develop in the international Communist movement; and it cannot be judged correctly without taking into account the specific context in which it occurred.

Everyone is well aware that relations between Cuba and the USSR, the same as relations between Cuba and the Communist parties of Latin America, have undergone manifold changes since the victory of Fidel Castro's movement. Conjunctural factors have swayed things this way or that, but the direction has been determined at bottom by the permanent contradiction consisting of the fact that while on the one hand Cuba, as the most advanced expression of the revolutionary tendencies of the sixties, necessarily comes into conflict with the conservative bureaucratic system headed by the USSR, on the other hand, Cuba cannot do without the Soviet Union's economic and military aid and the USSR cannot contemplate a possible crushing of the revolutionary Cuban government without very unfavorable repercussions for itself both from the strategic and political standpoint.

The Tricontinental conference at the beginning of 1966 marked the greatest effort by both sides to reach an agreement, no matter how short-lived. But the rapid realization by the Cuban leaders of the impossibility of bringing the Latin-American Communist parties to accept a strategy of revolutionary struggle, which to them represented a vital necessity, led to new confrontations and to new conflicts, the decisions of the OLAS [Organization of Latin-American Solidarity] conference being the logical culmination of this.

Beginning with last October, the struggle entered a new stage -- the death of Che Guevara and the serious setback suffered by the guerrillas in Bolivia were immediately cynically exploited by the bureaucrats of the Communist parties. Backed by Moscow, they launched a counter-attack up and down the line. While the main target of this offensive was obvious-

ly the strategy for Latin America and the conception of guerrilla war, domestic Cuban policies also came under fire, since the basic Castroist concepts have continued to diverge from the concepts in force in the USSR and the European people's democracies (as well as from the Chinese concepts, moreover). The latter critique was partially facilitated by the difficulties which the Cuban economy has unquestionably experienced and is doubtless going to experience, as long as the present situation exists of blockade and isolation from the Latin-American continent.

This is the context in which the decisions of the plenum of the Central Committee at the end of January must be placed, decisions, one can be sure, which the Fidelista team did not undertake lightly and which, moreover, involved a very difficult choice. It is significant, also, that at the same time the Central Committee condemned Escalante and his "microfracción," it decided not to send representatives to the international meeting of Communist parties that is soon to be held.

The events of 1961-62 had already brought out sufficiently the nature of the tendency expressed by Escalante. No one has forgotten the famous speech by Fidel against sectarianism, in which he posed in a very clear and vigorous way the problem of the necessity for a stubborn struggle against bureaucratic tendencies. There is no serious reason to doubt that upon returning to Cuba after his luxurious exile, Escalante continued to maintain his concepts, seeking to prepare the ground for a return to posts of leadership.

The report presented to the Central Committee by Raúl Castro provides abundant information and documents, which, taken together, make up a coherent picture. One may wonder about this or that detail, or even hold that this or that criticism made by Escalante was not entirely unjustified; but it is indisputably evident from the document that Escalante and his friends were partisans of orientations completely opposed to those of the present leaders and very close to the concepts maintained by the sector of the Communist movement under Soviet influence. What is striking, moreover, to those who recall other documents of analogous accusations is that the report in question makes it possible to understand very clearly that the oppositionists had a rounded conception with its own internal logic and that they even set themselves quite concrete objectives

and that the report avoids resorting to grotesque distortions and still less to describing the persons aimed at as monsters inspired by the most abominable designs.[1] Here, very briefly, are the main points of the Escalante group's platform:

(1) The present ruling group is following a line that is departing more and more from that of the USSR, which, as the country that has the greatest responsibilities, must normally play the leading role in the camp of the socialist countries. Criticisms leveled against the USSR must be rejected, for example, in connection with aid to Vietnam and its attitude on the occasion of the crisis in the Middle East, but also in connection with its orientation in Latin America. (Escalante criticized Fidel's speech of July 26, 1966, on Soviet aid to Chile, Brazil, etc., and held that Soviet intervention in Latin America in this field in reality dealt blows to imperialism.)

(2) The strategy of armed struggle advanced by OLAS is adventurist and does not correspond to the existing objective and subjective situations. The Cuban CP, in fact, is following a "Trotskyist line of exporting the Revolution."

(3) Among the leaders, and particularly among some of them, a tendency clearly stands out of collaborating with French capitalism, whose policies are embellished.[2]

(4) With regard to domestic policy, the economy is suffering from inadequate planning. In agriculture, particularly in sugar production, objectives were set that cannot possibly be attained. Erroneous concepts are advanced particularly in putting the emphasis on moral stimulants that demand a level of consciousness among

[1] "Manuscript No. 2 of Octavio Fernandez" provides interesting material on the perspectives of the group.

As to the parallel with briefs of political accusations, without referring to the classical Stalinist documents which cannot possibly be compared, it suffices to point to certain Chinese documents against Liu Shao-chi, the false and tendentious character of which is instantly transparent and which present the unfortunate victim as a frightful monster who had been plotting with capitalism since the twenties.

[2] In connection with the alleged relations with French imperialism, the "microfraccionistas" did not hesitate to slander Régis Debray in a foul way, attributing his expulsion from the French Communist party to links with the secret police of his country.

the masses much higher than the actually existing one. The unions are not fulfilling their function of giving impulse to the economy and the party leading bodies are not functioning smoothly.

Ernesto Che Guevara was a special target of the supporters of the "microfracción" and it was particularly against him that they utilized the characterization of "Trotskyist," considered to be the most damning epithet possible. But the so-to-speak "sociological" characterization applied to the Fidelista leadership as a whole was not any more flattering. According to the Escalantists, the events of 1962 signified the defeat of the proletarian tendency and the victory of a petty-bourgeois tendency which, in the final analysis, could lead to restoration of the pre-1959 regime.

Raúl Castro's report is understandably cautious in dealing with the relations between the "microfracción" and representatives of the USSR and other workers states. Nevertheless there are many explicit indications of the relations which Escalante and his group maintained, whose political significance cannot be doubted. The report cites names and circumstances in a precise way, and that these allegations are well founded can scarcely be doubted. If they were really false, how is it to be explained that the Soviets, the East Germans and the Czechs have maintained complete silence up to now, despite the publicity given to Raúl Castro's report and despite the role of certain figures under fire?

In conclusion, no doubt is possible as to the political meaning of the conflict in the Cuban CP nor about the fact that Escalante and his friends represented a faction, which, in agreement with the pro-Soviet CPs, and in support of totally different concepts of revolutionary strategy and the construction of socialism, was carrying on oppositional activity against the present leadership team. The cleavage around the Escalante affair internationally will thus once more follow the already established lines in the world revolutionary and Communist movement.

There is another aspect to the events, however, of which the Cuban leaders themselves are most of all aware. Condemnation of Escalante's political orientation does not automatically imply unqualified approval of the method adopted against him and his group. In particular the fact that the Central Committee's political sanctions were followed by penal sanctions provoked and is still provoking comment that cannot be ignored. On the other hand sincere revolutionists wonder about the meaning of a measure that appears to be in contradiction with the

antibureaucratic concepts maintained by the Cubans; on the other hand, the Stalinist and neo-Stalinist attorneys claim that the Escalante trial only confirms the inevitability of certain methods.

It would be easy to show that no analogy can possibly be drawn between what has occurred in Cuba and the tragic experiences which the USSR and the people's democracies underwent respectively in the thirties and the fifties.[3] But that would not be sufficient.

There is no doubt that in a workers state where a whole series of conditions existed which do not exist in Cuba, which was faced with loyal oppositional elements willing to accept certain rules of the game, and who, above all, were integrated in a system of workers parties and states founded on genuinely democratic and internationalist relationships, crimes like those charged against Escalante would be inconceivable and no one would find it acceptable that the condemnation of a political orientation meant judicial proceedings. But what has occurred must be judged in a concrete context, one characterized by a war to the knife within the international Communist movement itself, where methods are currently being used that have nothing to do with democratic and revolutionary methods. It is sufficient to recall here, by way of example, the present employment of economic blackmail and extortion, which in the case of the conflict between China and the USSR brought with it extremely grave consequences for the Chinese people. The reference is not at all to an abstract analogy -- everyone knows what pressures are constantly exerted on the Cuban leaders; and, according to Raúl Castro's report, Escalante and his friends went so far as to wish that the USSR would undertake economic measures which, by having very grievous repercussions for the country, could lead Castro to correct his attitude!

Let me add, finally, that despite the caution and reticence of the report to the Central Committee, it is clear that Escalante and his group transmitted confidential texts and documents, the knowledge of which could be injurious to the interests of the revolutionary government, and it is not excluded that through their relations with the leaders of the Latin-American Communist parties they undertook actions prejudicial to the struggle of the revolutionists on the continent. It must not be forgotten that

[3] Escalante himself wrote, moreover: "I am aware that the leadership of the party did not turn me over to the State Security because of my opinions but because of my activities."

in this field, too, a ferocious battle continues to develop.[4]

It is probable that the Escalante trial will lead some to be concerned about the danger of the Cuban regime becoming bureaucratized. We have no reason to revise the idea we advanced at the time of the most positive moves undertaken by the Cuban leaders in the antibureaucratic struggle. In the domestic and international situation in which the Cuban socialist experience is unfolding -- given the economic limitations and constricting bottlenecks caused by the blockade and isolation, given the technical and cultural backwardness, despite the prodigious efforts of the last years, and, last but not least, given the powerful means of pressure at the disposal of the Soviet bureaucracy and its allies -- the objective tendency toward bureaucratization cannot be eliminated for an entire period and certain actual bureaucratic deformations are, in the final analysis, inevitable. Against this, the eminently positive factor remains of the existence of a leading group conscious of the danger and disposed to struggle resolutely against it.

As for revolutionists, particularly the Latin Americans, their task is not to make a hue and cry over their fears, nor to take their distance or to worry about keeping up their prestige as people capable of analyzing all phenomena in time, utilizing this or that cautious formula to prove it; their task is not to forget for a single instant that the fate of Cuba will be settled, in the final analysis, in the field of revolutionary struggle in other countries, particularly Latin America. It is by organizing that struggle, it is by carrying it forward to a victorious outcome that one also participates in practice in the struggle which the Cuban revolutionists are carrying on in their own country. By the same token the possibility is increased that the Cuban regime will not be ruined by the phenomena and tendencies which led to the degeneration of other revolutionary regimes.

[4] In my opinion the circulation of the documents of other Communist parties cannot be considered a crime; at most, under certain conditions, it could represent a violation of discipline. This would seem to hold all the more since it can hardly be thought that the articles or reports of a Corvalán or Codovilla are of a kind to trouble the thinking of Cuban militants.

REPORT BY MAJOR RAUL CASTRO ON ACTIVITIES OF ANIBAL ESCALANTE GROUP

[We are publishing below the first installment of the report made by Major Raúl Castro, Chairman of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and State Security Commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, at a Central Committee meeting January 24.

[On the basis of this report, the Central Committee expelled José Matar from the Central Committee, expelled Ramón Calcines from the Central Committee and the Communist Party of Cuba, and remanded a number of others, including Aníbal Escalante, to the Revolutionary Tribunals. The trial began January 27 and ended February 1 with verdicts of guilty against the defendants. The sentences, announced February 3, ranged from two to ten years in prison for twenty-six of the group, twelve years for eight members, and fifteen years for Aníbal Escalante. Two, who belonged to the armed forces, were turned over to the military for courts-martial.

[The translation is the official one and has been taken from the February 11 issue of the English edition of Granma, the official organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba. The subheadings appear in the text provided by Granma.

[For a preliminary estimate of the meaning of the case, the reader is referred to the article by Livio Maitan on page 155 of this issue.]

* * *

MAJOR RAUL CASTRO RUZ: Comrades of the Central Committee and the Political Bureau: We herewith present the report of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and National Security Commission on the activities of the microfaction.

● Background

In the middle of 1966 certain information reached us concerning opinions critical of the leadership of the Revolution and specifically of Major Fidel Castro, as well as statements against the ideological line of the Party, coming from some former members of the People's Socialist Party (PSP).

Up until that time, reports had appeared spontaneously, many of them referring to statements that were made at the end of 1965 at the Dos Hermanos Farm, operated by Aníbal Escalante Dellundé, where holiday dinners were given by Aníbal for former PSP members, friends of his.

At those dinners political obser-

vations were made to the effect that Aníbal Escalante represented the true ideological line of the working class; that his presence in Cuba alone, although he was not participating in political activities, constituted a brake on the petty-bourgeois elements entrenched in the leadership of the country; that a policy exists to eliminate the old Communists; that the said policy began with the events of March 1962 (that is, the criticism of sectarianism), when the petty bourgeoisie concentrated its attacks on Aníbal Escalante; and that time was proving Aníbal Escalante right, and Major Fidel Castro's speech in Santa Clara on the occasion of the anniversary of the attack on Moncada Garrison was presented as proof of this.

For this group, that speech represented a rectification of the points of view for which Aníbal Escalante was expelled from a position of national leadership. They based this judgment on Major Fidel Castro's affirmation that key posts should be held by revolutionaries, even if they are not technicians. According to them, what Aníbal Escalante had done was to put the most revolutionary elements in key posts.

They spoke of the existence of a strong anti-Soviet current and emphasized, moreover, that the USSR should hold a position of hegemony. They considered the departure of Major Ernesto Guevara Serna from the country a healthy development for the Revolution, as they believed Major Guevara to be one of the strong opponents of Soviet policy and one of the representatives of Chinese positions, going so far as to state that Major Guevara had left because he was a Trotskyist and that he had been one of the strongest critics of Aníbal Escalante.

They maintained that the petty-bourgeois line was the prevailing current in the policy of the Revolution and that the petty bourgeoisie had made attempts to seize all the power in its hands. The most important example used by them was the following: upon the triumph of the Revolution, rightist elements tried to frustrate it and keep Cuba in the capitalist camp, but with the establishment of the Agrarian Reform and the passing of other revolutionary laws, imperialism cut off trade, thereby strengthening the genuinely revolutionary current within the country. Later, the petty bourgeoisie and the anti-Communist elements centered their attacks on the former PSP members and especially on Aníbal Escalante, who was the one who most firmly defended the ideological positions of the working class.

The petty bourgeoisie and the rightist elements set about preparing the

conditions for the denunciation of March 26, 1962, reinforcing their position with the October Crisis. These two events, the 26th of March and the October Crisis, facilitated a reorientation of the trade policy, once again toward the capitalist countries.

The aims of the petty bourgeoisie (that is, the revolutionary power) were not only to shift trade to the capitalist areas, but also to bring Cuba back to the system that had been abolished in January 1959.

This supposed rapprochement with the capitalist countries seriously damaged, according to them, the trade relations between our country and those of the socialist camp, which finally agreed to resume the discussions on trade agreements that had been set aside without previous notice by Cuba when Cuba turned toward capitalist markets.

This resumption of discussions was possible thanks to the Soviet Union, which underwrote all the financial operations.

Anibal Escalante did not express any opinions on the October Crisis. However, some of the group expressed their belief that, thanks to the wise policy of the USSR in withdrawing its missiles and to Nikita Khrushchev's letter to Kennedy, not only was war avoided but long-term immunity from attack by the imperialists was assured.

They maintained that the serious differences between Cuba and China fortified the positions of the proletariat -- that is, that they fortified the position represented by Anibal Escalante; that the problem with China was also beneficial, because, according to them, it weakened the thesis that the only road for the peoples of Latin America is that of armed struggle.

They generally opposed armed struggle, alleging that neither the subjective nor the objective conditions for it exist.

They viewed the struggle as it was conceived in Venezuela as an adventure.

Among the facts and antecedents we cite here the fact that during these gatherings at the Dos Hermanos Farm certain long-time leaders of the PSP were severely criticized, not for any particular political error but for the attitude they assumed in the case of Anibal Escalante, since it was postulated that they should have offered opposition to so great an injustice.

Anibal Escalante was also described as the leader of clearest political judgment within the leadership of

the old PSP.

Similar reports indicated that this position existed among certain persons in the Academy of Sciences, among some former trade-union leaders and among certain groups in the newspaper GRANMA -- where a group of journalists who had originally worked for the daily Hoy and the weekly Mella, headed up by Carlos Quintela Rodriguez, sustained a position of criticism of the Party's line and of sounding out the positions of their co-workers.

We also learned that certain ex-leaders of the Socialist Youth organization, such as César Gómez, Alfredo Pons, Thais Aguilera (Gómez' wife) and Adolfo Rivero, visited each other frequently and conversed about their disagreements with the line of the Revolution, in opposition to the stands taken by Major Fidel Castro on July 26, 1966, when he referred to aid given by the Soviet Union to the Governments of Chile and Brazil and other Latin-American oligarchies.

(I mention this business of their criticizing and of their being against this point or that in order to further clarify things. Early this morning I made the following proposal to a group of comrades who were going over this material with me: let's look for a single thing that the Revolution has done that these people support. And really, comrades, we could not find a single one which had been able to gain the support of these citizens. That is, any measure taken by the Revolution, important or not, met with their systematic criticism.)

Quite apart from these reports, others had also reached the Party, through the militants, which did not refer to the same persons, but the statements coincided and indicated the existence of a profoundly sectarian position. That is, around the middle of 1966 data began to come in from various fronts, all of them reliable, which led us to suppose that a current of ideological opposition to the line of the Party existed, and that this did not come exactly from the ranks of the enemy but rather from people who were active in the very ranks of the Revolution and were motivated by supposedly revolutionary positions.

In the course of our examination of all the reports which had come in spontaneously through Party channels and State Security channels themselves, when we began to see that it was no longer a matter of simple criticism or divergences of opinion, but that the first seeds of conspiratorial activities were beginning to make their appearance, we decided to propose to the Political Bureau that systematic investigations be instituted so as to obtain full information as to the existence of this trend, its leader-

ship, connections and the group activities which we had reason to believe it was carrying out.

- What the work of investigation approved by the Political Bureau showed

The data and evidence obtained in the course of investigation permitted us to establish the following beyond any doubt:

First -- That a homogeneous political grouping existed, centered about Anibal Escalante. If this group did not go so far as to organize itself formally because of the arrest of its leading figures (and we believe also because of the repeated warnings issued on various occasions by the First Secretary of the Party and by myself, cautioning them, in the course of public speeches, to retire from this activity before finding themselves completely out of their depth. Some of them treated the whole thing as a joke; others, such as Anibal, took it seriously but responded by taking, in turn, more security measures of a conspiratorial nature in order to continue with their machinations), if it did not go so far as to organize itself formally, we repeat, because of the arrest of its leaders, it did begin to take preliminary steps in this direction and carried on factional activities alien to the Party line.

- The aforementioned group carried out the following activities:

-- The sounding-out of opinions of long-time militants and former PSP leaders.

-- Attempts to sound out several members of the Central Committee.

-- Approaches made to Soviet, German and Czechoslovakian officials and citizens, including Party members, government representatives and journalists with access to leaders of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, with the purpose of informing them of their viewpoint, contrary to the position of the Communist Party of Cuba, in order to create an opinion in the leadership of such parties in favor of their position. They even went so far as to aspire to the application of political and economic pressure by the Soviet Union to force the Revolution to draw closer to that country.

(It is our opinion that this point should be expanded briefly.)

(I am going to read to you, literally, what was stated on that point by the prisoner Dr. Emilio de Quesada Ramirez in his written declaration of November 28,

1967, in relation to the role the economy would play in a policy change by our Government. This man was one of the strongest pillars of the microfactional group headed by Anibal. Once arrested, he wrote the following of his own free will:)

"The opinion was expressed that the objective factors were determinant, especially the external factors. By this we meant economic realities that tended to lead the Revolution along the road we considered the best. Bluntly speaking, we even wished for a certain degree of political pressure and that economic realities come into play that would help us in this sense. This may sound monstrous, but it is understandable from the point of view that we believed that the path of coincidences would, in the long run, save our Revolution; that a little pain was preferable to a course that would lead to serious dangers."

(When the prisoner speaks of the path of coincidences, he means that they were of the opinion that our Party should put into effect a policy coinciding with the line of the CPSU.)

(The following paragraph -- which I now repeat -- is very important for understanding the intentions of these gentlemen:)

"Bluntly speaking, we even wished for a certain degree of political pressure and that economic realities come into play that would force us to change course." (Not only for the reason that they give, but also for others which will appear later.)

(We continue with the evidence obtained through the work of our investigators:)

-- Dissemination of Anibal Escalante's ideas and orientations.

-- Reproduction and distribution of articles written by Latin-American leaders and other polemic material in open disagreement with our political line, many of which were obtained at the TASS and Novosti agencies.

-- Meetings and study sessions where the Party line and the measures taken by the Revolution were criticized and revolutionary leaders maligned.

Second -- That the arguments used by this political group to combat the political line of the Revolution consisted fundamentally of:

-- Penetration of the Central Committee by the petty bourgeoisie.

They declared that there was a petty-bourgeois influence in the Central

Committee which brought with it contempt for the working class and lack of recognition of the vanguard role the working class should play; that workers are used in the country's great mobilizations, as in voluntary work, and that their utmost effort was requested in production while they were excluded from leadership of the Revolution and responsibility for leading the socialist emulation was taken away from the trade unions. They argued that persons promoted to middle-level cadres were all professionals who did not proceed from the working class and were, therefore, endowed with a mentality and method of work not in accord with the proletariat.

They described the construction of socialism in our country as "theoretical."

As principal examples of the petty-bourgeois influence in the Party, they pointed to Comrades Armando Hart Dávalos, José Llanusa, Faure Chomón Mediavilla, Haydée Santamaría Cuadrado, Marcelo Fernández Font, Raúl Roa García and Celia Sánchez Manduley.

-- The existence of an anti-Soviet current in the Party leadership.

The existence of an anti-Soviet current in the Party leadership was affirmed, based on the argument that we were drawing closer economically to France as a result of an alleged loan made by that country to ours, qualifying as loans trade operations identical to those carried on by all socialist countries with Europe. According to them, it was also the purpose of Comrades José Llanusa, Marcelo Fernández, Alfredo Guevara and Carlos Franqui to bring us closer to that country politically, thus drawing us away from the Soviet Union and the socialist camp.

In the international field, this group claimed for itself the role of defenders of the policy of the USSR, describing its economic policy as correct and arguing that it allowed it to black-mail imperialism in Latin-American countries on the grounds of economic penetration.

-- The ignoring of long-time militants of the PSP.

They refer to the ignoring of former militants and members of the PSP by stating that a policy exists to liquidate and disregard the old militants, since, while many of the PSP members were denied the right to become members of the Party because of some weakness, others who had done nothing against the tyranny were promoted. It was also stated that the appointment to the Central Committee of some leaders of the old Party was merely a formality, since their opinions

are not taken into account when it comes to making decisions. They made use of the dismissal of José Matar as head of the CDRs, of Felipe Torres and Armando Acosta, and the changes within the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions to create propaganda and intrigue around the alleged relegation of old militants by the Revolution. Nevertheless, at the same time they bitterly criticize leaders and militants from the PSP, their main targets being Comrades Blas Roca, Lázaro Peña, Isidoro Malmierca, Joel Domenech, Severo Aguirre, Jorge Risquet, Manuel Luzardo, Lionel Soto and others to whom they apply such epithets as opportunists, sellouts and traitors, criticizing their activity in the work to which the Revolution has assigned them.

-- Intervention of the Revolution in the internal affairs of Latin-American Communist Parties. They affirm that each Party must lead its own revolution, and accuse us of following a Trotskyist line of exporting the Revolution. They argue that an effort is made to impose the Cuban line on the other Communist Parties, and criticize the fact that public statements were made concerning the rightist leadership of the Communist Party of Venezuela, whose position they justify and defend.

● Investigative work proved that Aníbal Escalante was top man in the group

When Aníbal Escalante returned to Cuba in 1964 a number of luncheons were organized by various friends of his. These luncheons were attended by old PSP members who were in sympathy with Aníbal Escalante, most of whom were not in agreement with the treatment he had been given in March 1962, when he was separated from the Secretariat of Organization of the ORI (Integrated Revolutionary Organizations). Some of these luncheons were held on the Dos Hermanos Farm, of which Aníbal Escalante had been put in charge; other luncheons or dinners were held on the farm of the father of Giraldo Victoria (in custody), which is located in Arroyo Arenas; in the home of the mother of Ramiro Puertas (in custody); and in the home of Dr. Emilio de Quesada (in custody)

The topics dealt with at that stage were, fundamentally, the Sino-Soviet question, the worker-farmer alliance, friendship between Cuba and the USSR, and the return of Aníbal Escalante, and toasts to revolutionary unity were made. At these gatherings Aníbal Escalante explained his point of view and made statements to the effect that in the years 1956, 1957 and 1958 he had been in favor of armed struggle, unlike other leaders of that Party. He stated this on various occasions so as to make himself a figure of prestige and cast aspersions, with his intrigues,

on other PSP leaders who are at present members of the Central Committee. Criticism was made of any revolutionary measure, regardless of the matter involved. For example, at the luncheon given at the home of Ramiro Puertas' mother there was conversation about the measure the Revolutionary Government had adopted concerning the departure of gusanos via Camarioca; the group expressed the opinion that this provided the imperialists with material for argument.

In general, the tone of those dinners was one of adulation and flattery of Aníbal Escalante. Many of the things he had to say about the period of struggle against the tyranny and the internal discussions of the PSP were unknown to those attending; therefore, he attained great standing in their eyes and his role in the development of the Revolution was overestimated.

The opinions that Aníbal Escalante spouted during those luncheons, as well as those he expressed to his visitors on later visits to his house or farm, were accepted by them as truths, which they sallied forth to spread and defend outside, using them as arguments in their contacts with other long-time militants.

Among those who attended those dinners were: Octavio Fernández, Raúl Fajardo Escalona, Reinaldo Puig, Mario Aja, Alberto Merino, Pedro Margolles, Manuel Bravo Chatman, Inaudi Kindelán, Genaro Cajiao, Edenio Herrera, Israel Castromán, José Solís, Jacinto del Peso, Francisco Brito, Jorge Suárez, Francisco Diez, Evelio Tiele, Manuel de Jesús Zamora, Emilio de Quesada, Manuel Cruz and his two sons, Carlos Quintela, Luciano Argüelles, Giraldo Victoria, Félix Fleitas, Francisco Pérez de Armas, Lázaro Suárez, Angel Gutiérrez, Víctor Trejo, Oscar Gómez, Inocente Martínez, Edith Escalante, Roberto Argüelles, Francisco Demetrio, Yolanda Pulido and Alfredo Rancaño.

After the death of Comrade César Escalante, visits by these elements to Aníbal Escalante's farm and home became more frequent and criticism of the revolutionary leadership became sharper, the revolutionary leadership being termed petty bourgeois and anti-Soviet; such statements went hand in hand with systematic criticism of each and every measure taken by the Revolution.

(It is clearly seen here that after César's death there was a change in the action of the group headed by Aníbal.)

- Some of the criticisms and comments made by elements of the micro-factional group

On combat preparation: They criticized it severely, finding all kinds of

flaws and defects; this, at bottom, revealed an attitude of opposition to military preparation of the people.

On the elimination of the job of bus conductor: Argüelles states that they expressed the opinion that the elimination of the job of bus conductor would increase the number of surplus personnel and that there would be more conflicts on the buses.

Argüelles on the mobilizations: He said that the constant mobilizations or changes of cadres from one activity to another, from one post to another, would not permit specialization and the gaining of experience.

Argüelles on agriculture: He stated that the two years in agriculture were not going to solve any problem, that it was necessary to have the workers who had left the farms return, and that this could be achieved through the use of material incentives -- that was Lázaro Suárez. Argüelles said that it was incorrect to send militants to the countryside, that they could not make up for the practical age-old experience of the peasant. (This was the Argüelles who headed the micro-factional group in the Ministry of Industry.)

Argüelles on planning: He said that the existing planning was bad, that it was not being used as the major instrument in the harmonious development of our economy, that plans are drawn up, then re-drawn up, that everyone takes part in drawing them up, at all levels, that it results in working three or four times as much as necessary.

Octavio, on the departure via Camarioca: He stated that the Camarioca business had had to be suspended because the number of people who were leaving was greater than expected, that a negative impression was being given.

Argüelles on free admission to sports events: He said that this measure was demagogic, since it increased the amount of money in circulation and promoted inflation.

Caballero commented, on publications in the press, that material with Marxist content was not published.

Argüelles: He severely criticized and made fun of work rationalization, especially as carried out by the Ministry of Industry.

Lázaro Suárez: The leaders of the old Party, the PSP, had less and less participation in the leadership of the Revolution; Luzardo had maintained an opportunistic position concerning sec-

tarianism, and, as of 1962, had begun to persecute the Communists; Felipe Torres had been replaced because he would not permit the old Communists to be persecuted in his province.

Some criticisms made by Aníbal Escalante to various microfactional elements, with slanderous comments: Aníbal said that the influence of the petty bourgeoisie was quite strong in our Revolution, that this was bad for Cuba and the Party, and that the ideological strain which now prevailed was that of the petty bourgeoisie.

Argüelles: Our Party was weak ideologically, and we would find it hard to pay our commitments, in accordance with the availability of sugar at the moment -- 1966-67. We would not have enough, and this would mean that the USSR would have to continue furnishing aid.

On volunteer work in the countryside on Sundays, he commented that this did not yield any benefit, because it cost more to transport the people than was gained, that socialist emulation should be under the responsibility of the labor movement, with the application of moral and material incentives, each playing its part.

Argüelles, on the handicrafts workshops, stated that there would be a limit to articles for export, for even if a country such as France bought a thousand or ten thousand hats or handbags, the time would come when it would not buy any more, and there were other countries that could compete with us under better conditions, as they had greater experience and excellent credit.

Referring to the Salon de Mai, Aníbal Escalante commented that this group was directed by Llanusa; that the tendency of this group was to move us away from the USSR and the socialist camp; that Llanusa had extraordinary power and influence, since, besides being Minister of Education, he participated in the activities of INDER (the National Institute of Sports, Recreation and Physical Education) and INIT (the National Institute of the Tourist Industry); and that Betancourt, Party Secretary in Havana Province, was a man trained by him.

(All this, as you see, is selected at random, because they systematically opposed everything, and, in turn, looked for solutions to everything with the facility common to classic highball and coffeecup strategists -- for many of the comments, and you will see the proofs later, were made with an elbow on the bar, highball in hand.)

When Aníbal was put in charge of

the small El Yarey State Farm -- where he was working last -- early in 1966, specializing in poultry genetics, Octavio Fernández organized some volunteer work sessions with the argument that it was necessary to give Aníbal Escalante a hand so that he would make a success of the work the Revolution had entrusted to him. Many of those who attended the dinners, and some employees of the La Corona Factory, brought by Inaudi Kindelán and Renay Hernández, went to those volunteer work sessions -- on the one hand, they criticized volunteer work, and, on the other hand, they went there so that Aníbal would triumph. By this time, some additional elements clustered around Aníbal Escalante: some of them had been intermediate-level leaders in the underground struggle. Such were Octavio Fernández and Inaudi Kindelán, who served as vehicles for transmitting his ideas, being identified with his position.

They came to Aníbal Escalante to consult him about work and personal problems, to talk with him about their worries and lack of understanding of certain problems, to know his position on each measure taken by the Revolution or each national or international problem that came up.

Aníbal Escalante gave orientation, advice, directly or indirectly through those close to him, to many long-time militants; he was sent documents that, due to their state and political character, he should not have seen. We could mention, for instance, several brochures on exports and imports that were sent to him by Ramón Mirabal Carrión, at that time the Subadministrator of the MINCEX (Ministry of Foreign Trade) School of Cadres and at present working in that ministry's Department of IBM Machines. These were handed over to Aníbal by Inaudi Kindelán or by Mirabal Carrión himself.

From Luciano Argüelles Botella (in custody), he received a document on the arguments and Resolutions of the Communist Party of Uruguay, which had been brought from that country by a member of that Party, Mario Troccoli, a functionary of the Ministry of Industry.

In investigations we made later, it was determined that this comrade from Uruguay had turned in the document as a matter of his Party, not as anything clandestine nor for the use that was to be made of it.

Similarly, Aníbal received from Higinio Casuso (in custody) various special documents put out by the COR (Commission for Revolutionary Orientation), which were provided by Orestes Valdés. Among these we could mention a

list of union leaders approved as Party members, a document on Party statutes, and, moreover, a document that was put out only for members of the Political Bureau and was, therefore, secret in character.

When a report on bureaucracy was going to be discussed in the Party nucleus of the Ministry of Industry, Oscar Gómez was appointed to draw it up. When the paper was finished, Luciano Argüelles took it to Aníbal Escalante, who reviewed it and made his observations, which were taken as orientations of his and, according to the confession of Luciano Argüelles, had to do with the actions of members of the group who were in the Party nucleus at the Ministry of Industry.

On another occasion, the Ministry of Industry ordered a study made on the reorganization of the Ministry. For this purpose, a document was drawn up by Angel Gutiérrez (in custody), who was acting Vice-Minister at the time. This document, too, was taken to Aníbal Escalante, who made some corrections on it.

When José Matar was national leader of the CDRs (Committees for the Defense of the Revolution), the Party sent him orientation that the CDRs should adopt a structure similar to that of the Party, and, in addition, raised some questions such as the elimination of the CDRs in work centers, the elimination of dues, and several other points. Matar drew up a document opposing these orientations, which he took to Aníbal Escalante, who checked it before it was sent to Comrade Armando Hart.

According to the confession of Dr. Emilio de Quesada, José Matar also asked Ramiro Puertas for his opinion in drawing up the document.

Shortly after Ramón Calcines Gordillo was replaced in FRUTICUBA, he was to draw up a document addressed to the Prime Minister in which he was to describe the work done on the fruit farms. He sent this to Aníbal Escalante through Raúl Fajardo Escalona (in custody). Aníbal Escalante reviewed the document and sent it back to Ramón Calcines through Fajardo Escalona, sending him his opinion on some of the points raised and on what should be added to or omitted from the document.

● Established activity of the group

Aníbal Escalante expressed the opinion that during 1967 the orientation of the Revolution would become clearer as to whether it would draw closer to the USSR and the socialist camp or, on the contrary, there would be closer relations with France, in keeping with the

criteria of the "petty bourgeois" on the Central Committee.

Aníbal went on to say that, in view of this and inasmuch as there were many long-time militants of the PSP left up in the air and without proper orientation, it was necessary to see them in order to discuss things with them, clear up their questions and win them over to the opinions held by the group.

This orientation was given by Aníbal to the prisoners Octavio Fernández, Inaudi Kindelán, Quesada and others, who were charged with passing it on to other members of the group.

The reconnoitering of the position of long-time militants of the PSP was done in a subtle way. For example, they would ask them what they thought of such and such a speech by the Prime Minister, ask them what they thought of the USSR and comment to them on the replacement at the time of a long-term PSP member in his administrative or political post. In those cases in which they held the same opinions on various aspects, contact was maintained in order to win them over completely to the opinions of the group.

Sometimes -- in the second phase of this probing about -- to determine whether or not an ex-militant was "clear," he was invited to visit Aníbal Escalante; if he steered away from the meeting he was considered "unclear," and the comrade was termed a "turncoat," a "sellout," or a "weakling."

As for the prisoner Emilio de Quesada, a member of the Party nucleus at Calixto García Hospital, he received orientation from Aníbal Escalante on the way to express his opinions on various topics that were discussed in study circles held by that Party nucleus, something that had to be done subtly and without directly contradicting the viewpoints of the other comrades, but always arguing in defense of the USSR when topics such as the Middle East Crisis, relations with Latin-American countries, or aid to Vietnam were discussed.

This method was used in discussion of the book Revolution in the Revolution? to express his opinions in relation to the role of the Party, the working class, etc. It made it possible for Emilio de Quesada to work to feel out and win over persons within the nucleus to which he belonged, as well as professionals with whom he had contact.

It was through Quesada that Aníbal Escalante found out that Dr. López Sánchez, Assistant Director of the Academy of Sciences, agreed with his opinions but did not state them in public. Escalante then instructed Emilio Quesada to discuss

the matter with López Sánchez so that the latter would change his attitude and begin to speak out actively in favor of the group's opinions.

To give weight to the opinions held by the group, and in opposition to the line of the Party, Aníbal Escalante would base himself on various excerpts from Lenin's writings -- chosen with ill intentions -- on peaceful coexistence and the role of the working class and the unions which he read to those who visited him or advised them to read. Aníbal Escalante discussed these theoretical formulations fundamentally with Dr. Emilio de Quesada.

They not only probed about for the opinions of long-time militants of the PSP but also tried to find out the opinions of leaders who are at present on the Central Committee.

When Octavio Fernández (in custody) happened to meet Justina Alvarez, the secretary of Comrade Blas Roca, at the Central Committee of the Party and started up a conversation with her about a trip which this prisoner -- Octavio Fernández -- was trying to make to Germany, she casually asked him if he had seen Comrade Blas.

Octavio Fernández (in custody) went to Aníbal Escalante to raise the advisability of talking with Comrade Blas. Aníbal thought it would be well to make inquiries first of someone who was close to them as to what opinions Comrades Blas Roca and Lázaro Peña had on various questions.

However, Octavio Fernández took advantage of the funeral of Blas Roca's daughter-in-law to approach him at the cemetery and make an appointment to see him later. He did see him at his home, but when he stated some of his opinions Comrade Blas Roca tore them apart, and he realized that the results were negative and immediately informed Aníbal Escalante of this.

Prior to this meeting of the Central Committee, Comrade Blas Roca had reported that he had been visited by several persons who voiced certain opinions and that he had always refuted them -- this can be seen in the declarations made by the prisoners -- and criticized those who kept visiting Aníbal and hanging around in groups here and there, advising them to stop doing foolish things and devote their time to work.

Octavio Fernández did not agree with the idea that he should feel out Lázaro Peña's position. He explained to Aníbal that he did not consider it best, because once when he had come across Lázaro at the Hotel Capri and told him

that he could not make a trip to the German Democratic Republic, Lázaro had paid no attention to him and continued on his way. Therefore, Octavio Fernández suggested that it would be better to have Inaudi Kindelán visit Lázaro Peña, but the meeting never took place.

● Circulation of documents contrary to the Party line, meetings and study sessions

The group reprinted, put into circulation and exchanged various documents contrary to the Party line, with the knowledge and participation of Aníbal Escalante. Escalante received from Félix Fleitas Posada (in custody) a pamphlet by Daniel Chirino, a leader of the Communist Party of Venezuela. After he read the document, Aníbal Escalante gave it to Octavio Fernández and asked him to read it and then return it to him. Octavio Fernández read the document and gave it to Aníbal's daughter, Niurka Escalante. The document was later picked up at Aníbal's house by Félix Fleitas Posada.

Aníbal Escalante also gave his former secretary, Yolanda Pulido Averoff (who, in practice, was still acting as his secretary), a reproduction of the Venezuelan Party's answer to our Prime Minister, for her to read. This reproduction was delivered to Yolanda Pulido at her home.

The group also made reproductions of Teodoro Petkoff's letter to Mexican journalist Mario Menéndez, of an article by Luis Corvalán, and of the article entitled "To Create One, Two, Three, Many Vietnams," which appeared in the Czechoslovakian magazine Reporter, in which the terms "romantic," "adventurer" and "anarchist" were employed to describe Comrade Ernesto Che Guevara.

Aníbal Escalante gave Emilio de Quesada (in custody) the reproduction of the pamphlet by Venezuelan leader Daniel Chirinos. Reading was also recommended of the article entitled "Batallones de Hierro del Proletariado" (The Proletariat's Iron Battalions), which appeared in the magazine URSS, published in Cuba, and material from Novosti was obtained dealing with material incentives and the October Revolution. These materials, together with the editorials appearing in URSS, were read to the workers of the H. Upmann and La Corona cigar factories because the group believed that such material postulated theses opposed to our Party's line.

These documents were reproduced in various places such as the office of Félix Fleitas Posada (in custody) in the Fishing Port; the Fiancée Jewelry Shop, managed by José A. Caballero (in custody); the home of Edmido López Castillo, at 964 Oquendo Street; the home of Nereida

Valdés Oliva, at 118 Kholy Street, Nuevo Vedado; and the home of Ramón Chávez Cornaris (in custody), at 117 Industria Street.

Simultaneous with the reproduction of documents, meetings and study sessions for exchanging opinions were held at Fleitas Posada's home, at 168 16th Street, Vedado; Giraldo Victoria's home, at 221 San Mariano Street, Santos Suárez; Edmundo López Castillo's home; and Luciano Argüelles' home, at 59 Arzobispo Street, Cerro.

While all this went on, several deaths occurred among the old Party militants and commemoration ceremonies were held in honor of Miguel Fernández Roig, Octavio Fernández' father, and Comrade César Escalante.

These acts of mourning were unscrupulously used by this group as an excuse to meet, exchange opinions, criticize the Revolution, and find out where some long-time PSP members worked and whether or not they were having trouble of any sort where they worked.

Aníbal Escalante's presence at all these activities was always noteworthy. He attended every funeral and even delivered the funeral oration at Dr. Sergio Arce's funeral. He would speak with several former militants, voice his criticism and give opinions on questions put to him.

These "appearances" brought Aníbal Escalante back into the public eye, as he went probing about to see what support he could get from some former militants. (I'm going to tell you an anecdote: this incident occurred on April 4, during Aníbal's visit to a wake he had decided would be a good springboard for political activity. A number of army men were present at the wake, and the comrades there were surprised when the army men rose to their feet when Aníbal walked into the room. When we investigated we found that these were well-prepared "shows": a small claue would hang around the elevator waiting for Aníbal to appear. As soon as he showed up, they would jump to their feet, and, in turn, the army men would rise to their feet, too, thinking that a leader or a high-ranking official had just come in.)

On April 4 Sixto Quintela died. He was a newspaperman who had had problems at GRANMA owing to his anti-Party position. The eulogy was given by José Solís, separated from GRANMA (he came from the ranks of the 26th of July Movement), who took advantage of the opportunity to voice his resentment and support anti-Party activities.

It is unfortunate that the deceased, Sixto Quintela, was part of this group.

Attending his wake, among others, were the journalists who had been dismissed from GRANMA along with Sixto and with various ex-members of the Socialist Youth, who made comments such as the following: "And what do the people of the ORI say?" "The ORI is the greatest." These remarks were made by Rubén Placeres, a journalist from Juventud Rebelde, and Thais Aguilera, the wife of César Gómez. Responding to somebody present who said that that period was dead and gone, Thais Aguilera alleged that that was a great period, to which history would give proper perspective and would say that it was better than this phase, that of the opportunists.

Of course, Aníbal Escalante attended that wake and spoke with several ex-militants. There were some expressions of elation at Aníbal Escalante's presence -- for example, on the part of Lt. César Gómez (not to be confused with Lt. César Gómez who works in the COR of the Provincial Party Committee), who gaily commented that the old man was already conducting affairs in the halls.

At the funeral of Comrade Luis Fajardo Escalona -- chief of diplomatic couriers -- as well as at the reception of the body at the airport (he had died in the Soviet Union) one could detect interest in mobilizing a good number of long-time members of the PSP. Félix Fleitas (in custody), speaking with a group of those now under indictment, said: "We must prepare a demonstration. I've called several people who won't fail to go, and above all we must look for a way to get people such as Pepe Solís from 'the 26th' to go, so that these people will realize that it isn't just us, but their own people are there, too. We have to prepare a good demonstration." He added: "And Aníbal Escalante must give the eulogy. I know that Raúl Escalona (referring to the brother of the deceased) won't let somebody outside our group give the eulogy."

They tried to use the reception (at the airport) and give it a political tone, to use the wake as a center of agitation against the Revolution.

The leadership of the Party, aware of all this, selected Severo Aguirre, a comrade of impeccable behavior known by all, who had been a leader of the PSP Youth Movement and who had even been the superior of the deceased in that organization, to prevent this maneuver of having Aníbal speak (Aníbal was quite ready and willing to deliver the eulogy).

Some commentaries made: At the funeral parlor, Félix Fleitas told several of his comrades, "The PSP neither submits nor sells out," and showed his displeasure at the choice of Comrade Severo Aguirre to deliver the eulogy, stating

that it was an insult to them that that piece of s--- had given the eulogy. Another arrived and said: "Look what kind of S.O.B. they have sent to speak at the

funeral services." (And none of this was said delicately.)

[To be continued.]

SUPPORT THE VIETNAMESE REVOLUTION!

[The following statement was issued February 5 by the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International. This is the World Party of Socialist Revolution founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938.]

* * *

The International Executive Committee of the Fourth International salutes the indomitable courage of the National Liberation Front fighters, both those engaged in guerrilla war and those in the urban centers, who have launched a general offensive against the occupation forces of American imperialism and its Thieu-Ky regime lackies.

The extent of the offensive, the heroism of the fighters, the mass uprising of the workers and the poor in many cities, have once again confirmed the fact that the NLF enjoys the support of the vast majority of the working people of South Vietnam -- without this support it could not have stood up to the assault of the concentrated military power of the United States.

In spite of the deluge of fire and steel that the criminal imperialist bombings have rained on the cities and villages of Vietnam; in spite of napalm, suffocating gas, the destruction of villages, torture and massacre of prisoners, the Vietnamese people have more than held their own. Their heroism is an unprecedented example of what can be achieved by a people conscious that they are fighting for their national and social liberation.

Now more than ever in these days of bloody struggles in Vietnam, the most urgent duty of the international workers movement is to come to the immediate aid of the Vietnamese revolution.

Now more than ever this aid must go beyond the stage of passive demonstrations and collecting money and medical supplies, however useful and necessary that may be.

To rise to the height of the demands posed by the struggle of the Vietnamese people, international solidarity must take the form of ceaseless harass-

ment of the American war machine. Following the example of the Australian longshoremen and the Japanese unions, it must take the form of refusal to load and unload or transport American troops or munitions. Through ever more militant demonstrations and strikes it must force the governments of all capitalist countries to deny all direct or indirect aid to the Yankee war machine and block any shipping of arms to the counterrevolutionary imperialist armies engaged in the Vietnam war.

The example of the small People's Republic of Korea, moreover, has clearly shown how right it was to call for a vigorous "counterescalation" of anticapitalist forces throughout the world. It has shown that American imperialism is disconcerted by counterblows elsewhere than Vietnam and that Che Guevara's appeal for the creation of a "second, a third Vietnam" -- far from being irresponsible or romantic -- corresponds to the opportunities and needs of the moment.

The Executive Committee of the Fourth International calls on the working masses of the USSR, the People's Republic of China and all the workers states to bring maximum pressure to bear on their governments to increase their aid to the Vietnamese revolution and to combine this with active assistance to revolutionary movements and abandonment of their disastrous so-called "peaceful coexistence" strategy. The Fourth International once more calls on the Soviet government to reaffirm its public guarantee of support to the People's Republic of China against any imperialist aggression and on this basis to constitute a real anti-imperialist united front of all the countries that have abolished capitalism.

Glory to the heroic fighters of the NLF and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam!

Long live active international solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution!

Long live the world socialist revolution!

WILSON'S "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WITH JOHNSON PAYS OFF HANDSOMELY

Harold Wilson's trip across the Atlantic paid off handsomely for the British prime minister. He was granted an extra long conversation with Johnson February 8.

"The President had originally set aside only an hour and a half for Mr. Wilson," Joseph C. Harsch reported in the February 12 Christian Science Monitor. "It was stretched to four hours. At the risk of sounding overly cynical, it can be said that verbal disapproval of the North Koreans bought Mr. Wilson the extra two and one-half hours of visible presidential camaraderie. This in turn should, or was supposed to, help Mr. Wilson's 'image' back in Britain."

It appears that Wilson's popularity has declined so precipitously among British voters that it was felt extraordinary measures should be taken. Why not use Wilson's "special relationship" with Johnson? Perhaps a bit of "rub off" of Johnson's popularity would help. And

at no injury to Johnson. In fact Johnson's own popularity has declined so badly with the American voters that anything that could be rubbed off from Wilson's popularity would certainly be appreciated

As Harsch put it, "What the two men could do was help each other out of mutual difficulties by an exercise in 'atmospherics,' at which both are skillful."

Wilson, as the head of a bankrupt empire, had to pay of course for the unusual time allotted to him. "In return" for the extra two and one-half hours "it is understood," said Harsch, "that Mr. Wilson will continue to say 'the right things' about such matters as the Vietnam war and the snatching of American warships by North Koreans."

A "special relationship" with Johnson, it is plain to see, is a very valuable asset.

In this issue

	<u>Page</u>
DRAWING: Vo Nguyen Giap	145
Will Johnson Use Nuclear Bombs in Vietnam? -- by George Novack	146
"A Setback of Unprecedented Magnitude"	148
The Truth About Ben Tre	149
Call for European Antiwar Youth Demonstration in West Berlin	150
YSA Hails Vietnamese Freedom Fighters -- by Elizabeth Barnes	152
Fred Halstead's Name Heads College "Primary" List	153
Explorer Gives Barrientos the Jitters	153
Onganía Flips Wig Over Long Hair	153
Vinh Long, My Tho, and Hue	154
The Condemnation of Aníbal Escalante -- by Livio Maitan	155
Documents:	
Report by Major Raúl Castro on Activities of Anibal Escalante Group	158
Support the Vietnamese Revolution! [Statement by International Executive Committee of Fourth International]	167
Wilson's "Special Relationship" with Johnson Pays Off Handsomely	168

