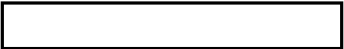


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NORTH VIETNAM: The regime appears to be seriously attacking corruption.

A handful of officials have received rather stiff prison terms for violating North Vietnam's new law covering abuses of state-owned property. According to recent Hanoi newspaper articles, three of the officials, from middle echelons of the domestic trade ministry, were charged with malfeasance and two others, a foreman and warehouse head in the countryside, were charged with skimming funds and profiteering.

Hanoi rarely publicizes the proceedings of its various tribunals, but with these cases the regime probably hopes to demonstrate that this time it means business in curbing corruption. Indeed, the crackdown probably is a good deal more extensive than Hanoi has admitted to so far. It seems almost certain that the authorities have moved against others for similar "crimes," though this has gone unreported. Since the law was announced early this fall, the press has been full of articles that suggest a housecleaning of inept and corrupt officials is under way in the party, military, and government bureaucracies.

The regime also is leveling its guns on lackadaisical performance of North Vietnamese workers, which may well be every bit as prevalent as corruption. One example that has been publicized involves a workman who was sentenced for two years for neglecting an electric generator that burned out.

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JAPAN: The Japan Socialist Party (JSP) is continuing its lemming-like ways.

The extreme, doctrinaire wing of Japan's largest opposition group tightened its grip on the party's leadership at the national convention held this week in Tokyo. As anticipated the challenge of the moderate right fell far short, strengthening the possibility of a future split in the party.

The JSP retained its increasingly unpopular ideological rigidity, denouncing American "imperialism, Japanese militarism, and monopoly capitalism." The new policy line did place greater emphasis on the issues of pollution and improving relations with China, but the over-all tone was as stodgy as ever. Moderates were excluded from leadership posts and the position of those Socialists opposed to a recently proposed realignment of the opposition parties was considerably strengthened.

The Socialists, apparently having learned nothing from their devastating defeat in last December's Lower House elections, appear to have assured themselves of another setback in next summer's Upper House elections. The right wing, freed from all responsibility for the debacle, will then be in a good position to demand basic reforms, and, if ignored again, have a solid issue on which to bolt the party.

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WARSAW PACT: The Warsaw Pact states have renewed their commitment to East-West negotiations and have put themselves on record in favor of a "mutually acceptable" Berlin agreement.

The meeting produced four statements, released a day after the session ended. The most interesting dealt with European security. It announced Pact support for a mutually acceptable agreement on West Berlin, which it defined as one "meeting the interests of detente in the center of Europe, as well as the requirements of the people of West Berlin and the lawful interests and sovereign rights" of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The statement adds "the interests of detente" to the definition of an acceptable Berlin agreement made by Soviet party chief Brezhnev in a 29 November speech in Soviet Armenia. The phrase may be intended as an oblique acknowledgement of the linkage that Bonn has established between a Berlin settlement and final ratification of its treaties with the USSR and Poland.

The statement also proclaimed that "peace in this area cannot be built without the participation of the GDR," thus promising a role for East Germany in future talks. Nevertheless, the Pact countries did not go beyond saying that the establishment of "equal relations" between Bonn and Pankow would be a "substantial contribution" to the cause of European security. This is in line with recent Pact statements on this subject, but falls short of Pankow's maximum demands and presumably will do little to assuage East German unhappiness with its allies' earlier responses to Ostpolitik.

The statement also reaffirmed Pact support for Czechoslovak negotiations with Bonn on the basis of West German repudiation of the 1938 Munich agreement. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] this statement does little more than signify Pact awareness that Bonn will be turning to Prague next. [REDACTED]

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PAKISTAN: No party appears likely to gain a majority in Monday's elections for a national constituent assembly.

In the first nationwide direct elections since independence in 1947, Pakistanis will select 291 members of a constituent assembly charged with drafting a constitution within 120 days and submitting it to President Yahya Khan for approval. Elections in nine constituencies stricken by the recent cyclone will take place later.

An important issue in the campaign and the central question for the assembly is the division of power between the national government and the provinces. Pakistan's political leadership has been dominated by Punjabis from West Pakistan, although the greater part of the population lives in East Pakistan. Mounting demands for greater autonomy by the Bengalis of East Pakistan, echoed by inhabitants of the three non-Punjabi provinces in the west, have evoked several public statements by political leaders affirming their support for increased provincial autonomy. Translating abstract consensus into a specific separation of powers, however, will be difficult, especially as the Punjabi-dominated military may refuse to accept any significant weakening of the central government.

In East Pakistan, the center-left Awami League, leading champion of greater Bengali autonomy, remains the front runner but is unlikely to gain a majority in the assembly. In the west a potpourri of leftists, moderates, and religious conservatives are contesting, and no party appears likely to come close to winning a majority.

Some violence, which has already marred the campaign, could occur in the final days. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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URUGUAY: A new wave of violence has struck Montevideo.

In the past week, the Tupamaros have bombed the main communications center of the International Telephone and Telegraph Company, fire-bombed the neighborhood headquarters of seven progovernment political groups, and attacked several other targets. Montevideo also witnessed the first appearance of counterterrorism in response to the Tupamaro movement. A group calling itself the National Armed Defense carried out several bombing attacks against the homes of relatives of known terrorists and has pledged four deaths for every citizen killed by the insurgents.

The rash of terrorist raids appears to be part of the guerrillas' campaign to gain government concessions for the release of US agronomist Claude Fly and Brazilian consul Dias Gomide. Both have been held captive for four months. President Pacheco still refuses to accede to the Tupamaros' primary demand that their political manifesto be published in exchange for Fly's release. [REDACTED]

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INTERNATIONAL LABOR: The World Confederation of Labor (WCL)--formerly the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions--may be moving toward closer relations with the Communist-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU).

Since at least early this year, WFTU Secretary General Pierre Gensous has been proposing cooperation between the two internationals. In a letter to WCL Secretary General Jean Bruck in September, Gensous suggested consultations between the secretariats of the two organizations on all their problems and on the international labor movement in general. He also proposed increased cooperation in the work of the specialized agencies of the UN, including an exchange of views on the effect of the cutback of US funds on the ILO.

In early November, the council of the WCL overwhelmingly approved a resolution calling for expanded ties with all trade union organizations, whether or not they met the criterion of free trade unionism. Under its new policy the WCL will seek closer relations with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). But it is the establishment of ties with the WFTU, where the WCL would be the mediator between the two major internationals, that is uppermost in the mind of some WCL leaders, despite ICFTU opposition to Bruck's attempts to involve it in joint approaches to WFTU.

Last week at their third meeting, Bruck and Gensous went over various problems facing the two organizations, and the WFTU leader requested "regularization" of meetings between his federation and the WCL. Bruck now thinks the WCL confederal board, which meets in April, may agree to "round tables," with agendas on such subjects as the violation of trade union rights in Spain and Portugal, apartheid, and the proliferation of multinational corporations.

The WCL, although smaller than the two major internationals, claims a total membership of 14,500,000.

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CHILE: Discussions on opening relations with Communist China are under way in Paris. The Allende government has not indicated when it expects them to be established, but a Chilean Socialist leader now in Peking says the move may come by the end of the year. This year, Chile became the first country in Latin America, except for Cuba, to vote for the Albanian resolution in the UN. A Chinese Communist commercial delegation, which is particularly interested in acquiring copper, arrived in Santiago this week. The small trade mission set up over five years ago in Santiago is presently the only Chinese Communist official representation in Latin America outside of Cuba. [REDACTED]

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UN: The modifications made in the Arab-sponsored "Palestinian rights resolution," which was tabled this week, seem to have significantly widened its support. The proposed resolution recognizes that the people of Palestine are entitled to "equal rights and self-determination" and declares that full recognition of their "inalienable rights" is indispensable to establishing peace in the Middle East. The US opposes the revised resolution on the grounds that it will make a negotiated settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute much more difficult. The US Mission believes that while the resolution might pass in the special political committee, there may be a chance of blocking it in the General Assembly. [REDACTED]

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JORDAN: Fedayeen forces and Jordanian troops clashed in Amman last night in a skirmish that lasted about five hours. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

The fighting apparently began when armed security force vehicles arrived at a new police station near the Wahdat refugee camp south of Amman. When refugees protested, security men began firing in the air [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Palestinian militia from the camp then opened fire, and the shooting spread. Although the incident apparently has been contained, the danger is that with King Husayn out of the country, minor incidents may be allowed to escalate. [REDACTED]

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