

# PATHET LAO THEME IS SELF-RELIANCE

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Nationalist Line Appearing  
to Ignore Big Communist  
Neighbors of Laotians

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Self-reliance and nationalism are the keynotes of the official doctrine being preached by the Communist-led Pathet Lao now that its long struggle for control has been won, won.

Diplomats who have been scanning published statements, listening to Vientiane broadcasts and those of the Pathet Lao's station in its original zone of control and comparing impressions of conversations with officials have concluded that neither North Vietnam nor China nor the Soviet Union gets much mention.

The principal Pathet Lao propaganda official, who prefers paganda official, who prefers not to have his name used, always refers to the movement he represents to as patriotic and nationalist rather than Communist. Asked about China and North Vietnam as possible models for the construction of the new society proclaimed by the Pathet Lao, he replied, "We cannot speak of any model."

In a four-hour rally in a nearby village, which marked the Pathet Lao's take-over of administrative and military control in the rural district, two officials of the central apparatus made long speeches describing the principal themes of the new era and celebrating the victory of the "patriotic" forces. Despite the dominant role played by North Vietnam's troops in the 20-year military struggle and China's heavy support, neither country was mentioned.

## Modest Aid Programs

Modest aid from China and North Vietnam has been announced but the presence of both countries in Vientiane remains discreet. The Soviet Union's assistance is more visible; many crew members of planes that have helped in refugee resettlement can be seen

about town.

A neutral diplomat able to assess the Soviet aid effort said the Russians appeared overpowering in their approach, telling the Laotians what they ought to want and lacking in tact. "A second USAID," he remarked, referring to the assistance program of the United States Agency for International Development, which the Laotians, recently ordered concluded.

While the diplomats do not underestimate the potential of strong influence by Laos's Communist neighbors or the Soviet Union on this landlocked, thinly populated country of perhaps three million, they see no sign of undue interference.

Meanwhile official pronouncements miss no occasion to emphasize the intention of freeing the country from what are considered to be negative foreign influences.

The Pathet Lao propaganda official said that too many Thais who cross the Mekong River to work, particularly in the sawmills of the north, were taking jobs away from Laotians. Gambling, Western dancing, bars and prostitution are being denounced as colonialist and neo-colonialist imports and gradually outlawed.

## Stress on Agriculture

In conversations Pathet Lao officials indicate a strong tendency toward self-reliance, in opposition to the long tradition of foreign aid. Their emphasis is on a return to agriculture and a significant reduction in urban populations, swollen by the war.

The propaganda official said he had proposed the formation of an agricultural cooperative of the Information Ministry. He said that once the fusion of the bipartite elements of the civil service and the army was completed, they would return many of their men to agriculture. "We will only need three generals and a few colonels," he added.

In line with the stress on self-reliance, the official said it would be logical to assume that prospects were meager for the French military training mission of about 70 and 300 French teachers and administrative experts.

Speaking of the military mission, he remarked that each nation must rely on its own forces and that a few soldiers requiring special training could be sent abroad. As the nationalizing of education advanced, he added, there will be room for only a few French teachers.

The French community is noting with disquiet that the United States is not alone in being criticized for its role in Laos. In what is becoming a standard official litany, American neo-colonialism takes its place, in chronological order, after French colonialism and Japanese Fascism.