

# FEATURE PRESS SERVICE

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WEEKLY BULLETIN #2208

August 24, 1964

## ACLU SCORES STATE DEPT. FOR BANNING MADADE NHU

The American Civil Liberties Union has vigorously protested a State Department ban on a visit to the United States by Mme. Ngo Dinh Nhu, a vehement critic of this country's policies in Viet Nam.

In a letter to Secretary of State Dean Rusk, in July, the civil liberties organization objected to the ban as an act interfering with the right of the American people to form political judgments on the basis of as much information, from all sources, as possible. The letter was signed by the ACLU's executive director, John de J. Pemberton, Jr.

Mme. Nhu's request for a visa to address a July 7 political rally in New York was denied on the basis of a section in the immigration law which bars aliens who the government believes would engage in activities that are "prejudicial to the public interest."

The ACLU letter declared: "What the government has done here, is to suppress unashamedly the speech of a controversial personality. It has consequently sacrificed the right of the people to hear -- the indispensable correlative right to freedom of speech -- in order to save its policy from criticism. One of the main values of critical expression is precisely to point out possible frailties in official policy." The ACLU went on to note: "At a time when our country is seeking to demonstrate the meaning and vitality of democratic principles to other countries, we mock that effort and make a travesty of our cherished First Amendment freedom by refusing to allow a single critic to express her views within our borders. Granting that the South Vietnam problem is a tense political and military one, would criticism of our policies there really be 'prejudicial to the public interest?' Surely the vast array of informational techniques available to our government for counter argument is a match for Mrs. Nhu's comments."

The ACLU letter also recognized that, although presently an alien denied a visa cannot appeal in the United States courts from abroad, the organization hoped that Congress will revise the immigration law to this effect. "Until it does," the ACLU stated, "we must rely on the good faith of the Executive branch to administer the visa policy in accordance with democratic standards. We think it has not done so in the present case of Mrs. Nhu."

The ACLU concluded by noting that Mme. Nhu has since been invited to accept further speaking engagements in this country, and therefore urged that the State Department reverse its decision and demonstrate "our confidence in the strength of democratic freedoms."

The State Department replied on July 21 that it would not rescind its position. It based its decision on the fact that because of Mrs. Nhu's repeated denunciation against the South Vietnam government, her admission into the United States "wouldn't be understood in Vietnam," and would have an "adverse effect" on the spirit of the Vietnamese people."

## LAW CORPS AIDS CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

A "Law Corps", modeled after the Peace Corps, and comprised of teams of volunteer practicing attorneys and assisting law students, is now working in six southern states in two-week shifts in support of intensive civil rights programs.

Ahead of the "Law Corps" went groups of college students and other civil rights demonstrators who had just completed training sessions in which they learned

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