

## Test of the Consular Treaty

Now that President Johnson has thrown his prestige into the fight to win Senate ratification of the Soviet-American consular convention, the treaty's prospects have improved; but the battle is not over.

The extreme right is mustering its entire force in the effort to kill the agreement. Senators are being deluged with opposition mail while—as so often happens—the more reasonable majority remains apathetic.

Yet, next to the Vietnam war, the consular convention has now become the most important single foreign policy issue on this nation's present agenda. What is really involved goes far beyond the immediate effort to insure more protection for Americans in the Soviet Union. It is just because of the intense right-wing opposition that the consular convention has become a vehicle for a national decision on relations with the Soviet Union.

Shall the world's two most powerful nations make a serious attempt to work together for their mutual advantage, or shall they revert to the hostility of the worst days of the cold war? This is now the central question. The desire of far-right extremists for a return to the frigid atmosphere and great perils of the early 1950's is plain enough, and their desires are shared by similar reactionaries in Moscow.

We believe, however, that the great majority of American and Soviet citizens alike want to live in peace, to understand each other, to cooperate to help prevent thermonuclear war and to spur trade and other mutually beneficial exchanges. Perhaps the right-wing fanatics have performed a service by making the nature of the choice so transparent.