

Harvard's Specialist on Vietnam

Samuel Lewis Popkin

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CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Nov. 21—Some see a certain irony in the jailing of Samuel Lewis Popkin. A specialist in Vietnamese village life, he continued to deal with Government experts despite his growing personal opposition to the war. He was once invited to the White House to discuss Vietnam

Man with Henry A. Kissinger, a former colleague at Harvard. And although he would

certainly not be considered a conservative, he has earned the enmity of radical students because, he says, he has not been a dogmatic critic of American policy.

Yet today he was imprisoned by the Government for refusing to tell how he knew of the existence and authorship of the secret Pentagon war study before its general release by his friend, Daniel Ellsberg.

In accepting jail rather than testify, Mr. Popkin has stressed that he was acting not out of political commitment but on academic principle.

He argues that his work, which has taken him to Vietnam and to the centers of power in Washington, requires some privacy and forcing him to name his sources "would seriously endanger the right of scholars and journalists to carry on the lawful process of free inquiry essential to a democracy."

A Research Fellow

Mr. Popkin is an assistant professor of government and a research fellow at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard. At 30, he is optimistic, with an ingratiating boyish manner and a taste for Beethoven, Mozart, hard rock, the writings of George Orwell, good wine and non-Cantonese Chinese food.

"Vietnam did not radicalize me," he likes to say, "it Orwellized me."

His six-foot-tall figure,

topped by a mop of black hair, has been familiar around Cambridge for years, both at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he took his Ph.D., and at Harvard, where he teaches an undergraduate course in statistical methods of political analysis and a graduate seminar in "revolution and politics in Vietnam."

His stand, which he says has "destroyed" him as a scholar for the last year and a half, has won the support of scholars of almost every political stripe.

"He is making himself a martyr to principle—I am not sure many of us would have had the courage to do the same," said Prof. Stanley H. Hoffmann of Harvard, often identified with liberal causes.

"He's a man of great integrity," said Ithiel de Sola Pool, a more conservative scholar at M.I.T. and the man under whom Professor Popkin took his Ph. D. "He's a professional social scientist—his personal views are clearly liberal, but he's not an ideologist."

Colleagues say that despite his personal feelings against the war, Mr. Popkin has avoided dogmatic analyses. "He does not fall for the naive notion that all Vietnam is wishing for the Communists to take over," said one colleague.

Mr. Popkin has maintained his links to Government officials. "So many people in the university say you should not go near those people," he said. "But as bad as things are in Vietnam, I cannot say people suffer more with me than without me. I always separate personal opinion from analysis."

He has visited Vietnam several times since 1966, usually with Government support. He spent a year doing research on village life in Vietnam with Simulmatics, a concern run by Mr. Pool and supported by the Defense Department.

He has since returned under the sponsorship of the

Asia Society. He is preparing a major study of the impact of social and economic changes in Vietnam on village life.

Mr. Popkin, the son of a furniture salesman, was born in Superior, Wis., on June 9, 1942. He took his bachelor degree in 1963 at M.I.T. and won a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship for his Ph.D. work, completed in 1968. His mathematical and methodological talents, as well as his interest in Vietnam, drew the attention of Harvard, to which he was recruited in 1968.

Last February, he married the former Susan Shirk of Port Washington, L. I., a specialist in Chinese education. She was a member of a group of students and scholars who visited China earlier this year and met Chou En-lai.

The Popkins live in a large, cheerful apartment, decorated with many works of Oriental art, just a few minutes' walk from the Harvard campus.

Aided by Fund Drive

amounted to more than \$20,000 and have been defrayed in part by a fund drive mounted by many of Harvard's top scholars.

He says that encouragement has also come from Government and military officials, one of whom wrote:

"There are those of us who personally feel that your position vis-à-vis the courts is an important protection for all of us concerned with the free flow of information."

Why the Government has pressed for his testimony remains uncertain. He has denied under oath knowing anything about the unauthorized dissemination of the secret study (he was in Hong Kong at the time). He theorizes that he is being used as "a test case to keep scholars and journalists away from bureaucrats."

"How can they talk freely if they fear their boss is going to use me to spy on them?" he asked in an interview two days ago.