

# TOP AIDES IN LAOS FORCED TO RESIGN

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## 'Virtual Purges' Linked to a Tightening Communist Grip on Government NYTimes

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VIENTIANE, Laos, May 30—

Top officials throughout the Laotian administration are resigning under pressure from demonstrators as the Pathet Lao increasingly solidify their control over the Government.

The forced resignations were described as "virtual purges" by many persons both inside and outside the Government.

Officials in such key ministries as economy and planning, finance, public works and information, as well as in the Vientiane mayor's office, have resigned.

At the Ministry of Economy and Planning, sources there said, so many officials tendered their resignations that the Minister, Soth Phetrasy, member of the Communist-led Pathet Lao, was reportedly forced to select only four so that the

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department could continue to keep functioning.

The scene in the Finance Ministry was apparently typical of many throughout the Government today.

Shortly before 10 A.M., the director general of the Ministry of Information, Kamsem Kheou, a Pathet Lao who is known to wield far more political power within party councils than his Government position might indicate, emerged from the Finance Ministry, brushing aside inquiries and climbing into his limousine.

On the second floor, outside the offices of Boutsabong Souvannayong, the Secretary of State for Finance, and a Pathet Lao, the scene was chaos. Earlier this month, the Minister of Finance, the right-wing Ngon Sananikone, resigned under

pressure and Mr. Boutsabong has since run the ministry.

This morning a half dozen Pathet Lao soldiers wearing pistols patrolled the corridors outside Mr. Boutsabong's office and nearly a score of persons waited. Most appeared terrified, and none would talk even with a Lao reporter.

### 'People's Court' in Session

One at a time they entered the office of Mr. Boutsabong and within minutes emerged. There was, one official finally said, a "people's court" in session inside.

It has been these people's courts, the top judicial structure of the Pathet Lao, that has been largely responsible for leading the purges that began this week.

All this has been taking place in a variety of ministries. Later in the day a young woman waited outside the office of Mr. Kamsem in the Information Ministry, was summoned in and a few minutes later emerged, burst into tears and ran down the corridor. Political officials said later that she had been the operator of the Government printing press and had been dismissed, apparently for political reasons.

An indication of the workings and the timetables behind some of these actions was made possible today by the publication in one of the local Lao-language newspapers of a 14-point statement by the workers in the Ministry of Finance which had clearly touched off the demands of the recent demonstrators. The demonstrators, who have in most cases been following the mandates of Pathet Lao organizers, demanded the resignation of all the agency directors in the ministry; their replacement by persons acceptable to the demonstrators and workers; the firing of all foreign consultants and contractors, many of whom run such crucial aid programs as the foreign exchange operations fund; immediate translation of all official documents into Lao, and the recognition of the Committee of Demonstrators as the main consultative body of the ministry.

### A Warning Is Included

"In case these demands are not accepted within 48 hours," the statement concluded, "the demonstrators will pass to the second phase of action" — which was not specified.

It is clear, however, that there will be no resistance in any of the ministries to such demands. Within the last month the Pathet Lao has increasingly solidified its control over the Government, which is still, on paper, a coalition between the Pathet Lao and the right-wing Vientiane side. The Pathet Lao is now apparently trying to extend its control throughout the administrative structure of the Government as well.

Increasingly as this control spreads, so too does the ability to enforce some of the demands of the party. Today an official order was promulgated closing

about 20 bars and nightclubs. The order takes effect July 1 and will mean the end of an Asian landmark, the White Rose Cafe.

Most of these places are in Vientiane, where demonstrators today also demanded the ouster of the mayor and four of his deputies in the regional district offices, and barricaded the City Hall.

Late today the Lao press agency said that the mayor, the right-wing Phagna Sisouvan, had turned in his resignation, although the fate of his deputies had not yet been decided.

### Economic Delegation Leaves

The Government also announced today that a senior economic delegation left for Peking this morning to discuss China's financial aid program for Laos. En route, according to the Government announcement, the delegation will stop in Hanoi "to negotiate with the authorities on the problem of transit of merchandise provided to Laos by the People's Republic of China."

It was not known whether these discussions in Hanoi would include the subject of direct aid from North Vietnam, which Laos is also understood to want badly, particularly if the American economic aid program ceases or is substantially phased down.

Officials of the American Agency for International Development, meanwhile, began to make preparations today to ship out the personal effects of the hundreds of Americans who have been evacuated from the country over the last several weeks.

The United States Embassy has chartered a C-130 cargo plane from Bird Air Company, a private Thai-based American charter company, and the plane is now standing by at Vientiane airport.

### Tribesmen Fired On

VIENTIANE, May 30. (UPI)—The Pathet Lao opened fire on thousands of Meo hill tribesmen fleeing southward toward Vientiane, Government officials reported today. It was the first outbreak of violence during the Communist take-over of the country.

Reports from the Long Tieng area 90 miles north of Vientiane said the Meos, once part of a secret army funded by the United States Central Intelligence Agency, had demanded a meeting with Government officials to end "exploitation" by the Communists.

Reliable reports from the scene indicated that at least five tribesmen were killed and about 30 wounded Thursday.