



AP Wirephoto

School girls wearing the Pathet Lao emblem cheered marchers in the big Vientiane parade

A Giant Celebration in Laos

Vientiane, Laos

Soldiers and civilians paraded before an estimated 100,000 spectators yesterday in festivities staged by the Pathet Lao to mark the 30th anniversary of the declaration of Lao independence from France.

At Vieng Xay in northeastern Laos, leaders from Vietnam and Cambodia joined Laotian Communists for a top-level celebration at Pathet Lao headquarters.

The get-together was believed to be the first meeting of senior Lao, Cambodian and Vietnamese Communist party members since the Communist victories in their countries.

Communist officials of the Lao Revolutionary People's party were hosts to Premier Hunh Tan

Phat of South Vietnam; Ieng Sary, Cambodian deputy premier for foreign affairs, and North Vietnam's Truong Chinh, regarded as the most powerful member of that country's ruling politburo.

The Vientiane parade, said by residents to be the largest in the capital's history, was marred by an overnight rain which turned the carefully prepared parade ground into a sea of mud. Women in bright, calf-length sarongs splashed past the reviewing stand singing and waving red and blue pom-poms.

The celebrations marked the Oct. 12, 1945, declaration of a Free Lao government which paved the way for final granting of independence to Laos in 1953. Some of the Free Lao leaders went on to join the Pathet Lao

movement, which now exercises control over the country.

Westerners said government operations over the past two weeks came to a standstill while officials prepared for the anniversary festivities.

Among the dignitaries watching the parade was U.S. Charge d'Affaires Thomas Corcoran.

The president of Vientiane's Revolutionary Committee Meune Somvichith, gave a speech which Western observers termed "mildly anti-American."

The Americans and Thais were invited to the anniversary celebration on Saturday only a few hours before the three-day holiday was officially opened. Other embassies received invitations long in advance.

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