



PRINCE SOUPHANOUVONG
...takes over in Laos

Prince Laotian President

Reuter

VIENTIANE, Dec. 4—Prince Souphanouvong, the "red prince" and titular head of the pro-Communist Pathet Lao forces, was today named president of the new Laotian People's Democratic Republic.

The Laotian National Congress also named Kaysone Phomyiharn, a veteran political and military strategist in the Pathet Lao as prime minister.

The appointments followed yesterday's announcement of the abolition of the 600-year-old monarchy and the creation of a republic in the landlocked nation of 3 million people.

The changes, expected following the flight of the extreme rightists, were approved by the congress summoned here by the Pathet Lao Central Committee Monday.

What came as a surprise was that the country's revolutionary leadership did not completely discard all the members of the royalty or the rightist side of the former coalition government, but gave them roles in the new administration, apparently as a gesture of moderation and compromise.

King Sisavang Vatthana, who abdicated yesterday, was

appointed as "supreme adviser" to the president, at the latter's request. The deposed prime minister, Prince Souvanna Phouma, a half-brother of the Pathet Lao leader, was named as "adviser to the government."

In the 45-member people's supreme assembly appointed by the congress nine seats were allocated to the rightists, among them former Crown Prince Tiao Vongsavang and former Princess Nang Tiao Tiane Petsarath, a niece of both the new president and Prince Souvanna.

The Cabinet also includes four deputy prime ministers, all staunch Pathet Lao or Hanoi-oriented party leaders. Among them is Nouhak Phomsavane, who was also named as finance minister.

News dispatches said that, although the 63-year-old Souphanouvong, a popular figure who fought the French during colonial times, was theoretically head of the Pathet Lao, political observers in Vientiane believe that Kaysone and Nouhak are the movement's real No. 1 and No. 2 leaders. These observers described the two men as hard-liners who have closely followed policies laid down by North Vietnamese party chiefs.

The new prime minister, who is in his 50s, was described by one Laotian observer as both the theoretician and the military genius of the Pathet Lao. Kaysone, the son of a Vietnamese father and a Laotian mother, studied at Hanoi University in the mid-1940s, was spotted by Ho Chi Minh and trained by the Vietnamese Communist leader in Marxist-Leninist theory.

In 1947 he worked with Prince Souphanouvong at the Samneur caves, near the Vietnamese border, which later became Pathet Lao headquarters.

In 1956, Kaysone was appointed secretary general of the Laotian Workers' Party, now the People's Revolutionary Party.

After decades of quiet work in the Pathet Lao leadership, Kaysone came to the fore in public only last October, during celebrations marking the 30th anniversary of the Laotian nationalists' declaration of independence from France.