

An Analysis:

Behind the Sino/Soviet Dispute

The protagonists are, after all, the two pretenders to the leadership of world revolution, each denouncing the chauvinism and imperialism of the other to lay claim to an uninhabited island, ceded under duress by the Manchu Dynasty to Tsar Alexander the Second.

THE FLARE-UP OF THE SINO-SOVIET conflict over a barren island in the frozen Ussuri River is such a cryptic cipher in that unfolding history that it may well suggest a satirical conceit of Lewis Carroll rather than a military extension of politics à la von Clausewitz. "We will never allow Soviet revisionists to invade and occupy China's sacred territory—Chenpao Island," proclaims Peking. Sacred territory? A curious category for the Marxist-Leninist dialectic of Chinese communism.

The Russians appear equally incongruous in their efforts to wear the mantle of Lenin along with the raiment of Tsarist territorial conquest. Unhappily for their case, Lenin's government in 1919 actually renounced all Tsarist treaties in China. There was, however, no central government in China at the

time to accept the offer, and in the subsequent jockeying for position and power between Stalin's regime, the Japanese conquerors and local Chinese warlords, the former boundaries of the Russian empire were sustained.

The Ussuri River boundary, the current *casus belli*, was established by the Peking Treaty of 1860, under which the Manchu Empire ceded all land east of the river to the Tsars. Boundary lines which run along waterways are generally drawn along the lowest trough of the main channel, or the "thalweg," and it has been suggested that constant flooding of the Ussuri may have shifted its "thalweg" and caused the dispute. In any case, the island itself, which is called "Chenpao" by the Chinese and "Damansky" by the Russians, is so inestimable that it is not identifiable on the most detailed maps

by David Horowitz

available—though they do show several other islands in this region of the river.

Despite the appearance of Alice in Wonderland disproportion in the elaborate and costly struggle over this cartographical nonentity, its very insignificance underscores the fact that territory is not the real issue. Chenpao is no more suitable for conquest than for class struggle. This island, becoming the focal point of a larger conflict, has merely flared like a dry leaf under a lens. Even the territorial question *in toto*, which Western observers (with a seemingly indefatigable interest in proving that revolution changes nothing) like to cast as the ultimate ground of Sino-Soviet realpolitik, is primarily a political projection of other, more basic, conflicts.

It is true that Russian propaganda continually inveighs against the alleged territorial ambitions of the Chinese. The poet Yevtushenko, darling of establishment liberals in the Soviet Union, has immortalized the incident in a poem—"On the Red Snow of the Ussuri"—in which he compares the Chinese to the Mongol invaders of the Middle Ages. (It has been noted that in racist conceptions of China the smallest military units are "hordes" and "waves.") The ascription to China of this kind of classic expansionist drive for imperial resurgence has roots in a popular Malthusian determinism about her: it is the child's storybook China come of age—you dig a deep hole to get there, and when you arrive there is no place to sit down. So she bursts her borders. However, this land-hunger theory of Chinese politics, particularly as it relates to China's northern and western borders, bypasses the basic demographic facts about the country: 90-95 per cent of all China's inhabitants live in just one-third of the country, in the southeast. The borderlands contain only about five per cent of the population.

The fact is that territorial issues were not raised in a public and political manner by the Chinese until 1963, the year that the Sino-Soviet conflict broke into the open; and then they were raised in such a way as to make clear that it was this conflict which was being prosecuted in the dispute over territorial borders. Moreover, while the legacies of the imperial past cannot be ignored in analyzing the evolution of the conflict, it is evident from the history of the schism that these alone would not have provoked the serious antagonism which now exists between the two former allies.

Indeed, far more significant than the lingering influence of old empires in stoking the flames of conflict between the two Communist powers has been the imposing presence of a new empire on the rise in Asia: the United States and its Free World co-prosperity sphere. One of the foremost experts on Central Asia, Professor Owen Lattimore, recently summed up the postures of the three powers: "The Soviet Union stands, except for Finland, just about where the Tsarist Empire stood. China, except for the Mongolian People's Republic [which is now "independent" and under Soviet influence], stands just about where the Manchu Empire stood. Only the United States has, with giant strides, advanced its bases and its armed forces into South Korea (there are no Chinese or Russian troops in North Korea), Japan, Okinawa (which has virtually been detached from Japan), Taiwan, the Philippines, South Viet-Nam (there are no Chinese troops in North Viet-Nam), and Thailand." It is this thrust into Asia by the United States, with its clearly demonstrated readiness to inflict unprecedented levels of violence and destruction on

Asian peoples, that is at the source of the present open hostility between the two Communist powers; and it is this empire which provides the geopolitical framework within which the Sino-Soviet conflict must work itself out.

[SINO-SOVIET CONFLICT]

ALTHOUGH THE CHINESE CLAIM that it is the "revisionism" of the Russians, and the Russians that it is the "adventurism" of the Chinese, and while Western observers profess to see immutable great power ambitions as the source of the conflict between the two states, the fact of the matter is that the development of the conflict neatly follows the trajectory of America's attitudes toward the two revolutions.

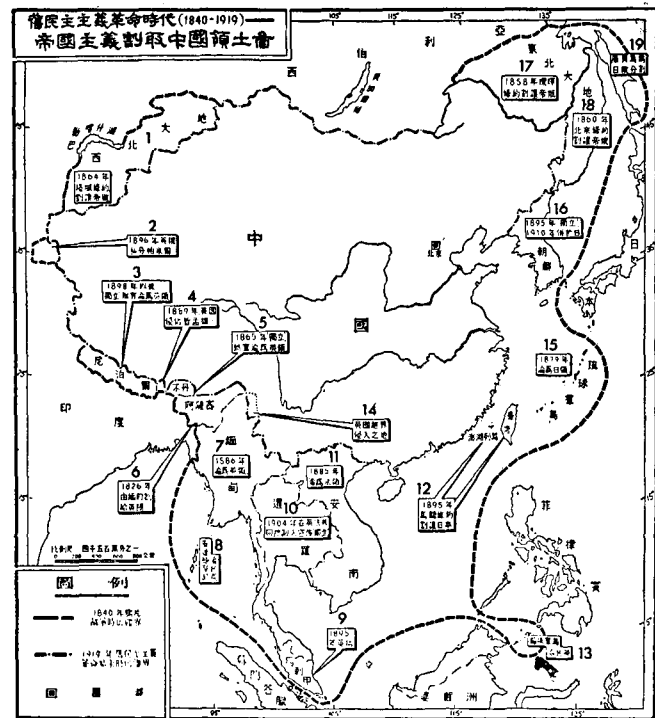
When the United States regarded communism as a monolith (China was nothing but a Russian colony, according to Assistant Secretary of State Dean Rusk in 1951, and the Chinese Revolution little more than a Russian coup d'état), the two revolutions found their interests mutually served by firm solidarity against Washington's nuclear containment ring. When, however, the United States began to recognize the great power status of the Soviet Union (a recognition greatly stimulated by the Soviet development of H-bombs and ICBM's) and to entertain the possibility of establishing normal relations with Russia while maintaining the isolation of China (as well as the intervention in her civil war and territory), notable fissures began to develop in the hitherto solid alliance. The closer the détente between the U.S. and Russia seemed to be, while China was forced to remain out in the nuclear cold, the more the Chinese felt betrayed by their allies. The Russians, on the other hand, who over decades had come to look upon their revolution as the Sun of the socialist spring, naturally regarded China's growing criticism as ungrateful and spiteful. In addition, Russia saw China's unremitting resistance to U.S. power as dangerous and destructive, and as presenting an insuperable obstacle, so long as the two countries remained allied, to her own desire for détente with the United States. The growing tolerance of Washington for one of the two Communist states, while it maintained a posture of hostility and aggression toward the other, was accompanied, therefore, by a growing intolerance of the two states for each other.

As late as November 1957, a year after the famous "revisionist" Twentieth Party Congress in Russia, Mao went to Moscow and proclaimed: "The Socialist camp must have a head, and this head is the USSR. . . . The Communist and workers parties of all countries must have a head and that head is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union." At the same time, however, a development took place which, in combination with Russia's economic resurgence and post-Stalin political stabilization, was to change dramatically the international military situation and the political lines of force dependent on it, including the Sino-Soviet alliance. In August of that year, the Soviet Union successfully tested its first intercontinental ballistic missiles, and in October, during the 40th anniversary celebrations of the Russian Revolution, Sputnik I was launched. For the first time in the Cold War, American society became directly vulnerable to a crippling blow from Soviet nuclear weapons.

The most important consequence of this development for the Russians was the gradual but steady accommodation of

KEY TO MAP of areas seized from Imperial China
(Translation of the information given in boxes on the map.)

1. The Great Northwest: seized by Imperial Russia under the Treaty of Chugachak, 1864. [Parts of present Soviet Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, and Tadzhikistan.]
2. Pamirs: secretly divided between England and Russia in 1896.
3. Nepal: went to England after "independence" in 1898.
4. Sikkim: occupied by England in 1889.
5. Bhutan: went to England after "independence" in 1865.
6. Assam: given to England by Burma in 1826.
7. Burma: became part of the British Empire in 1886.
8. Andaman Archipelago: went to England.
9. Malaya: occupied by England in 1895.
10. Thailand: declared "independent" under joint Anglo-French control in 1904.
11. Annam: occupied by France in 1885. [Covers present North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.]
12. Taiwan and P'eng-hu Archipelago [Pescadores]: relinquished to Japan per the Treaty of Shimonoseki, 1895.
13. Sulu Archipelago: went to England.
14. Region where the British crossed the border and committed aggression.
15. Ryukyu Archipelago: occupied by Japan in 1879.
16. Korea: "independent" in 1895—annexed by Japan in 1910.
17. The Great Northeast: seized by Imperial Russia under the Treaty of Aigun, 1858.
18. The Great Northeast: seized by Imperial Russia under the Treaty of Peking, 1860.
19. Sakhalin: divided between Russia and Japan.



American policy to Russia's great power status, culminating in President Kennedy's recognition of the status quo in Eastern Europe in June 1963, and the signing of the nuclear test ban treaty a month later. At the time of the signing, the Kennedy Administration let it be known to "inside" reporters that after the prevention of nuclear war, it regarded the containment of China as the most pressing priority for policy.

Even without this intelligence, the Chinese had little cause to celebrate. Not only had they been excluded from the nuclear club at a time when they were ringed with American nuclear bases and submarines, but the Russians had engineered a détente with the very power that had made China a pariah in the world of nations, and without insisting on any quid pro quo that would lessen the enormous pressure placed on China by the embargo and encirclement. Coming on the heels of Moscow's ignominious retreat from the defense of a small ally in the Caribbean, this rank betrayal of China's interest led to a démarche from Peking, and the first public acknowledgment of the split.

It was at this time, moreover, that the territorial issue was injected into the dispute, principally as a means by which China, as the far weaker of the two powers, was able to strike a nonmilitary blow at her treacherous ally. Four months earlier, the Chinese had first made territorial noises in the course of their criticism of the Kremlin's debacle in Cuba. The gist of the Chinese position was that the Kremlin never should have put missiles in Cuba in the first place, and that once they were there, they should not have been withdrawn under nuclear threat from Washington—appeasement would only whet the aggressive appetite of the American colossus. If Washington could back Moscow down by nuclear blackmail in Cuba, why not elsewhere?

In its defense against Peking's charges of "capitulationism," Moscow pointed to Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao, the still

unliberated colonial enclaves in China. Moscow's analogy was more than a little shaky and hardly met the Chinese criticism head on. Beyond that, to China it was salt in her wounds. China did not retort with tactical distinctions between the two cases. Instead, in an editorial in *Jenmin Jih Pao* in March 1963, the Chinese took the point a step further in the direction that the Russians had unwittingly opened. They reviewed the history of the colonial enclaves, and of the annexation of Chinese territory by outright conquest and by unequal treaties—including the Treaty of Peking with the Russian Tsar.

Thus did the territorial issue enter the Sino-Soviet dispute, providing a well-aimed barb at Soviet great power chauvinism toward its weaker allies. Soon after the territorial issue had been raised, it was taken up in an even more evocative way by Chairman Mao himself, in the course of an interview with Japanese socialists on August 11, 1964. In answer to questions about Japanese territorial claims Mao said: "There are too many places occupied by the Soviet Union. . . . About a hundred years ago, the area to the east of [Lake] Baikal became Russian territory, and since then Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, Kamchatka, and other areas have been Soviet territory. We have not yet presented our account for this list."

[A FEINT TO THE NORTHEAST]

IN ASSESSING THE POLITICAL MOTIVES behind Mao's new territorial gambit, with its specific raising of possible claims in the northern Far East, it is necessary to consider another event in the momentous year prior to the open break between the two countries, an event which occurred in the most strategic and vulnerable of China's own border regions—in the west.

When the Communists took power in 1949, they in effect

put China under centralized, unified administration for the first time in half a century. In the interim, China had been torn by civil strife with whole regions under the independent rule of various Chinese warlords, as well as foreign powers like Russia and Japan. Among the regions with the most intractable fragmentary tendencies was the western province of Sinkiang (which means "New Frontier").

Sinkiang is a highly strategic area containing Karamai, one of China's chief domestic sources of oil, as well as the nuclear installation site at Lop Nor. The population of Sinkiang is composed predominantly of Turkic Moslems with strong ethnic and cultural affinities to the Kazakh and Uzbek nationalities in Soviet Central Asia. Prior to the Sino-Soviet split, there had been disturbances in Sinkiang, including a major rebellion in 1958. The split brought a new dimension to these problems, because in the '60s, the Soviet Union began actively to promote dissidence and separatist tendencies in the region. Thus the Soviet Radio Tashkent emphasized in Uighur language broadcasts the better economic standard of living enjoyed by the Uighurs living in Soviet Uzbekistan, and denounced the "assimilationist" campaigns of the Chinese (like the Russians, the Chinese are stimulating settlement of the borderlands and minority regions by the majority population).

In April and May 1962, Russian subversion in Sinkiang reached a climax with several tens of thousands of Sinkiang citizens, notably Kazakhs, fleeing across the border into Soviet Kazakhstan. The incident was first publicly acknowledged by the Chinese in a statement on September 6, 1963, which denounced it as "an astounding event, unheard of in the relations between socialist countries." Soviet intervention in Sinkiang did not cease with this incident. During the height of the Cultural Revolution, for example, Moscow gave pointed political exposure to refugees from Sinkiang and denounced Red Guard attacks on Uighur culture, while the region was in such serious turmoil that the People's Liberation Army had to be called in to restore order.

In view of the situation in Sinkiang, Mao's stirring of the territorial issue in regard to the lands east of Lake Baikal, and China's readiness to mobilize and fight over a barren island there, become intelligible. It is a way of applying pressure on a border region which is sensitive for the Russians (the trans-Siberian rail link to Vladivostok runs perilously close to the border along the Ussuri, while Kamchatka is a Soviet nuclear test site), and of shifting pressure from China's own weak border region in the west.

The connection between the border clash in the Ussuri River and the struggle over Sinkiang 2000 miles away was underscored in official Chinese accounts of the anti-Russian demonstrations following the Ussuri clash. These gave a prominent place to the protest meetings by "well over 2,500,000 revolutionary people of 13 nationalities" in the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region. According to the Peking Review, the deputy commander of the Sinkiang Military Area Command, speaking at a mass rally in the capital city of Urumchi on March 8, denounced the "Soviet revisionists' monstrous crimes," stating that they had "ceaselessly carried out sabotage, subversive and aggressive activities in vainly trying to separate Sinkiang from our great motherland," and warning: "Anyone who has the audacity to try to undermine the unity of the people of all nationalities in

Sinkiang or disrupt the unification of our great motherland, and anyone who dares to invade the sacred territory of our great motherland, will surely be hitting his head against a stone wall and will ignominiously end up in utter defeat."

[CRISIS IN THE SOVIET BLOC]

IF THE CHINESE HAD THEIR compelling reasons for mobilizing along their border in the frozen Siberian far east, there were powerful promptings behind Russia's military buildup and actions as well. Indeed, insofar as an international "incident" took place on Chenpao-Damansky Island on March 2, it may be said to have been authored by the Russians—not necessarily in the sense that Soviet troops fired first or upset the status quo in the island area, but in that Moscow chose to announce the incident to the world, and to conduct what the press has called a "classic atrocity campaign," to whip up national hysteria against China. For military incidents are nothing new to this border region, but never before have they been acknowledged by either of the parties. The question, as Newsweek put it, was "just why had the Russians chosen to balloon a pair of relatively minor border affrays—hundreds of which have occurred along the Sino-Soviet frontier in recent years—into an international *cause célèbre*?"

The answer to the question lies in the growing crisis in the Soviet bloc since the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, and in the increasingly important role which China has come to play in that crisis.

The crisis is essentially the product of two divergent developments in the Communist world: the re-Stalinization which has taken place in the Soviet Union since the fall of Khrushchev in October 1964, and especially since the American escalation of the war in Viet-Nam; and the de-Stalinization which has continued to progress in the interstate relations of the bloc as a whole, reflecting increased pressures for national autonomy and self-determination. The delayed and dramatic *internal* de-Stalinization in Czechoslovakia prior to the invasion of course greatly intensified these contradictory tendencies.

Since 1956, the political struggle in the Soviet Union has been delineated along liberal-conservative lines between those who want the limited de-Stalinization measures extended and those who want them curtailed, and even reversed. In addition to Soviet liberals—mainly artists, writers and the scientific-technical intelligentsia—the main supporters of de-Stalinization have been the *national* communists in the bloc states, for whom the shattering of the Stalinist monolith means a relaxation of the Kremlin's oppressive centralized control of their national destinies. This link between liberal anti-Stalinism and national self-determination within the bloc (which is supported by liberals and Stalinists alike in the countries involved) remains a key to understanding the present turn of events.

In the wake of his retreat in the Cuban missile crisis, Khrushchev, who had made de-Stalinization the vehicle of his rise to power, found his prestige and position critically undermined. Anti-Khrushchev forces in the leadership began mobilizing immediately, and a resurgence of Stalinism (the natural grouping point of Khrushchev's opponents) soon marked the escalation of the internal struggle. Six months after the crisis, Khrushchev received a substantial respite when the heir

presumptive, Frol Kozlov, was removed by a heart attack; but the arc of his long-term decline was already set, and on October 14, 1964, the ebullient Ukrainian was toppled by a Politburo coup.

For several months the new Brezhnev-Kosygin team marked time. But Khrushchev's appeasement of Washington in the Cuban missile crisis had consequences other than revealing the ineptness of Soviet foreign policy and the weakness of the Soviet Union's commitment to small Communist allies in the face of American power. Washington, newly aware of the extent of this weakness, was emboldened in February 1965 to undertake the bombing of a Communist state and military ally of the Soviet Union, even while the new Soviet Premier, Kosygin, was visiting its capital city, Hanoi. This naked and supremely arrogant act of aggression was so threatening to Soviet national interests that it quickly brought out the hawks in Moscow, and the re-Stalinization movement surged ahead. Appropriately, it was led by the military and first took the form of a series of reappraisals of Stalin's role in the defense of the Soviet Union against the German invasion during World War II. The spokesman of the new movement and the most important force in the leadership behind it was Leonid Brezhnev, who has since emerged as the new strongman of the Kremlin.

While this resurgence of Stalinism was accompanied by increased defense expenditures and stiffened military support for Viet-Nam (although the support given was still less than what was provided for the noncommunist regimes of the Middle East), it did not alter the fundamental lines of Soviet coexistence policy toward Washington and the West, which had been continuous since the era of Stalin and was not fundamentally deviated from by his successors. But it did have major repercussions on Soviet relations with its dependencies in Eastern Europe.

The original de-Stalinization had had, of course, its most dramatic and violent reverberations in Eastern Europe, where nationalism had linked up with anti-Stalinist liberalism to unleash the forces of full-scale revolt. It is therefore not surprising that a repressive re-Stalinization in Russia, combined with a rapid liberalization in the hitherto stalwart Stalinist Czechoslovakia, should have produced in the spring and summer of 1968 the elements of a new explosion.

The Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia to put the lid on a *Communist* regime (not even a coalition of Communist and noncommunist elements as in Hungary) signified a total commitment of the present Soviet leadership to a solution of the tensions within the camp by Stalinist repression and the enforced recognition of the absolute prerogatives of Moscow as the head of the Communist Church. This attempt to reassert a monolithic law for the Communist bloc was formally presented last September in what has become known as the "Brezhnev Doctrine." The doctrine asserts in effect the limited sovereignty of any socialist country accessible to the Red Army and the right of the Soviet Union as the head and guardian of the socialist camp to intervene where it deems necessary to preserve the status quo.

Although there has been protest against the invasion and its consequences inside the Soviet Union from liberal intellectuals, the major opposition to the present bid of the Soviet rulers to turn back the historical clock has come from the liberal parties of the West and the *national* parties of the

Communist bloc. Foremost among these latter has been the Communist Party of China. Indeed, the loudest, clearest and—considering its weight in the world Communist movement—most significant voice opposing the Soviet invasion and the Brezhnev Doctrine has been that of Peking, which has denounced the Soviet enclave in Eastern Europe as a prototype for colonial empire, and the invasion as "fascist" aggression. It is the Chinese who have issued the call, "Down with the New Tsars"—in Eastern Europe as in Central Asia—and it is they to whom dissident East European states like Rumania have turned for support.

A GAINST THIS BACKGROUND, the Kremlin's handling of the border incident over Chenpao-Damansky Island becomes intelligible indeed. In Stalinist practice, the way to maintain an orthodoxy, discredit an opposition and render its members unpersons is to put it outside the camp of communism and revolution. Thus it was necessary to fabricate a collusion between Trotskyism, Hitler and the Mikado to make opposition to Stalin impossible in the '30s. An attack by China on the Soviet Union, replete with atrocities, would provide the pretext needed to expel China from the international Communist movement altogether, and to break up the incipient bloc of Chinese and East European opposition to Soviet domination (a war scare would also facilitate the internal repression—and co-optation à la Yevtushenko—of Moscow's anti-Stalinist liberals). How convenient of the Chinese, therefore, to "invade" Damansky Island just prior to the upcoming World Congress of Communist Parties in Moscow!

If there were any doubts as to what thoughts the Kremlin would be entertaining about Peking-style communism when the Congress met, they were dispelled when the Soviet paper *Izvestia* reported the April meeting of the 9th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (the post-Cultural Revolution Congress) in the following terms: "The Communist Party of China is no more. The Maoist rally is actually the first Congress of a new organization which has nothing in common with the Communist Party of China or international communism." The message could not have been made more clear. If the Chinese are successfully drummed out of the Communist movement, then ideas which parallel those of the Chinese—for example, that the Kremlin is exploiting Eastern Europe economically and dominating it politically in an imperial manner—will become heretical for any Communist to hold.

But it is not at all clear that the Kremlin leaders will be successful in this effort, even in the short run. Already they have been stymied in their pre-Congress efforts to get the Warsaw Pact countries to denounce China's "aggression." Pressure from the Rumanians, French and Italians delayed the Congress until June, and the Congress itself will be boycotted by the most independent and revolutionary bloc parties: North Korea and Cuba. Moreover, pressure from the Soviet Union's domestic dissenters is increasing. The latter-day Stalinists in the Kremlin may, after all, discover that turning back the clock can be a dangerous and ultimately fatal remedy for being out of touch with the times.

David Horowitz's new book, Empire and Revolution, a radical interpretation of contemporary history, is being published this month by Random House.



Ephemera



TELEVISION

A Doily for Your Mind

"The country is run by business. There are haves, and they want to keep what they've got. The changes that are going on directly threaten their hold on things, so they hold on harder. That's exactly the way it is in the television industry. The haves, like CBS, aren't letting go of anything." —TOMMY SMOTHERS

CBS TELEVISION CITY floats serenely and secure in the Los Angeles smog. Huge and austere, formed by the geometry of structural oppression, it sits like a tribute to Pharaoh. Of the streams of people channeled in and out its doors, some are tanned and chic, present only because they are Hollywood's beautiful people. But most are visitors, stalking celebrities down long corridors and hoping somehow to comprehend the nightly mystery they see sandwiched in between commercials. But more scenarios are hidden from them than are shown. Only rarely do the trade secrets inside CBS become public: plays outside the play.

* * *

Monday, March 31: Tommy Smothers, dressed casually in khakis and motorcycle boots and carrying a large briefcase, walks into the wing of Television City allotted to the "Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour." On the walls are signs booming Pat Paulsen for President and scattered Xeroxes from television journals discussing The Great Censorship Struggle with CBS. Short and slight, his blonde hair carefully combed to camouflage thinness at the top, Smothers looks very up-tight, not at all like his light-headed television persona. He nods perfunctorily to his secretaries and goes into his inner office, where he slumps into a chair beneath a large photograph of brother Dickie making a hairpin turn in his sportscar. Staring at an indeterminate point in the ceiling, he mumbles, "I've always had a feeling that this place was bugged."

Normally the subject of gossip, in-jokes and office politics, the simmering feud be-

tween the brothers and the network is very much in the public eye this morning, even if the CBS eye remains officially blind to it. Comedian Jackie Mason's attorney has just called to announce that his client is suing the network for millions because his monologue on the previous night's Comedy Hour has been scissored in half. Almost overnight, this show has become one of the famous ones. Originally scheduled for the previous week but delayed because of haggling with the CBS program practices department, its major victim was not Mason, but Joan Baez. The folksinger also has a grievance: the CBS censor may have left intact her ballad to her husband David, who is going to jail for draft refusal, but he has mutilated her eloquent preceding statement. "It's pretty goddamn disgusting," Tommy says, chewing nervously on his fingernails as he sees the incoming calls begin to play computer patterns on his telephone buttons. "When she says he's going to jail—that's left in. When she says why—that's cut out. It's crazy. It leaves the impression that maybe he's committed auto theft or grand larceny or something. You just can't do that to people."

Smothers speaks in his small boy's way, with the wistful, angelic smile he has perfected in his stage role of professional dunce flickering tenuously across his face. The gestures and the voice are the same as those that have come over the screen on Sunday nights for the last three years, but the content is different, putting him into a time-warp. Particularly in this environment, he seems too articulate. "Because of these problems with CBS," he says, "I've come to realize that television is a microcosm of this whole society. The country is run by business. There are haves, and they want to keep what they've got. The changes that are going on directly threaten their hold on things, so they hold on harder. That's exactly the way it is in the television industry. The haves, like CBS, aren't letting go of anything. And the really horrible thing of it is that as a result, television finally manages to deal with nothing at all that affects people between the time they're born and the time they die."

Just back from Washington, where he spoke to the Federal Communications Commission and members of Pastore's Senate

subcommittee (which was investigating sex and violence on television) about what he feels is the impending destruction of television, thirty-two-year-old Tommy is the Smothers who is most deeply involved in the ups and downs of the industry. Lately, it has been mostly downs. "It's really starting to get to me now," he says, throwing a half-smoked cigarette into one of the plastic cups on his desk and immediately lighting another. "I got this a couple of days ago," he says, fishing a telegram out of his briefcase. "It shows the kind of response you get from them: 'Please be advised that you are not free to use the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour as a device to push for new standards. If you cannot comply with our standards—whether or not you approve of them—the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour cannot appear on CBS.' This is from Bob Wood, president of CBS-TV. That's the kind of attitude you're up against. The thing last night with Joanie is only one of the worse examples of the crap we've gotten. It's been one long series of harassments. Once, for instance, we tried to get in a plug for VISTA, but they said in script consultation that it would be 'influencing pending legislation.' We tried to say something about Mothers for Peace, and they told us that it hadn't been cleared by HUAC, or something like that. You know that Belafonte, Elaine May, Cass Eliot—they've all been censored. We did a long interview with Dr. Spock last fall, and we still can't show it because they tell us he's a 'convicted felon.' All we've ever wanted to do for godssakes was try to get a little serious opinion onto television once in a while."

As their relations with CBS over the past six months developed from occasional skirmishes to a full-scale battle, the Smothers thought about not renewing their contract for next year. But on March 15, they finally decided to sign, committing themselves to 26 shows and the network to \$4.5 million over the next nine months. "Next season we'll book who we want and do what we want to on the show," Smothers says with a shrug. "We've tried to do it CBS' way, now we'll do it ours. If the ratings go down, who cares? We didn't intend to stay on forever anyway. We couldn't have. Anybody who tries to do anything worthwhile in this medium is going to get their platform taken