

Henry

THE FREE OBSERVER

THE FIRST
AND ONLY

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

IN ENGLISH
IN VIETNAM



WHEN?

JUNE 66



- Religion Should Last as Politics Passes
- Anti-Americanism in Vietnam
- Buddhist New Move
- Television in Vietnam
- The People and the Armed Forces Council
- To Whom is July 20th a Shame?
- The First Visit of a VN Diplomat to the US
- Vietnam's Peasant Army
- **MAY** : A « Hunger Strike » Month
- NVN Administrative Organization

D A N A N G



A REPRESSION OF
BUDDHISM ?

A FRATRICIDAL WAR ?



A RE-ESTABLISHMENT
OF NATIONAL ORDER
AND DISCIPLINE ?

HISTORY WILL JUDGE...

The Free **OBSERVER**

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

The selection of our cover picture for this issue has created for us a real case of conscience :

Standard journalistic practice would require the most important and representative picture of the month.

The commercial considerations however call for the most sensational and attractive photo.

National interests dissuade us from the presentation on the front cover of views detrimental to national unity and to the morale of our troops.

In fact, pictures such as the Danang fight, the charred Hue JUSPAO's building, some self immolations of the recent weeks would be very striking and would sell the paper.

We think however that all these were regrettable incidents which happened against the will of all responsible men.

We sincerely apologize to our readers for the breach of journalistic rules.

The prospect of a real national unity so badly needed for stability and victory, as is shown in the imaginary Vietnam Boat of Unity will plead, we hope, in our favor.

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Pagodas, churches and temples symbolize religions.

~~These places are for prayers, meditation, contemplation, spiritualization, idealization.~~

The places exclude, by definition, criminal thoughts, perfidious plans, treacherous plots, and deceitful acts.

Religions are, in fact, the sound side of the life we are living, the side of life we really live for ourselves. Religions are

sacred matters, free of impurities of profane life. Their positions ~~are aside from or above~~ temporal matters, including politics.

On the contrary, politics is everything. Politics has its nobility, greatness and ideal. But it has at the same time imperfections, weaknesses and baseness.

Very often, politics tolerates things and acts entirely reprov-

RELIGION SHOULD LAST



AS POLITICS PASSES

by religions: assassination, bloodshed, underhanded maneuvers, unscrupulous thoughts, ...anything which may help reach a goal.

And when the goal is reached then politics bestows all the privileges to a winner and disappointment to the loser.

Religions cannot be like politics because of the intrinsic nature of each.

Political alliances may be

destroyed if they fail in their undertakings. But religions are destined to survive and last for ever, despite political changes.

For these reasons, religions and politics are incompatible and should not be mixed.

If religions persist in their involvement in politics, they demean themselves. But what is worse is, they participate in a system which will work for their own destruction.



In front of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, May 25.

The Burning and ransacking of the U.S. Consulate and the (JUSPAO) Office in Huê in May have stirred up the spirit of the people in Vietnam and abroad, especially in the United States, on one of the most delicate problems facing this country: ANTI-AMERICANISM IN VIETNAM.

Other events preceding the «distressing act» in Huê — as U.S. Ambassador Cabot Lodge called the Huê sacking, included anti-American demonstrations by some Buddhists in Saigon and in some northern provinces, the burning of American vehicles and some cases of maltreatment of American individuals.

Part of Buddhist or pro-Buddhist press has also directed strong attacks against the Americans, or rather the «American mistakes and weaknesses» in Vietnam. Some Buddhist leaders also voiced strong criticism against American policy and American errors in this country.

The superficial conclusion drawn from these events is that anti-Americanism prevails in Vietnam.

To us the problem appears, however, to be much more complicated. To have a clear idea of what the situation really is, the factor of time, place and circumstances must be taken into consideration.

As for the time factor, we are presently at war, a war in which the Americans are deeply involved. There is no need to explain that anti-Americanism is an *aspect of the war* which the Americans have to face, in the same way they are boldly facing other aspects of the war.

ANTI-AMERICANISM

The war in Vietnam which the Americans have voluntarily joined involves politics and unfortunately religions too. And when politics and religions are involved in a war, in a country which still claims freedom as the only reason for its existence, there cannot be a complete unity. Disunity creates opponents and these opponents, for own advantage, exert pressure on the Americans, who play a key role in this war. Attacking the Americans is an efficient way, some people think, to exert pressure.

By the same token, the Americans cannot avoid the fate of becoming a scapegoat for dissident groups.

Concerning the « place » factor, the Americans are in contact with an Asian nation which bears the strongest imprints of Asiatic character and mentality. With some words pronounced and acts manifested do not necessarily reflect their minds and their hearts. In other words, anti-American words and acts may not come from anti-American minds and hearts, it may even come from pro-American sentiments.

The Americans are also in contact with a country recently delivered from a century of colonial domination, which had created in its people a strange kind of complex of the « dominated ». This complex does not favor at all a frank expression of Vietnamese sympathy for the Americans. Considering this, one can see that anti-American elements, in a way, enjoy a favorable climate for their expressions, while pro-Americans find it rather difficult to disclose their feelings. The apparent present anti-American feeling in Vietnam is therefore rather deceitful, because the anti-American aspect of the problem is visible while the pro-American side of the problem while existent, is not always evident.

It is easy for the « antis » to cry « Americans go home »; but it is not easy for the « pros » to shout « Americans, please stay ». The « go home » is readily understandable; but the « please stay » cannot stand alone, it always seems to need explanations, elaborations and comments: some kind of justification.

About circumstances, the « antis » also enjoy favorable natural psychological privileges. A ransacking, a burning, a murder by a few extremists has its immediate echo in the world, and stirs up the opinion all over the United States. But the indignation of thousands, may be millions of people who view such acts can hardly go beyond the country's frontiers. A few anti-American slogans on banners carried by children in the streets of Saigon draw millions of Americans to their TV screens. But repeated speeches of gratitude expressed to Allied troops and the American people by the Nation's leaders may not even come to the attention of official U.S. circles.

(Continued on page 30)

I N V I E T N A M

Ey PHU-SI

AN ANNIVERSARY!

For whom is JULY 20th A SHAME?

EDITOR'S NOTE : Forthcoming July will be the month of the Geneva Agreements on Vietnam.

The Viet Cong in the South as well as their comrades in North Vietnam are already busy right now preparing for the celebration of the Geneva Accords Anniversary which falls on July 20th.

To the Vietnamese Communists, for reasons of their own, this is an Anniversary of Victory.

To the free Vietnamese, however, this day has been called « day of shame », because it marks the day Vietnam was partitioned.

And again, to Free Vietnam, partition means a shameful crime, a betrayal of Vietnam's ancestors and heroes who, throughout the centuries, had fought for and rebuilt and maintained the unification of the country.

These points concern the Vietnamese both in the North and the South. But what does this day mean for some of our Allies, for our American friends and for the Free World as well ?

The following pages, we hope, will answer the question.



The Geneva Conference was just a heavy-handed comedy of five acts :

1) Colonialist rule : Under colonial domination, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos had the collective name of Indochina and their peoples suffered merciless oppression and exploitation.

2) Struggle for independence : For almost a century, there was a

continuous struggle for the recovery of the countries' independence. Vietnam always led the fight. Unfortunately, in 1945, Vietnam's independence fell into the Communists' hands.

3) 9-year war : During nine years of war, France had more than once negotiated with the Vietnamese nation-

alists and two accords had come about (Accord of March 6, 1946 and Agreement of March 3, 1946) in which France recognized Vietnam to be a free and independent state. But the accords were never totally carried out.

4) Geneva Conference : In the Summer of 1954, the French and the Vietnamese Communists brought the Vietnamese problem before the a world court of arbitration in Geneva, with the participation of Great Britain, the United States, the URSR and all those involved.

5) Geneva Accords : The results were announced early in the morning of July 21, 1954: the great nations of the world had decided to divide Vietnam into two, the northern part for the Communists and the southern part for the nationalists.

Representatives at the Geneva Conference may be divided into four groups: the Sino-Soviet group, the Anglo-French group, the minority group of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, and finally the outsider U.S. delegation which formed an isolated group in itself.

The first two groups worked hand in hand during the 86 days of the conference whereas the Vietnamese Communists referred to the decisions and advices of their great brother countries.

Since the beginning of the conference, the U.S. had apprehensions and

misgivings over the somewhat pro-Communist attitude of the French and the British.

Cambodia and Laos were much luckier than Vietnam which was considered as the center of the discussions. The Vietnamese nationalist government was kept in the dark although the French government had repeatedly declared that Vietnam would be informed in advance of any decision concerning its internal or external affairs.

The partition of Vietnam decided upon at the Geneva conference reflected the policy of the Soviets and the U.S.

The main and essential motivation of the conference was the change of the Communist tactics at that time.

Instead of pushing their attacks down the Indochinese territory, the Communists had to accept an armistice as they did in Korea.

In fact, the Soviet tactics were to only instigate rebellions but not to openly support them. And when there was or they felt there was vigorous reaction from the Western nations, the Soviets intervened and called for an armistice.

The situation was truer when the USSR realized that they had failed in weakening the hostile forces, in creating trouble and confusion among the people and the government of

the hostile country and in undermining the unity and cooperation between the Allied countries.

In Indochina, there was growing discontent of the people who had become impatient after nine years of war. Their Communist leaders' promises of freedom and happiness did not materialize. The nation's vitality was visibly running out and a «I don't care» attitude on the part of the people prevailed. The people's inrush to towns and cities, and the return of peasants to their native villages in the French occupied zones indicated that the people were really tired of the war.

The resistance movement led by the Communists would have lost all its meaning and would have been dismissed if the French had been honest in the agreements signed with the nationalists and if they were really willing to give complete independence to Vietnam. French narrow-mindedness was the cause of France's defeat.

The Dien Bien Phu catastrophe did seriously affect the political prestige of France which had been weakened year after year by the long and costly Indochina war. France had also met with serious troubles in its political system characterized by fifty government changes since its liberation.

To Moscow, the Indochina war was but a mere trifle. However, it ran the

risk of becoming an international war if the French Expeditionary Corps was crushed to pieces by the increasing strength of the Viet Minh forces. In the event of such a defeat on the part of the French, it would be very likely that the U.S. would interfere and the war could be turned into another Korea. To avoid this risk, and to swallow up one half of Indochina and at the same time to undermine the unity of Allied nations, the USSR had openly favored an armistice between the French and the Vietnamese Communists. The USSR would also have North Vietnam as a bridgehead for its expansion over all South East Asia.

Since 1954, there had been serious differences of viewpoints between the U.S. and Great Britain. Even the British participation in the Korean war had not relaxed to any appreciable extent the often tense relations between the two countries. There had been evidences that Great Britain was getting closer to Red China despite the warning of the U.S. Moreover, Great Britain also attempted to court the USSR to maintain its position in the world.

It was also Great Britain which had advised France to enter into negotiations with the Vietnamese Communists.

The Indochina war had brought Great Britain even closer to its

Communist Chinese customers. As a result, after the Geneva Conference, Great Britain had obtained new promises from Red China to abandon the local Communist movement in Malaya or in any other British colonies.

For the United States, the Indochinese war was an anti-Communist war and the French defeat and the negotiations with the Communist meant a defeat for the Free World.

After the armistice, the U.S. was apparently isolated while Great Britain, France, Red China and the USSR had had their shares. This situation pushed the U.S. to strengthen its relations with Bonn, Yugoslavia, Spain, to increase its support to Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, etc., and to speed up its defense programs in South East and Nord East Asia.

In this connection, it would be useful to recall that the Colombo bloc had not participated in these defense programs for fear of impairing its good neighbour policy with the Communist countries in Asia.

The USSR also poured out sweet words promising the French that it would not oppose French presence in Vietnam and the participation of the Viet Minh in the French Union.

Did the Viet Minh participate in the the French Union of the French Fourth Republic?

JULY 20th...

The French Union was but a collective name to designate the remaining French colonies. With its military strength, its actual position and prestige, the Viet Minh could not be considered as a colony, even if it were admitted into the French Union.

As a member of the French Union, not only would it lose anything but on the contrary, it would be free to carry out its Communist activities and to raise its prestige in the French colonies, thus gradually destroying the prestige of France within the French Union.

The Viet Minh's participation in the French Union might also serve as a shield to prevent direct American intervention in Indochina. That was why the Viet Minh decided to stick to the French who, in turn, were given promises on the safeguard of their cultural and economic interests in Vietnam.

In the meantime, the Vietnam-France Association was re-established in Hanoi by the Viet Minh.

From the foregoing, one can discern the subtlety of the Soviet plan for dividing Great Britain, the U.S

and France. It can be said that the Geneva Conference had been created by France, Great Britain, Red China and the USSR, who had arranged between themselves to prevent the American reaction and intervention in the Indochinese problems.

The U.S. plan to build an iron chain running from Japan through Taiwan and the Philippines and down to the Indian Ocean had been breached in many places.

The defeat of the French in Indochina was somewhat a defeat of the U.S. itself and had affected the American influence in the Far East and South East Asia.

For the United States, the question was to seek to reinforce the defensive forces in South East Asia the fate of which was closely connected to the future of the United States and its Asian Allies.

Moreover, with its 700 million people, South East Asia actually constitutes a decisive factor in the balance of power between the two giant blocs of the world.

The 1st Visit of a VN Diplomat to the US

The first Vietnamese to set foot in America was a man named Bui-Viên. He was born in the village of Trinh-Phô in Thai-Binh province, North Vietnam, of a family of scholars. He received his first academic degree in 1864 in the reign of Emperor Tu-Duc, and his second degree in 1868.

On the same year Bui-Viên went to Huế, the capital to pursue his studies at the Imperial Academy where he was hospitably received by the Officer of Ceremonies, Vu-duy-Thanh. During Bui-Viên's stay in Huế, he became acquainted with Lê-Tuân, Under-secretary at the Ministry of Ceremonies. This acquaintance led to his career at the Court of the Emperor Tu-Duc.

The Emperor, troubled by the banditry in North Vietnam of the Black Flag troop of Luu-vinh-Phuc and the Yellow Flag troops of Hoàng-sung-Anh, sent an army commanded by Bui-Viên's patron, Lê-Tuân, to fight them. Lê-Tuân, however, being a native of Central Vietnam, knew nothing about North Vietnam and so asked Bui-Viên to accompany him as his adviser. Thanks to Bui-Viên's valuable cooperation, Lê-Tuân achieved great success against the bandits, and the Court was soon aware of Bui-Viên's presence in the shade of Lê-Tuân.

Then, Doan-Uân, Commissioner-general for Land Development in Nam-Dinh, charged Bui-Viên with the development of what is now the province of Hai-Phong, and Bui-Viên carried out his assignment with great success.

Consequently, in 1973, when Vietnam was disputing France's right to extend her control over all VN, the Emperor chose Bui-Viên to go on a mission abroad for the purpose of enlisting the help of the United States. Bui-Viên was well aware of the difficulties confronting him, but was also determined to overcome them as shown in these lines dedicated to his fellow countrymen:

Quý phụ minh triều sī,
Phiên tông hải quốc du du.
Binh sơn hồng nhật cận,
Thân thể cương thường trọng,
Thê hàng bạt thiệp du.
Hoàng linh phong lạng lạng thiệp,
Thu thủy nhất hành chu.

I am ashamed to bear the reputation of an erudite
scholar of the Court, who,
Condescending, will travel to maritime countries.
The red sun approaches Mt. Bình ;
The white clouds float over Côi Peak
A person's status, his social connections, and his
duties are a weight upon one.
Climbing mountains and voyaging seas, wading lakes
and fording rivers excite anxiety.
But under the spiritual guidance of the Emperor of
Heaven, I submit to the winds and waves.
Once launched upon the autumnal waters, my boat
will make headway.

The Emperor Tu-DUC summoned Bui-Viên to a private audience at the pagoda of Mt. Thuy-Vân near the sea, one of the most picturesque sites of the old imperial capital, as shown in the following poem by Emperor Thiệu-Tri:

Tích thủy toàn nguyên bất kể xuân,
Cầu long ẩn phục liệt lân tuân.
Huệ phong chung độ u lâm hưởng,
Không cốc hương la pháp hải tân.
Thụ luyện từ vân phù bích lạc,
Kính xuyên tăng tử tạp hồng trần,
Thánh duyên phở tế hàm quy thiện.
Phật tích tăng quang tự hữu nhân.

For countless springs those peaked blue-green moun-
tains have been in existence ;
In a series of their rugged places horned dragons
conceal themselves and ambush travelers.
The gracious winds carry the echo of bells into
the somber forest ;
The hollowed-out grottoes diffuse a fragrance over
the Buddhist seaport.
The trees enmesh the kindly clouds floating beneath
the blue sky ;
The by-ways bear the imprint of the bonze's san-
dals upon the red-brown earth.
The King's grace everywhere helps all men to return
to virtue ;

The footsteps of Buddha have in themselves the power to make the light of intelligence glow more brightly.

In granting Bui-Viên a private audience, the Emperor Tu-Duc wanted to show his high esteem for the scholar and at the same time to command him to do his best on his mission abroad to preserve the freedom of Vietnam.

Setting out in a small ship, Bui-Viên arrived ten days later in Hong-Kong, which was already a British colony and the meeting place of ships from all over the world. The Vietnamese scholar, eager for knowledge, was delighted to see so many new sights and faces; and he determined to do all he could to bring about closer and more frequent contact between his country and the West. Having made the acquaintance of the American consul in HongKong, a man whose mother was Chinese, Bui-Viên decided to try, on his country's behalf, to establish relations with the United States of America. The American consul, who was sympathetic to the Vietnamese patriot's project, had acquainted him with American people for their independence. For his part, Bui-Viên confided in the consul and told him the situation of Vietnam and the purpose of his journey. He had already realized that he could not expect any help from China — indeed the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ly-hông-Chuong, had told him that China was having too much trouble of her own to become interested in the fate of another country.

In the winter of 1873, Bui-Viên set sail by way of Japan for America, determined to put his country's case directly before President Ulysses S. Grant from Yokohama where the scholar had rested for a few days before he left for San Francisco. There he visited some person recommended to him by his American friend in Hong Kong and then started off across the country for Washington.

The journey was a difficult one for a man who knew neither the country nor the language, but, armed with several letters of recommendation and a firm resolution to help his country, Bui-Viên visited a number of American cities. He studied American customs, took great interest in American technical and scientific achievements, and made friends with many people.

At last he arrived in Washington. After the protracted and difficult matter of going through channels, during which Bui-Viên displayed great tact and patience, he was formally received by President Grant. The Vietnamese patriot was assured of American interest and assistance provided he would present credentials which would enable President Grant to justify to the American Congress any action he might undertake

in Vietnam's behalf. Bui Viên left for home to ask the Emperor Tu Duc to provide him with the all-important diplomatic documents. On his way, he was informed, however, that new political circumstances would not permit the President to give the assistance he had promised, and Bui Vien, sad at heart, saws his dream of American aid for Vietnam fade away. If he was living today, he would have seen his dream come true after all

Back in Yokohama, Bui Vien and his friend, the American consul, met again for a brief time, and, before parting for ever, exchanged poems, written in Chinese, which expressed their feelings. Bui Vien wrote :

Lý chúc Hành-Tân cửu nguyệt thu,
Nam vân hồi thủ chính du du.
Ba đảo mộng tình sinh tân hứng,
Thủy thò hoài tâm ức cựu du.
Ca vũ tăng đài kim hải quốc,
Phồn hoa nhân vật cũ bồng châu.
Vi hoan tự tích hoàn vi biệt,
Tiên lữ ! hà niên cộng phiến chu ?

We pour out wine into glasses at Yokohama in the
ninth month of autumn.
Turning my head towards the clouds of Vietnam,
I feel extremely anxious about my country.
Waves and billows, dreaming and waking engender
new enthusiasm in me.
Sea and land, memory and emotion remind me of
my former journeys.
Palaces of song and dance, many stories high, now
exist among the maritime countries;
Famous persons once existed with pomp and gaiety
in the Fairy Islands.
Enjoying myself with you, I regret all the more that
we must part.
Spiritual companion! in what year will we be together
in the same sampan?

The poem written by Bui-Viên's friend was the following :

Hoành kiêu liễu sắc tiêm ly thu.
Ác thủ phân trình vạn lý du.
Cựu ước hoa Thành ưng viễn phỏng,
Kỳ phùng Tiên Đảo cách huê du.
Nguyệt lương khách ý phi tam nhật,
Hồ hải quân tâm hữu tứ châu.
Liên đắc minh triều tương ức xứ,
Trùng dương vân thủy các cô chu.

The colors of the willow near the Yokohama Bridge
 little by little are leaving at the end of autumn ;
 Shaking hands, we shall soon separate, our roads
 myriad leagues apart.
 Our old promise to each other in the Flower City
 (Washington) makes it right to ask of news
 from afar.
 Our unexpected meeting in the Fairy Islands (Japan)
 does not mean, however, that we can go
 our travels side by side.
 Under the moon and on the bridge for three days,
 my will grew weak with sadness ;
 On lakes and seas your heart grew strong with love
 for these four islands.
 So be it ! tomorrow morning we shall both
 remember this place
 On the ocean each boat alone will face into
 the cloudhigh waves.

From Yokohama, Bui Vien went back to Hue where
 to the Emperor Tu Duc, he made a detailed report of his mis-
 sion. The Emperor was overcome at hearing of the unfortu-
 nate turn that Bui Vien's mission had taken, but acknowledging
 his merits, praised him in these words :

Trầm ư tử vị hữu thân ân nghĩa.
 Tử nãi dĩ quốc an ; nãi bảo gia an.
 Thâm đồ, viễn lự.
 Quỷ thần đương diệc giám chi !

Though I did not give you any personal favor or
 affections
 Nevertheless, you brought peace to the nation,
 nevertheless, you preserved the peace of the home.
 You pondered deeply, you planned far ahead,
 Demons and gods ought also to remark your deeds !

Bui Vien still continued to serve his Emperor and his
 country. As Director-general of Customs, he organized a power-
 ful fleet to disperse the pirates who infested the waters adjacent
 to Vietnam. And because of his success in suppressing
 smuggling, the Emperor appointed him Admiral of the Mer-
 chant Service.

In the fighting with the pirates many of Bui Vien
 sailors were killed. He saw to it that these brave men had
 military funerals and asked the Court to grant substantial
 pensions to their widows. He himself wrote funeral orations,
 composing the following lines :

Người sống ở đời,
 Tiếng thơm là trọng.
 Chết mà phải nghĩa,
 Chết cũng như sống.
 Thủy đùng đoàn ta
 Hào hiệp cùng lòng.

 Nói đến hai anh,
 Lòng riêng rầu rĩ
 Vài tuần rượu viếng,
 Một mối tình sâu.
 Hồn thiêng phách sáng.
 Chúng giám cho nhau !
 Ô hô ! thượng hưởng !

To man living in this world
 Fame is important.
 If he dies doing his duty, as is proper,
 Then dead, he is still alive.
 So the valiant sailors of our crew
 All shared the same chivalrous heart.

.
 Speaking of two of you particularly,
 I feel a sadness in the very depths of my heart.
 As I pour some two libations of rice spirits,
 I visit your soul —
 One tie of deep love between us.
 May your spiritual souls and your bright ani-
 mal souls.
 Witness and remark my outpourings !
 Alas ! So be it !

On the first day of the 11th month in the 31st year (1878)
 of Tu-Duc's reign, Bui-Vien died suddenly. The Court was
 struck with dismay at the news of his death, and the
 whole country mourned for him. Nguyễn Tu Gian expressed
 his sorrow in these lines :

Tha sinh hoặc vị vong gia quốc,
 Tráng chí không lân phó hải sơn.

In another life, perhaps you will not yet have for-
 gotten your home and your country:
 Your strong resolution you entrusted, in self-
 sacrifice, to her seas and mountains

(Continued on page 25)

VIETNAM'S PEASANT ARMY

With his sense of humour which was his inheritance, the great writer Bernard Shaw once said: « How could the Germans not hate us while Dr Gobbels' broadcasts tell them daily that we are a danger for their tranquillity ? ».

« Not knowing us, they fancy that we wish them a terrible death. They are attacking us because they are convinced they are defending themselves. These misunderstandings set apart, Germans are pacifists ... »

It is a prodigious feat to be able to define a whole frame of mind in so few words. The conclusion is : to like a people, one must first understand them. To understand a people one should study not only their social behaviour and their moral life but also their political and military set-up throughout their history.

What does the history of VN show ?

It says that for centuries his country has had to defend itself against bellicose and greedy neighbors who never ceased to make capital out of it and, further, to impose upon it modes of life contrary to its normal trends : China and Champa.

To defend the national patrimony, those who held power had to main-



tain permanently an army capable of facing all situations. This was no easy task. As a matter of fact, to protect the Northern frontier alone, a minimum of one hundred thousand men were needed. With Vietnam's size, an army of such strength would have been financially out of proportion. Instead of burdening the people with unpopular taxes the nation's great monarchs chose to have an army of peasant-soldiers, serving by rotation. Thus they had at all times a sufficient number of men to cope with any situation, the

major part of the army being mobilized in case of emergency.

King Dinh Tien Hoang had about a million trained men serving, according to the records of his time. Ngo Thi Si, the great Vietnamese historian, says that the major part of this formidable manpower pursued agricultural activities in peacetime. They constituted a reserve which could be mobilized in case of invasion.

Under the Le dynasty, the period of compulsory military service consisted of five terms. When the soldiers of

(Continued on page 18)

HUNGER STRIKE

May will stay in the history of VN as the month of «hunger strikes».

A review of the hunger strikes held in May alone will give us a complete picture of this socio-political phenomenon entitled now to an honorable place in the overall non-violent struggle strategy of the modern political war.

As shown in the pictures, they involve the young and the old, boys and girls, men and women, the rich and the poor, laymen and religious dignitaries.

They are carried out under all forms: sitting, standing, lying down, sleeping, chatting, silence, meditating, praying, may be insulting too. They are performed with one individual alone, in groups of four or five, ten or twenty, some time «en masse», some times on a local scale, other times as a nation-wide campaign.

What are the goals of hunger strikes?

They are first of all the expression of a protest; then they are an efficient propaganda medium. They are also a peaceful assault against the opponent and a challenge to the enemy.

How effective are they in this country?

They are rather efficient here because the Vietnamese people is a very sentimental people who easily sympathize with the «oppressed», the weak, the unhappy, particularly with children and women.

What is the feeling of the strikers?

It is your own feeling when you are on a «hunger strike» at home. You feel very uneasy, but you don't eat unless Madame insists. If she doesn't urge you passionately, you leave the house and eat elsewhere.



In a pagoda in Gia Dinh near Saigon (May 19)



Bonzes' strike at the Vien Hoa Dao (May 18)



Dalat students (May 4)

Nuns at the Vien Hoa Dao before the strike (May 18)



Ven. Tâm Giác, head of the Buddhist Chaplaincy, encouraged Buddhist chaplains before they entered «hunger strike». (May 18)



Workers' children strike for their parents, in connection with a labor dispute. (May 13)



Nuns at the Viên Hoa Dao (May 18)

VN's Peasant Army

(From page 15)

the first echelon were in service, those of the five others were in the field, and so on by rotation. This wise and humane measure, which recalls the modern system of conscription, provided the country against labor shortage or excessive taxation.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE VIETNAMESE ARMY SINCE THE Xth CENTURY

Soldiering was first taught to the Vietnamese by a Chinese Prefect. This militia of foreign formation was to be replaced by a truly national army only in the Xth century. The credit for this went to Dinh Tien Hoang who founded a dynasty. It was he who first divided the territory into ten Dao, each Dao into ten Lu, each Lu into ten Tot and each Tot into ten Ngu. Each Ngu had to give ten men fit for military duty who went through a period of intense training as soon as they were enlisted. So Dinh Tien Hoang was the first monarch to have an army of a million men.

In 1028, Emperor Ly Thai Ton found it suitable to set up an Imperial Guard consisting of ten companies or Ve of 200 men each. This crack formation consisted solely of real athletes. Thoroughly mobile, it could fight from a distance with particularly powerful cross-bows.

Under the dynasty of the Tran, in the XIIIth century, important changes were made in the organization of the Vietnamese army. Thus, it was decided that the War Establishment would never drop below a hundred thousand men who were distributed among the Cam Quan to defend the palace, the Chu lo Quan to defend the provinces and the En Binh Hai Quan (a kind of marines) entrusted with the defense of the water fronts.

This army was subdivided into Quans of 2400 men each and Quan into Dos of 80 men.

A noteworthy fact is that it was during this period that a police regiment or Chu Lo Quan was first set up a sort of military police for the maintenance of order among the troops.

It was Tran Nhan Ton who, through his various reorganizations of the army enabled his nephew the renowned General Tran Quoc Tuan, to defeat the Tartar troops of Omar and Sogatsu.

CREATION OF A CENTRAL MARSHALSHIP

In 1466, Le Thanh Ton divided the army into five Phus or Corps. The whole outfit was placed under a Supreme Command or Marshalship of the Center. The four other Phus were named after the four cardinal points:

Nam, Bac, Tay, Dong. The Nam Phu was therefore divided among the Southern provinces. Each Phu was commanded by a Marshal or Do Doc who received orders directly from Central Marshalship.

The king had also four thousand galleys of 52 oars each with cannons and a certain number of elephants.

Recruiting took place at that time once every six years.

As for the Phu or Corps, it was subdivided into six Ves or regiments, each Ve into six Sos or battalions of 400 men.

Each marshal or Do Doc commanding an army corps had a deputy Do Doc Dong Tri, who, in his turn, was assisted by a Do Doc Thiem Su.

Each Ve was under a Tong Tri, a kind of colonel, having as deputies a Dong Tong Tri and a Thiem Tong Tri. The Sos were under Lanh Binh having Vo Uys as deputies. The Sos were subdivided into Ngus Commanded by Tong Cos.

The Imperial Guard created by Ly Thai Ton kept its name of Thanh Tuy Cuoc and was placed under the orders of a Do Tri who was assisted by two Giams.

ORGANIZATION OF ARMY QUARTERMASTER CORPS

It is interesting, to note that, as early as that time, the Vietnamese had a Quartermaster Corps, though the Chinese Army even at the beginning of the XXth century used to live upon the production of its place of assignment.

There were then two kinds of Army

Supply convoys : land and river convoys. Each Phu had two companies of carts or Xa Dois consisting each of 50 men commanded by a Doi Trung. Each Xa Doi had 37 carts and 80 buffaloes, plus a reserve of six buffaloes.

THE ADVENT OF FIREARMS

It was in the XVIIIth century that the use of small firearms was first noted. Soldiers were then armed with a musket and a lance of pike. During the same time the royal galleys had three cannons, one astern and two at the prow.

CHANGES ORDERED BY GIA-LONG

Gia Long, who restored Vietnam's independence from China, changed the structure of the National Army. First, he increased the strength of the Imperial Guard which was raised to 30.000 men, while the remainder was divided into forty regiments, i. e. five corps.

Each corps or Quan consisted of eight regiments, all with elephants. There were more than five divisions of five regiments each not including the provincial forces.

At the top were the five marshals or Ngu Quans who were under the Supreme Command of the Chief Marshal or Trung Quan. The four other Senior Officers commanded : the right wing army or Huu Quan, the left wing army or Ta Quan, the vanguard or Tien Quan and the rearguard or

Hau Quan. Under them were De Docs or generals.

From then on, the organization of the command became more similar to the modern system and it was the mobility of the army which enabled Gia Long to win his victories. In fact, each general had colonels or Chanh Lanh Binh's, Lt-col. (Pho Lanh Binh), majors and captains under his orders. Each colonel commanded seven companies or regiments, — i.e. a total of about 3,500 men. The smallest unit of the army was a group of ten men (Thap). Each

Thap was headed by a Ngu Truong.

Rank insignias were worn on the chest. They were generally a square piece of fabric on which were embroidered various symbols denoting a mandarin's rank. The insignias were called Bo Tuus. The marshals had a unicorn, or Ky Lan as insignia. A mythological animal, the Bach Trach, was for the generals.

The style of the military mandarin's uniform was ruled by official decree, minutely describing the pattern of each uniform.



COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS

Another noteworthy fact about the structure of the Vietnamese Army was that as early as 1028, soldiers could sit at competitive examinations for promotion, while in France, for example, it was not before the Revolution of 1789 that any soldier could have the chance of being promoted to higher rank.

As early as in 1723, King Du Ton outlined the broad principles of military examinations which were to be held once every three years. They were held in two steps, first at the regional level, then at the capital city level.

The provincial level dealt with the rudiments of a soldier's profession. Successful candidates received the title of Vien Binh.

The senior examinations held in the capital dealt with the «seven military missions». They included analysis and comments. Successful candidates were promoted to the rank of Tao Ky.

Later, physical training exercises were included in the oral and written examinations. During the second-year course, the candidate had to wield a strong cross-bow of 28 kilos and fence with a scimitar of 30 kilos. He also had to hit a target with a bow while astride a trotting horse.

THE TWO MILITARY ACADEMIES

Success at the various examinations did not always mean admittance to the Cadet Officers' Schools which were only open to sons of mandarins who

had a general education. The An Danh Military Academy was open only to sons of senior military mandarins having a sound general education and conversant with the Chinese alphabet. The program of studies included strategy in mass warfare, tactics, knowledge of the different kinds of forts. ~~The trainees were also taught fencing.~~ At the end of the three-year course, successful candidates became captains and were assigned to a regular unit.

At the Giao Duong Academy only sons of military mandarin's who had qualified as captains were admitted.

Here the training lasted six years and the program of studies included psychology and the art of commanding men. Outlines of meteorology were taught. Those were meant to enable the students to forecast the weather and the dates of important battles. For instance a rainbow seen in the sky had a particular meaning; the sight of two rainbows, another meaning.

According to one of the precepts, if a cloud in the shape of a soldier carrying a lance were seen in a particular direction, then an attack that way had to be postponed for at least 24 hours, as it was a bad omen.

THE MODERN ARMY OF VIETNAM AND ITS SPIRIT

It can be said that during the French occupation there was no Vietnamese army in the strict sense of the word, as France had the responsibility of defending Vietnam,

It was only when Vietnam really won her independence that a great Vietnamese army was built up. For the historians of tomorrow its hasty formation will remain a mystery. There will be the need to consider not only making of the combatant a technician capable of using the many modern weapons but also training officers capable of maneuvering masses of men.

This army has not only closed the imaginary frontier of the XVIIIth parallel set up by the Geneva agreements but has also checked all internal rebellions.

It has caused the admiration of the world, for the effort demanded from this young army has been considerable. It had to deal with operations of unthinkable complexity.

This is understandable from what has been written above. It is because once more the country has appealed to its peasant-soldiers that have survived the disasters which seemed to be in store.

These men made an exact appraisal of the situation. Once more in defending the national patrimony they felt that it was their own paddy fields and their own households they were defending against the cupidity of the enemy.

As R. P. Alexandre de Rhodes, the inventor of the romanized Vietnamese alphabet, once put it, the Vietnamese soldier has always been known to be courageous and humane at the same time. This is certainly due to the fact that throughout the centuries he has been deeply rooted to his native soil.

★

Communist North Vietnam has a regime it calls a popular democracy or people's democracy.

To the Vietnamese Communists, the people are the labor and farming classes who make up the Labor Party, affiliated to the Indochinese Communist Party created in Vietnam in 1930.

In accordance with the above definition of « the people », the Vietnamese Communists organize their administrative machinery with the Party, — representing the people, — governing and handling public powers.

With a leader at the head of the party, the administrative structure of NVN is a 3-level organization :

« Uncle Hồ » leader at the top, then the Party, then the Government.

The above formula indicates there is not a separation of powers in North Vietnam ; there is however a division of responsibilities :

Organs such as the National Assembly, the Government Council (Hội

Beyond the 17th Parallel

N V N Administrative Organization

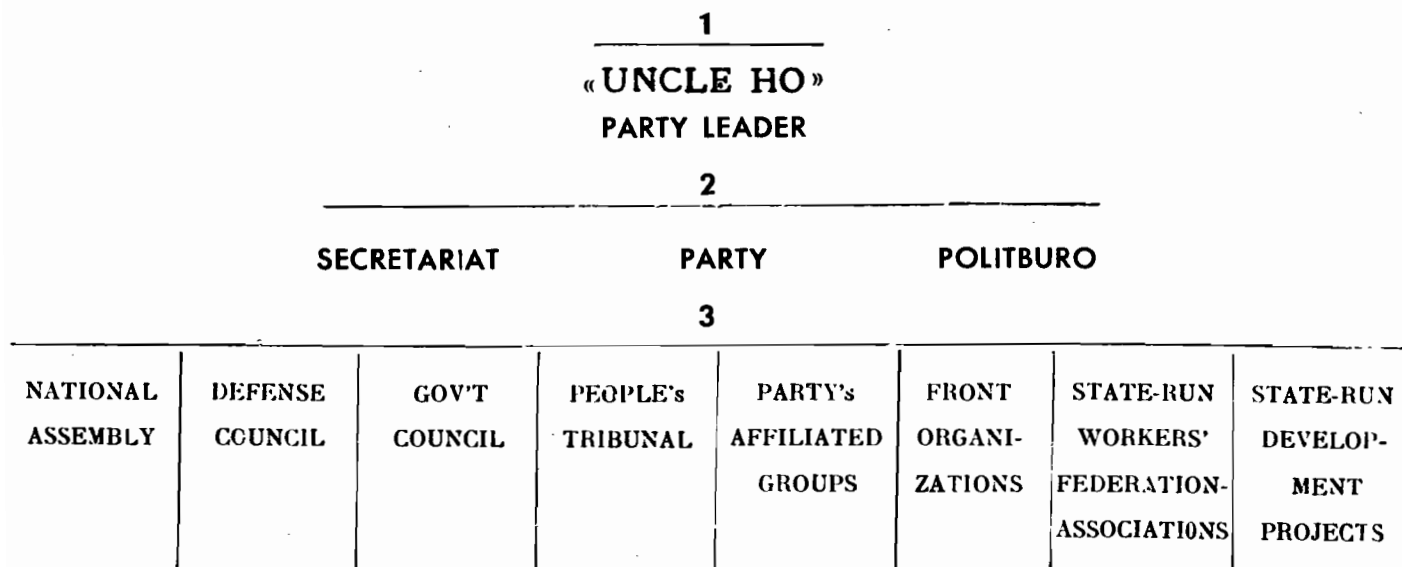
Dòng Chính Phủ) tribunals and the Popular Constitutional Supervisory Institute (Viên Kiểm Sát Nhân Dân) are but executive outfits, whose duties are to carry out orders and implement plans of the authorities as conceived by the Party.

Another fact is : all the Ministers and Heads of Government's Committees are at the same times Commissioners of the Party's Executive Committee and deputies of the National Assembly. It is then obvious that there is no separation of powers since one individual can assume concurrently legislative, executive and supervisory functions.

North Vietnam Constitution stipulates however that the National Assembly elects the Country's President and the President selects the Prime Minister. Naturally, that is pure theory, because practically « uncle Hồ », the Party Leader had elected himself President and will remain as such surely for life.

We may then conclude that words such as « people », « democracy », « election », ...are just devices exploited by a minority of Communists to establish a totalitarian regime. The people become instruments of production for the exclusive benefit of the Party.

THE 3 - LEVEL STRUCTURE



(NVN) LABOR PARTY
CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President : HO CHI MINH
Confirmed members : 43
Reserve members : 28

POLITBURO

Confirmed members : 11
Reserve members : 2

SECRETARIAT

First Secretary : Le Duân
Staff members : 6

— Party's Affiliated Groups

- Socialist Party
- Democratic Party

— Fronts

- Fatherland's Front
- National Liberation Front of South Vietnam

— Govt-run Workers' Federation — Associations

- Workers' Federation
- Labor Youth Groups (Men and Women)

— Govt-run business establishments

- Trade
- Collective farms and industrial zones
- Industrial plants

- National Assembly
- Government Council
- Defense Council
- People's Court

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The present North Vietnam National Assembly is composed of 453 deputies including ;

- ★ 362 deputies elected by the people of North Vietnam,
- ★ 91 deputies of South Vietnam, elected in 1946 and still maintained in the Assembly to represent the people of the South.

The territory of North Vietnam is divided into 32 electoral districts; each 50,000 people is entitled to one deputy; the excess of over 25,000 people gives a district the right of one more deputy.

Industrial zones, collective farms and development areas directly controlled by the Party's Central Executive Committee enjoy the rate of one deputy for each 10,000 to 30,000 people.

The number of deputies represen-

ting tribal groups, the highlanders and minority races is 1/7 of the total number of deputies.

The National Assembly meets twice a year, otherwise it is represented by a standing committee.

There were altogether three elections of the National Assembly in North Vietnam in the years 1946, 1959 and 1963.

The National Assembly has a Presiding Board of 24 members with five secretaries.

The Standing Committee has a Chairman, six Vice Chairman, a Secretary General, a secretary, 14 members and two reserve members.

There are three technical committees under the Standing Committee :

— the Committee for Law Projects with a Chief of Committee and 12 members ;

— the Planning and Budget Committee manned as the previous one ;

— the National Unification Committee with a Committee Chief and 17 members.

THE GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

The Party Chairman is concurrently the Chairman of the Executive Branch and of the Defense Council.

The Prime Minister is answerable to the Party leader and the Executive organ.

Ministers only play an executive role : their duties are to implement plans drafted by various Party's Committees,

The Public Security Ministry topped the list of Ministries. The Ministries of Agriculture, of Collective Farms, of Hydro-electricity, of Heavy and Light Industries and of Construction come right after the Interior, Defense and Foreign Affairs Ministries.

This proves that North Vietnam is practicing the economic principles of Socialism in compliance with the following formula :

Using agriculture for impetus for industrial development through motorization, electrification and hydro-technics.

READ IN THE No. 1 ISSUE OF

The Free Observer

- Political positions of the Buddhists, the Catholics and the Government.
- V.C. New Terrorist Tactics.
- Why This War ?
- The Responsibility of the U.S. press in Vietnam.
- The First U.S. Visitor to Vietnam.
- From the Advisory Council to the Constitutional Assembly.

- North-South Fight or East-West Clash ?
- The Price of a Minister.
- The Full Meaning of Two Death Sentences.
- The Kennedy's and the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam of the V.C.
- The National Union Issue.
- Democracy in the Vietnamese Traditional Society.
- Chronology of Events of March 1966

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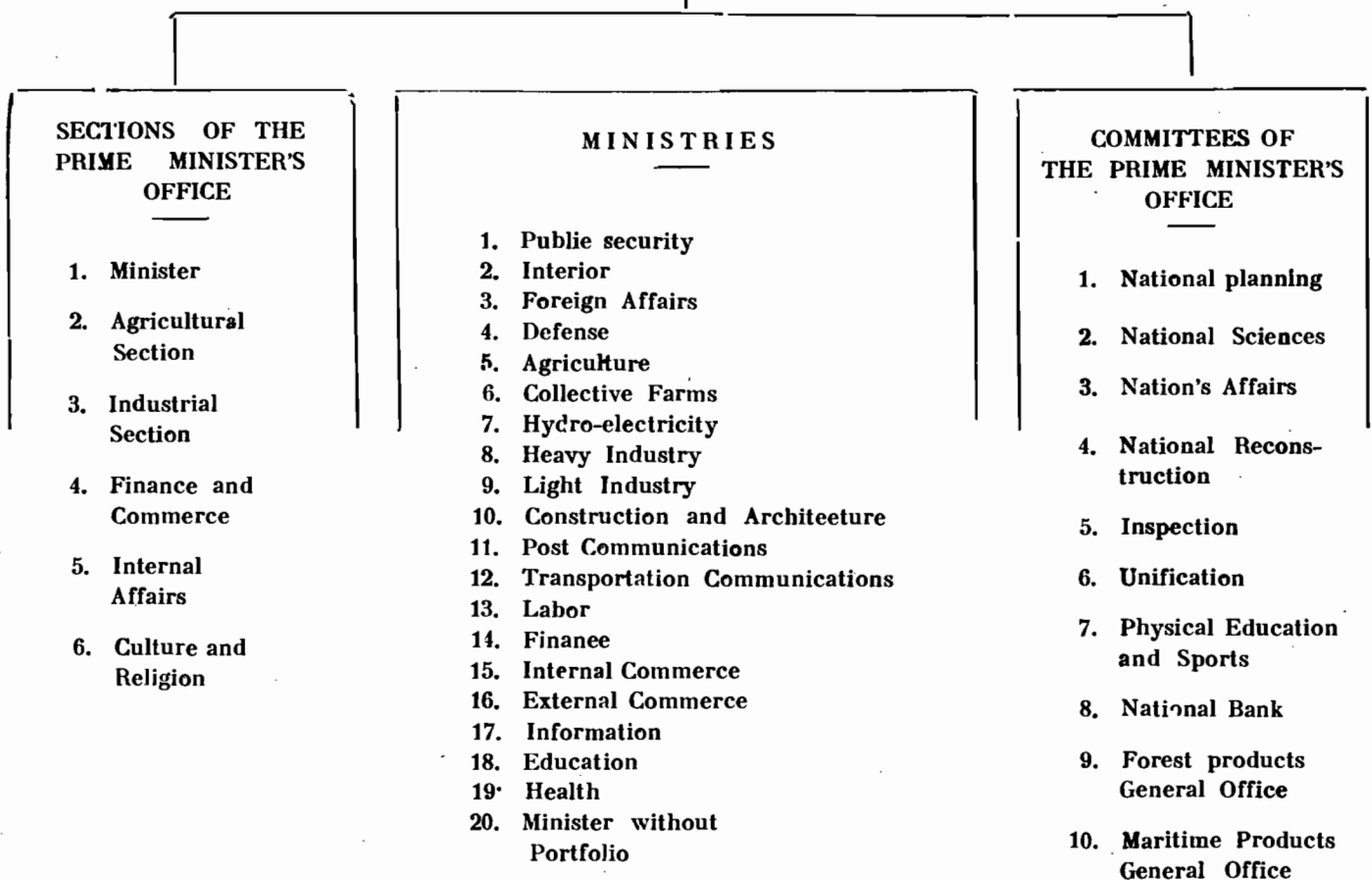
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The EXECUTIVE BRANCH

President	1
Vice President	1

The DEFENSE COUNCIL	
Chairman	1
Vice Chairmen	2
Members	6

The GOV'T COUNCIL	
Prime Minister	1
Vice Premiers	5



THE SUPREME CONSTITUTIONAL SUPERVISORY INSTITUTE

This Institute inspects the application of laws promulgated by the ruling authorities, the Government Council and the People's Court.

The Chairman of the Institute is designated or dismissed by the National Assembly.

Its Vice Chairman and staff members are nominated or removed by the National Assembly Standing Committee,

as proposed by the Chairman of this Committee.

THE SUPREME PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL

The principal judge of this tribunal is designated or dismissed by the National Assembly.

Its assistant principal judge and the judges staffing the Supreme Tribunal are nominated or removed by the National Assembly Standing Committee, as proposed by the Chairman of

this Committee.

The Judiciary organ of North Vietnam comprises then two organizations.

The Supreme Constitutional Institute with one Chairman, two Vice Chairmen, one Vice Chairman in charge of the Central Military Inspection Institute and five staff members.

The Supreme People's Tribunal, with one Principal Judge, one Deputy Principal Judge and 16 staff members who have the rank of judges too.

★

The 1st Visit...

(From page 14)

A high official of the Court also composed a memorial verse in Bui-Vien's honor :

Thôn thanh do thảo đặng tiền số ;

Tế chí nan thù hải ngoại du.

Your subdued words, still hesitant, present themselves before the lamps in the palace of the Emperor ;

Your concern for your country's safety, pledged to endure, travels yet beyond the seas.

Bui-Vien had a vision that looked far beyond seas and continents. He was probably the first Vietnamese who ventured to cross the vast Pacific seeking in the New World the help that would enable his beloved country to safeguard her independence. Bui-Vien's name, along with the names of John White and Edmund Roberts, shares a place of honor in the list of those who have sought to bring together East and West, Vietnam and the United States of America, in peace and friendship. ☆

Vietnamese riddles

1. A mother with millions of kids ; at daybreak, everyone is dead, except an old man with a grimacing face whom nobody dares to look at. What is this ?
2. It swings when it moves and becomes still when at home. What is this ?
3. What comes up from the earth with a hat ?

X

Please check answers in next issue.

MAY : A DECISIVE MONTH

The first half of May was rather calm. The second half was, on the contrary, probably the most agitated period of time since the Independence of Vietnam and the partition of the country 12 years ago.

The Buddhist struggle reached its climax during this period, with the use of all forms of violent and non-violent assaults against the country's military government and leaders. MAY might be called « a month of decision ».

CHRONOLOGY

MAY 1

MAY DAY— Economic crisis marked «May Day» march; troops cordoned U.S. Embassy as the celebration took anti-US overtones.

MAY 2

CATHOLICS— In Saigon and Quinhon, Catholics demonstrated to express «VN gratitude» to the Allied troops and denounce the Huế Buddhists.

MAY 4

KY-ELECTION — Ky said in Quang Ngai «we will try to hold the election by October.»

MAY 6

POLLS BODY — Chief of State Nguyen Van Thiêu signed a decree-law formalizing the creation of the Electoral Law Drafting Committee.

MAY 7

KY-GOV'D-NLC — PM KY said in Can Tho that his Government and the Directorate expected another year in office.

MAY 8

DALAT — 24 hour curfew was reimposed on Dalat to end anti-Gvt demonstrations there.

MAY 10

HAI RA TRUNG BLAST.— A Claymore mine blast near the Binh BOQ caused a mistaken shooting by U.S. Military Police. Gunfire killed five VN and wounded 21 others, and eight U.S. servicemen.

LODGE— U.S. Ambassador C. Lodge arrived in Washington for consultations with Pres. Johnson.

MAY 15

BUDDHIST YOUTH.— Saigon Po-

lice broke into the Buddhist youth Headquarters on Thien Vuong Street, Saigon at 3 a.m., arrested 20 persons and seized several important documents.

DANANG.— Danang local troops «spontaneously» moved to crackdown on the Danang (Buddhist) «Struggle Force» with the support of crack Marines units sent from Saigon.

The Danang «struggle force» had practically seized control of Danang since last March.

THIEU.— Lt. Gen. Nguyen Van Thiêu, Chairman of the NLC declared, in a broadcast over Saigon Radio, that the intervention of the government troops in Danang «only aimed at restoring peace and order,» prerequisite for a peaceful and democratic election».

CATHOLICS.— Catholics of the Chi Hoa district, 2 miles from downtown Saigon, staged a protest march.

ARMED FORCES COUNCIL, CAO — The Armed Forces Council held at the General Staff Command Headquarters appointed Maj. Gen. Huynh Van Cao Commander of the I Corps to replace Lt. Tôn Thất Dinh.

MAY 16

TRI QUANG.— Huế Radio broadcast what it said was a telegram sent by Tri Quang to President Johnson, calling for his intervention in the Vietnamese situation, especially the «Danang repression».

THIEN MINH.— Ven. Thiên Minh, requested the withdrawal of the ARVN Marines from Danang as a first step toward normalcy.

CATHOLICS.— The National Catholic Congress met in Saigon for two

days with the participation of representatives of all the Bishops of the 13 dioceses of South Vietnam and all the militant Catholic organizations.

A 7-man presidium was officially formed to command the Catholic Citizens Bloc created a month ago.

The Bloc will have two Secretaries General, one for the Presidium and one for the Bloc.

MAY 17

CAO — Gen. Huynh Van Cao made a brief visit to Hue by helicopter. Soon after takeoff from Hue, a dissident Lieutenant fired two pistol shots at his helicopter. A helicopter gunner fired back, killing the lieutenant. The general was unharmed.

TRAN QUANG THUAN — Professor Tran Quang Thuan, considered an unofficial spokesman for the Buddhist Church resigned from the Electoral Code Drafting Committee in protest against PM Ky's move against Danang.

ARMY AND POLITICS — Defense Ministry officially forbade political activities in the Army under whatever form. The role of religious chaplains will also be revised.

JOHNSON — In the face of mounting civil turmoil in VN, President Johnson called for continuous efforts toward unity of non-Communists against Communist aggression and the formation of a constitutional government.

MAY 18

KY AND DANANG — PM Ky said in Danang he does not feel it necessary to inform the United States of his political moves.

— Concerning the Danang operation, PM Ky made three points:

— It was essential because we could not have let this dissidence to go farther.

— There was a clear case of Communist subversion of the Buddhist movement and we had to stop it. If

(Continued on page 31)

— Television in VN —

(From page 8)

sion sets — one for Vietnam's Channel 9 and a separate one for Channel 11 — powered by a 100 kilowatt diesel generator bolted and nutted to the aircraft's tail section. Even with a 200 — gallon oil tank thrown in, there remained enough room for a little «studio». But the whole load had taken almost every pound of the plane's 40,000-pound capacity.

When the plane finally taxied down the Tan Son Nhut runway early January, the South Vietnamese Ministry of Information, in coordination with U.S.A.I.D. had a handful of receiver sets installed in places earlier selected for accessibility to big crowds.

The necessary test flights to determine the most effective flight pattern and flight area for the best possible reception postponed the previously announced TV premiere by Tet — the Vietnamese Lunar New Year holidays lasting from Jan. 21 to Jan. 23. But by Feb. 4, receiver sets had been properly attuned to an area southwest of Saigon where the planes were to fly. And Vietnam marked its breakthrough into the video age.

Not unusual for premiere nights, it was «standing room only» for the Vietnamese audiences, a slight inconvenience that will stay until tight foreign exchange restrictions relax to allow the availability of sets to private purchasers, but one which observably Vietnamese interest in their television will outlast.

To nurse local interest is the job of the National Movie Center which feeds the Vietnamese 7:30-8:30 p.m. hour on Channel 9 with newsreels, documentaries and variety shows. Here is where the Vietnamese shall wean

themselves soonest from American «involvement» in the project.

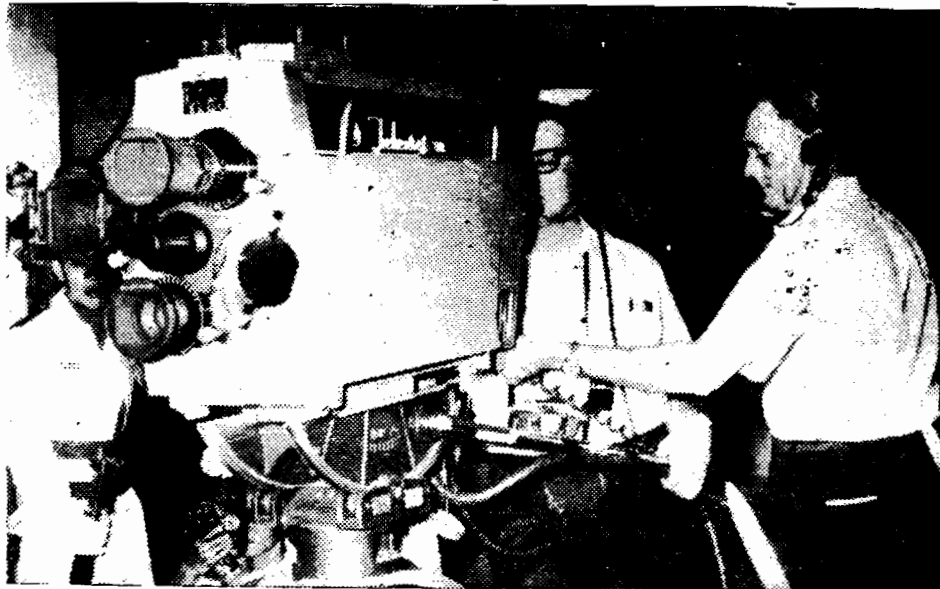
Barely sixty two days after Channel 9 went on the air, Vietnamese technicians were behind every knob and switch in canning a traditional poetry reading in video tape. American «advisors» who today still have to look over the Vietnamese technicians shoulders concede that in time, they shall soon, quite happily, lose their jobs.

There has been an increasing public demand to stretch the Vietnamese air time. The variety of Vietnamese entertainment forms — from dramas, comedies, the old-fashioned Chinese opera, the «reformed theatre» (Chinese opera with stronger Vietnamese overtones) to western rock'n roll — is rich enough to provide for such demands. But the way it is, Vietnamese production men are already caught in a hectic pace grinding out two shows a day. (Ed Sullivan takes a week for a one-hour show).

However, Channel 11, programmed especially for Americans here, gives Vietnamese fan additional fare until 11 p.m. Action features like «Combat», «Rawhide» and «Gunsmoke» provides the least barriers to hurdle, language-wise, and although English is still Greek to most Vietnamese, quite a few — stick around to catch Danny Kaye's gags flat on their faces.

There is little doubt in time, TVVN, hampered by a tight budget which is eaten up by some 20 troupes taking turns at the 15,000 piaster per show rate, not to mention the shortage of qualified personnel inherent to its infancy, will eventually hold its audiences longer with more shows.

Meanwhile the two U.S. Navy planes crewed by two flyers and five technicians and maintained by around 70 people, take whatever material the National Movie Center hand out for Channel 9 transmission — provided they get to the airport no later than 4 p.m.



T.V. TECHNICIANS AT WORK

Television in Viet-Nam

The aircraft's altitude of 10,000 feet does not only keep it out of combat air traffic and enemy ground fire but gives effective coverage to areas within 75 miles of its racetrack-shaped flight pattern southwest of the South Vietnam capital.

Sets in Binh Duong, Hau Nghia, Bien Hoa, Phuoc Tuy, Long An, Go Cong, Dinh Tuong, Kien Hoa, Gia Dinh, Kien Tuong, and Saigon-Cholon get relatively clear reception. Since, theoretically the signals are stronger as the plane is nearer the receiver set, the aircraft virtually gives away its flight pattern on the screen with the images fading somewhat as it goes further away and blinkers when the plane bank for a turn.

It is estimated that TV has reached an audience of at least 100,000 Vietnamese through sets installed in marked sites, public parks and squares, bus terminals, hospitals, factories and selected government buildings. The figure may appear rather bloated, but on occasions, as many as 500 have been gathered around one set. It is beside the point that a good portion of crowds that big will not have a idea of the whole proceedings on the screen. The fact remains that even if one sticks around to watch the TV watchers, there is something of a TV fan in himself too which will drive him up front next time.

Technical doubts have been raised on field reports by agents of the VN Ministry of Information that test sets

in Kien Giang, Bac Lieu and Chau Doc have been catching signals sharply too. But if postmarks mean anything, it is certain that Cambodia — at least a chunk of it close to its border with South Vietnam — tunes in on Vietnam's TV programs. National Movie Center people like to show a letter mailed there, presumably by a TV fan, requesting for more Chinese operas.

But of course, plans for future expansion, some phases of it already under way, leave out Cambodia. When the ground station on Hong Thap Tu street in Saigon finally rises from the blueprints, it will release the planes to other areas, in all probability Can Tho in the delta region where the next

ground station is contemplated. The aircraft in the same manner that it did in Saigon and eight outlying provinces, will also usher in the television age in the Central Vietnam region until ground stations are set up in Nha Trang and Hue-Danang. By that time, 2500 sets donated by the US government shall be in operation before Vietnamese audiences.

It is difficult to peg down the number of sets now attuned right to TVVN. Vietnamese newspapers carry ads of private individuals as well as established import-export firms, selling sets. Such transactions are neither encouraged nor discouraged by the Vietnamese government which to date has no foreign exchange regulation covering this specific item.

At most, this seems a safe gauge that television is in Vietnam to stay.

ANTI-AMERICANISM...

(From page 4)

«Anti-Americanism» is a catch phrase imported «ready-made to Vietnam.

If it could be given a clear definition, one which is applicable to a whole people, and if a thorough study of the problem could be achieved on the basis of that definition, we are sure that the phrase would become meaningless.

This problem however will remain unresolved because no one at this point wishes to waste his time to define words. It is easier for all to identify anti-Americanism with burning, ransacking, murdering, slogan shouting, demonstrating, hunger-striking, warning, protesting, petitioning, threatening...

It is for that reason that there is only one decision to make for both the Vietnamese and the American peoples and governments: **FORGET THE WORDS AND GO AHEAD WITH DEFEATING THE COMMUNISTS.**

The Vietnamese and the American peoples fight this war not for themselves only. They have a common responsibility with all the nations of the Free World and that is why they have the support of their Allies.

VICTORY is the word they should remember, not «anti» nor «pro».

MAY: A DECISIVE . . .

(From page 26)

we had not, even sending a million American troops to Vietnam would not help.

— The action was not a face saving device. It was an act to prevent secession.

BUDDHIST REAL DEMANDS — PM Ky said « they (Buddhist) wanted the Ministries of Information, Interior and Defense so they could control the election ».

VHD'S NON-CONFIDENCE — The Vien Hoa Dao's leaders announced their non-confidence in Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu. Chief of State and PM Nguyen Cao Ky.

HUNGER STRIKE — Twenty Buddhist monks and nuns started a 48 hour hunger strike at the Buddhist Institute and 13 Buddhist Chaplains in Saigon began a 24-hour hunger strike to protest the Danang operation.

TRI QUANG — Buddhist leader Thich Tri Quang made an radio appeal in Hue for Buddhists throughout the nation not to demonstrate. In Saigon, the VHD broadcast by loudspeakers the following statement of Tri Quang:

« There will be bloodshed as long as the regime of PM Nguyen Cao Ky remains in power ».

Tri Quang also sent a telegram to President Johnson urging him to step in and help stop the government move against Danang and other Buddhist facilities.

KY AND PAGODAS — PM Nguyen Cao Ky sent an official note to VHD requesting that pagodas in Dauang be cleared of armed groups, otherwise the Armed Forces should take appropriate measures to make these places clean for the worship of Buddha.

BREACH OF PROMISE — Ven. Thien Minh charged that the seizure of the Buddhist Youth headquarters and the Danang operation are « a breach of promise by the Government ».

JOHNSON INFORMED — At a press conference, Ven. Thien Minh read the text of a telegram sent by the VHD Council to U.S. President Johnson informing him of the decision of the Buddhist leaders to stage a general hunger strike to protest the government's actions.

MAY 19

DANANG — Gunfire broke out in Danang as government troops, inclu-

ding Marines and paratroopers, moved to seize dissident strong points. The government troops, led by tanks, faced

an estimated 1,000 insurgents dug in three pagodas.

DEMONSTRATION — A Buddhist demonstration in Saigon was dispersed by security forces using tear gas.

MAY 20

HUE — A crowd of about 4,000 soldiers and civilians listened to their leaders denounce Saigon authorities and pledge to resist any invasion of the Saigon government forces « with their last drop of blood ».

LODGE — U.S. Ambassador Cabot Lodge returned to Saigon after over a week's stay in Washington.

« I am very glad to be back here again in this country to which I am attached and in which I have been so much interested », the Ambassador told newsmen.

THIEN MINH, — commander of the Buddhist Struggle Forces, announced a 8 hour general hunger strike by bonzes and nuns on May 21 in protest of the « government betrayal » and « oppressive measures » in Danang and Saigon. At the same time, Thien Minh requested U.S. Ambassador Lodge to prevail on local government authorities against using American-supplied weapons and equipment against Buddhists.

BUDDHIST CHAPLAINS AND STUDENTS — The Buddhist Chaplains in Saigon and the « Van Hanh » Buddhist University students also announced they join the hunger strike by the Buddhist clergy on May 21.

Instructions were also sent to Buddhist chaplains all over the country to join the strike.

MAY 21

DANANG. — Government troops seized the Tan Ninh pagoda but did not attack the big Tinh Hoi pagoda.

Besieged Buddhist rebels in the Tinh Hoi pagoda appealed for U.S. Marines aid, saying they would « destroy » the airbase unless they got the aid.

KY — PM Nguyen Cao Ky warned, while on an inspection tour in the Tay Ninh province, that « as long as the War Cabinet remains in power, security and order should be restored anywhere, at any cost ».

Premier Ky held a closed-door conference with U.S. Ambassador Cabot Lodge.

ARMY-PEOPLE CONGRESS — The National Leadership Committee announced the convening of an Armed Forces-People Congress on May 24.

Gen. VINH LOC — Major Gen. Vinh Loc, II Corps area commander, urged his men to avoid a religious conflict in the rank of the Armed Forces. He wanted his men not to take any political and religious stand.

MAY 22

VIEN HOA DAO. — The Buddhist Institute was closed to the public starting May 22 « for Buddha birthday preparations ».

DEMONSTRATION — Buddhist demonstrations continued in the streets of Saigon.

MAY 23

DANANG — Dissident troops, flushed out of pagoda strongholds, marched out and switched over to the Government soldiers « en masse ».

MAYOR MAN — Danang Mayor Nguyen Van Man, a prime mover in the city's rebellious Struggle Committee, was captured and secretly taken to Saigon.

INNOCENT VICTIM — A Vietnamese soldier was shot dead near the gate of the VHD. Youths coming out from the VHD stopped a U.S. military jeep and an RMK-BRJ (an American construction company in Saigon) vehicle, flipped the vehicles over and burned them. The shot was confirmed later to come from an American tanker truck passing at full speed before the VHD.

BUDDHIST MEETING — The Vien Hoa Dao announced that it will organize a big meeting on May 25 which would be followed by a mass demonstration in the Saigon streets.

VHD — Strict security measures were enforced around the VHD. All the approaches to the Buddhist Institute were closed to traffic. This measure actually meant an isolation of the Buddhist hotbed.

CURFEW FOR AMERICANS — Curfew hours imposed by U.S. authorities on American militarymen and civilians were from 8:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

CHILDREN — The Saigon Prefecture urged parents to keep their children at home and to prevent them from taking part in demonstrations (just for pleasure).

THIEU — **KY AND CONGRESS** — At the « National Armed Forces and People Congress », Chief of State Nguyen Van Thieu explained that the operation in Danang was in the interests of the national security. He also voiced the

government's strong determination not to tolerate any attempt to create « a state within the State, a government within the Government and an army within the Army. »

Addressing the 1,200 congressmen, PM Ng-Cao-Ky affirmed that things were « looking up » in the country. Concerning Danang, the Premier defended the government's action as essential to preserve the nation's unity and said that he believed any country would act in the same way under the same circumstances.

He announced that the government's complete victory over dissident elements in Danang, who surrendered with 1,600 weapons.

The VHD boycotted the Congress.

STUDENTS — The Standing Committee of the Saigon University Students was deposed by a group of Buddhist students who called themselves the « Students Committee to Oppose Fratricidal War and to Protect Elections. »

The new group was holding a « sleepless night » at the student's headquarters when the old group staged a successful « counter-coup » without bloodshed.

MAY 24

DANANG — Two dissident military leaders who surrendered in Danang were flown to Saigon for interrogation. They were Lt. Col. Dam Quang Yen, former commander of the Quang Nam special sector and Major Ton Thât Tuong, who commanded the rebel troops in the Tinh Hôi pagoda in Danang.

NEW MAYOR — Lt. Colonel Le Chi Cuong, a paratrooper, was appointed Mayor of Danang to replace Nguyen Van Man.

TAM CHAU — In a cablegram from Bangkok addressed to all Buddhist monks, nuns and lay faithful, Ven. Tam Chau appealed for « tolerance and love ».

DEMONSTRATION — Several Buddhist demonstrations in Saigon were dispersed by the Police and troops.

U.S. JEEP DAMAGED — In the Tân Dinh sector, Saigon North, the mobs, composed mostly of kids and women, smashed the windshield of a US military jeep parked on the roadside.

CATHOLICS — A communique from the Catholic Citizens Bloc signed by Fr. Trần Du, the Bloc's Secretary General, reaffirmed unchanged views of the Catholics on a current issues.

MAY 25

DEMONSTRATION — Busiest day for Buddhist demonstrators pouring

through the streets from several sections of the city. The Buddhist — monks, nuns and laymen incl. students — marched into the streets of Saigon.

VIEN-HOA DAO — The VHD remained both closed and sealed off.

TRI QUANG — In Hue, at the Dieu De pagoda, Ven. Tri Quang addressed a crowd of 5,000 calling for non-violent non-cooperation.

BOGUS MONK — A Việt Công masquerading as a monk was discovered in the Viên Hoa Dao and turned over to security forces by Buddhist officials. Identified as Tran Van B., he was found bearing two different identity cards, a letter of recommendation from a Việt Công official, a map of a large government air force installation marked with red points and a broadcast copy for the VC National Liberation Front radio.

DAT TO NEWSPAPER — « Dat To » daily, the official press organ of the Vien Hoa Dao was ordered closed by the Ministry of Information, « for violation of censorship regulations ».

STUDENT LEADER KIDNAPPED — Tô Lai Chanh, chairman of the Saigon University Student Association was kidnapped by a group of unidentified people and believed to be detained in a pagoda in Saigon.

MAY 26

HUE JUSPAO BURNED — The USIS library in Huê was burned by Buddhist demonstrators. All American civilians living in Huê were ordered to leave this city.

LODGE — In Saigon, US Ambassador Cabot Lodge made the following statement concerning the Huê burning: « The destruction of a library and cultural center is a distressing act. We do not believe this violent action represents the views of the Vietnamese people as a whole. »

GOV'T TROOPS IN HUE — A battalion of ARVN troops moved into Huê to protect the U.S. Consulate and three other American buildings in the city.

DEMONSTRATION — Monk-led demonstrations in Saigon were dispersed by riot police firing tear gas. The monks marched within one block of the U.S. Embassy before being turned back.

MAY 27

KY - THI — Lt. General Nguyen Chanh Thi, the deposed I Corps Commander winged to Danang from Hue to confer with Prime Minister Ky. The

meeting was held at the U.S. 1st Marine Division Hqs at Chu Lai, about 40 miles south of Danang. No details transpired from the talk.

DEMONSTRATION — In Saigon, Buddhist demonstrations failed to mass up.

MAY 29

STUDENTS — Saigon University students demonstrated in front of the House of Culture, voicing their protest against the kidnapping of their leader Tô Lai Chanh.

SELF-BURNING — The Buddhists launched their self-immolation campaign with the physical sacrifice of a monk, a nun and a laywoman in Dalat, Hue and at the VHD in Saigon.

TAM CHAU — Ven. Tam Chau, returned to Saigon after a prolonged absence from Vietnam.

HUE RADIO — Govt troops retook control of the Hue Radio station which the anti-government « struggle force » students had used for weeks against Premier Ky's government.

MAY 30

TAM CHAU — Ven. Tam Chau pledged his loyalty to the Buddhist struggle, demanded that Gen. Thieu and Gen. Ky hand over authority to a transitional government and ordered an immediate stop to all plans for self-immolation and self-mutilation.

DEMONSTRATION — Buddhist monks and nuns demonstrated in the tear gas drenched city of Saigon.

MAY 31

NLC-BUDDHIST CONFERENCE — Gen. Thieu and PM Ky conferred with top VHD Buddhist leaders. Agreement was reached on the expansion of the NLC to include 10 civilian members besides the present 10 generals. The deadline for such action was June 6, (which had been met, despite the VHD's boycott).

JOHNSON — U.S. President Johnson said that political « acts of desperation » in VN should not obscure the progress made in that country toward a constitutional government. The President termed the acts of desperation « tragic and unnecessary. »

STUDENT LEADER — After almost a week's detention by unidentified persons, Tô Lai Chanh was freed blindfold in downtown Saigon.

U THANT — U.N. Secretary U Thant said that « even though this (VN Buddhist self-immolation) extreme manifestation of feelings is designed to use as a protest against certain action, it is not likely to serve that purpose. »

