

VIETNAM COURIER

MONTHLY



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Ha Long Bay

Lake Than Tho in Dalat

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Our Monthly

Comment

1975 will certainly be remembered as the brightest and the most glorious year of our history.

After the liberation of the whole country, the process of reunification on the level of State institutions has already started following the decisions of the Political Consultative Conference held in Saigon last November. A new era begins for Viet Nam, whose 45 million people are determined to work hard in order to build socialism.

Barely eight months after the liberation of south Viet Nam, an enormous task has already been accomplished. In spite of the presence of more than one million puppet soldiers who were neither captured nor disarmed, but simply reduced to inaction, following the unconditional capitulation of their chiefs, order and security have been established throughout south Viet Nam. Observers, even the most hostile towards the Vietnamese people, could not find the slightest evidence of the "blood bath" that Gerald Ford had spoken so much about — a statement which he had to recognize later on as totally unfounded. The people's power has been established at various levels; the people have become the real masters of the country and of their own destiny.

With the support of an enthusiastic population, the new

regime strove to solve problems that had seemed at first insoluble: How to maintain 20 million people without the 800 million dollars of annual American aid, of which a large part consisted of consumer goods? How to operate the various factories and enterprises without the raw materials until now imported from foreign countries? How to provide jobs for at least 3 million unemployed people? There is still a great deal to be done as it would be impossible to do away with the effects of twenty years of war and of Yankee colonialism in a few months; but at least, it has been possible to avoid the worst: no starvation, no epidemics, no social troubles. The struggle against the comprador bourgeoisie, who will have to be eliminated as a class in the south Vietnamese society, the issue of a new money, symbol of economic sovereignty, are measures which will help stabilize the market and ensure normal living conditions for the people.

The north, while helping the south to heal the wounds of war and to set right its socio-economic structure, has also started work on projects of a broader scale: building new electric power stations, enlarging or building new factories (cement factories, chemical fertilizer plants...), active preparation for the construction of big hydro-electric works, such

as those on the Black River. We have begun to increase the production of the Hongay mines and to produce the first tons of steel from the Thai Nguyen Steel and Iron Complex. And while, in the south, oil exploitation is being considered, in the north, signs of oil deposits have also been confirmed after careful prospecting.

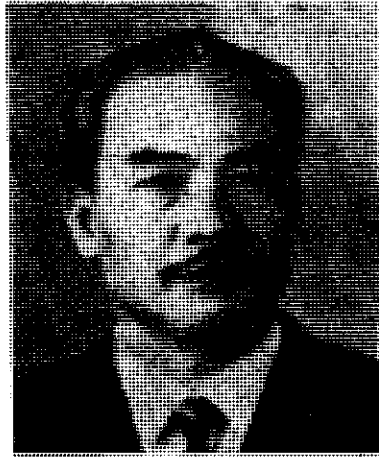
With abundant manpower and raw material, Viet Nam, which is essentially self-reliant, does not hesitate to extend economic relations and cooperation with other countries. Not only have the aid and support of socialist countries been assured — in this regard the trips of the First Secretary of the Viet Nam Workers' Party, Le Duan, in October and November, have been very successful — this cooperation and these exchanges are also extended towards capitalist countries: Sweden, France, Japan...

Viet Nam, north and south, occupied the place it deserved among the large family of non-aligned countries at the Lima Conference in August 1975. Washington's veto in September opposing the admission of Viet Nam to the United Nations only brought out the unanimous readiness of all other countries to welcome it to that large world organization.

International conditions are thus eminently favourable to the building of a new Viet Nam. The significant changes that took place in the two fraternal neighbouring countries, Cambodia and Laos, during this same year of 1975, have a special meaning for us: the Revolution has won, neo-colonialism has been definitely repelled.

Phnom Penh was liberated two weeks before Saigon, and Cambodia can already mention its first results in economic

Foundation of the Lao Democratic People's Republic



Tiao Souphanouvong, President
of the Republic and Chairman
of the Supreme People's Council.



Mr. Kaysone Phomvihane,
Prime Minister.

AFTER the smashing of the pro-American puppet administration by the masses and the establishment of revolutionary power, from the village to provincial levels, there was a pressing need to thoroughly change the political system in Laos. Responding to the cherished aspirations of the Lao people, on December 1 and 2, 1975, the Central Committee of the Lao Patriotic Front held in Vientiane a nation-wide Congress attended by 264 delegates of all nationalities, all social strata of the population, of the Liberation army, of the Committee of the Alliance of Patriotic Neutralist Forces, of other patriotic movements, progressive personalities and intellectuals, and Lao residents abroad.

The Congress took the decision to abolish the monarchical regime, set up a Democratic People's Republic; it chose Tiao Souphanouvong as

President of the Republic, accepted the abdication of King Savang Vatthana and appointed him Supreme Adviser of the President of the Republic. The Congress also appointed the Supreme People's Council composed of 44 members and presided over by Tiao Souphanouvong, formed a 39-member government with Kaysone Phomvihane as Prime Minister and comprising twelve ministries, two commissions and a National Bank, assisted by a Prime Minister Office; it also appointed Tiao Souvanna Phauma, ex-Prime Minister of the Lao Provisional Government of National Union just dissolved, Adviser of the new Government.

The Congress also adopted a resolution dealing with the national flag, national anthem, with the language used in official documents, and unanimously agreed with the program of action of the Lao Democratic People's Republic presented by Prime Minister Kaysone Phomvihane.

restoration. It has just convened its Congress of People's Representatives to approve a new Constitution which aims at the "establishment of an independent, peaceful, neutral and non-aligned Cambodia, with its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and a society of happiness, justice, and real democracy, without exploitation of man by man."

Laos has also expelled American aggressors and interventionists from its territory by peaceful means, overthrown the puppets and disbanded their armed forces. In December, the monarchy was abolished and a

Democratic People's Republic was established. As the new Prime Minister, Kaysone Phomvihane, stressed, the way to build a "peaceful, independent, democratic, unified and prosperous Laos advancing to socialism" is opened.

The existence on our western frontiers of two independent and peaceful countries sharing the same ideals of social progress is a precious guarantee for the construction of socialism in our country.

The establishment of diplomatic relations with other countries of Southeast Asia, such as the Philippines and Malaysia,

testifies to the unquestionable prestige that Viet Nam has, even among openly pro-American governments. If such relations are not yet established with Thailand, the reasons can be found in the unfriendly actions of the Thai government. These actions are not at all in keeping with its statements of friendship towards us.

Thus, the United States remains the only world power to maintain a hostile policy towards Viet Nam. Its opposition to the admission of our country to the United Nations,

(Continued on page 6)

HISTORIC TURNING POINT OF THE LAO REVOLUTION

Nhan Dan editorial of December 4th, 1975

THE All-Laos Congress of People's Representatives, convened by the Central Committee of the Lao Patriotic Front in Vientiane on December 1 and 2, 1975, unanimously approved a number of decisions to abolish the monarchy, set up the Democratic People's Republic, designate the President of the Republic and the Government, and adopt the national flag and the national anthem.

These extremely important decisions mark the complete victory of the Lao people's national democratic revolution and the beginning of a new stage in which the Lao people, under the leadership of the People's Revolutionary Party and as absolute masters of their country, will start in earnest to build a new Laos.

To turn their country from a feudal-colonial country into an independent State with a democratic people's republic system advancing to socialism, as it is today, the revolutionaries and people of Laos have valiantly carried out a long struggle against aggressive imperialism and domestic reaction. As early as the 1930's, Lao Communists joined Vietnamese and Cambodian Communists in the Indochinese Communist Party to propogate revolutionary ideas among the people, and to organize them against the rule of French colonialism. In August 1945, the Lao people rose up to take over the country from the Japanese fascists. Two months later, they formed a provisional government and declared Laos' independence to the world. This historic event had the merit of firing the national spirit and uniting all patriotic and democratic forces in the struggle against the French colonialist aggressors. This victory has provided a firm basis for the patriotic struggle of the Lao people against the US imperialists and domestic reaction over the past two decades. Right after the signing of the 1954 Geneva Agreements, the United States brazenly intervened in Laos, south Viet Nam and Cambodia, in an attempt to turn them into its colonies. In Laos, the imperialists resorted to all perfidious moves of neo-colonialism, even a ferocious air war, in an attempt to wipe out the Lao revolutionary forces.

The resistance of the Lao people against US imperialism was hard and complex. But under the correct leadership of the People's Revolutionary Party, the Lao army and people, closely united in the Lao Patriotic Front, fought with great valour, ceaselessly developing their strength and expanding the liberated zone, thus causing the balance of forces to change more and more in favour of the revolution. They smashed all

attacks by the rightist army and Thai mercenaries on the liberated zone, and defeated the US air war. From 1964 to 1973, the Liberation Army and people put out of action 180,000 enemy troops and shot down or destroyed on the ground 2,500 US planes.

The struggle of the Lao people against US imperialism and its henchmen was a skilful combination of various tactics and a clever application of the revolutionary strategy of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party. Each time a coalition government was formed — there were three such governments — the people further consolidated their victory to march on. The Vientiane Agreement of February 1973 was a concrete proof of the creativeness of the Lao revolution. Under this Agreement, the fruit of the struggle of the Lao revolutionary forces over the past two years, the United States had to end its intervention in Laos and to get the Thai mercenary army out of the country. The Agreement threw the reactionaries into confusion and created favourable conditions for the struggle for independence and democracy in areas formerly occupied by the rightists giving rise to the new situation today...

In May this year, strongly encouraged by the great victories of the Vietnamese and Cambodian revolutions, the Lao people bravely rose up under the leadership of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, and within a few months, abolished the last structure of the US intervention, smashed the reactionary puppet machinery from provinces to villages, and formed a revolutionary administration at all levels. The important decisions of the All-Laos Congress of People's Representatives to abolish the monarchical regime and set up a Democratic People's Republic completely conform with the new situation in Laos, in Southeast Asia and in the rest of the world, and with the evolution of history.

With the establishment of the Democratic People's Republic, the Lao national democratic revolution won a total and unquestionable victory. A new and extremely brilliant era of development begins for the Lao people in which they will build a peaceful, independent and socialist Laos.

The main architect of the victory is the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, which has correctly applied the principles of Marxism-Leninism to the realities of Laos, led the Lao people to overcome all trials and difficulties, ceaselessly developed its forces to push

(Continued on page 30)

Historical Notes:

The Vietnamese People's Struggle for National Unification

ONCE there was a boy at Giong village who, at the age of three, could not yet speak. But one day, when he heard a messenger call on all men to join in the fight against the enemy and save the nation, the boy sprang to his feet and asked to go to the front. Feeding only on rice, egg-plant fruit and water given by the people, Giong very quickly grew into a giant. Then, riding on an iron horse and holding an iron stick forged by the people, followed by men of all trades and all ages - farm labourers, fishermen, huntsmen and even herdsmen, Giong fiercely fought against the enemy. When his iron stick was broken, he pulled up whole bamboo groves, which he used to continue the fight. When the enemy had been driven out and peace had returned to the land, Giong on his horse soared up into the sky and disappeared.

That legend which has the naive character of ancient times, vividly reflects a reality. The Vietnamese in those days continuously had to face the threat of aggression by neighbouring tribes; and when the country was in danger, the Vietnamese people, though small in number, by uniting themselves became a very great force, and effectively defended their independence.

And there was not only foreign aggression. Nature also put many obstacles before the Vietnamese in their daily life: jungles, swamps, wild beasts, typhoons, floods. The unification of the country and the unity of the people became a necessity.

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THAT was 4,000 years ago. The Vietnamese had settled in what is now north Viet Nam and the northern part of central Viet Nam, with about fifteen Lac Viet tribes living chiefly in the midland and the plains, and many Au Viet tribes living in the mountainous region of Viet Bac. The most powerful of the Lac Viet tribes was the Van Lang, who occupied a vast land stretching from the foot of the Ba Vi mountain to the slope of the Tam Dao mountain, with the silt-laden Red River in its middle.

The chief of the Van Lang tribe

grouped all Lac Viet tribes into a country called Van Lang, and he became King under the name of Hung Vuong. The Vietnamese nation thus came into being. It continued to develop and, in the second half of the 3rd century B.C., it had grown into a larger, more closely knit community. The country of Au Lac was formed by unifying the mountainous region and the plain, inhabited mainly by the Au Viet and the Lac Viet.

The Vietnamese whose nation was founded by unification have been conscious of national unity since the earliest periods of their history:

*Crimson silk is covering the mirror,
People of the same country should
love one another.*

The defence of the independence and unity of the fatherland very soon became a necessity and a tradition. From the earliest days, the preservation of unity as well as of independence has been an objective of our people in their long struggle against the scheme of division by enemies from within or without. And at each new stage of historical development, greater unity, on a larger scale, was achieved.

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SPRING 40 A.D. Au Lac had been divided into districts of the Han Empire, and had suffered one hundred years of oppression and humiliation under the Northern rulers. In Me Linh district (in the present Vinh Phu province) an insurrection broke out, led by the two Trung sisters. At an oath-taking stand on the bank of the Hat river (Hat môn, Ha Tay province), Trung Trac declared that the main objective of the insurrection was to regain national independence and unity:

*"Firstly, we'll revenge our fatherland
Secondly, we'll restore the nation
built by the Hung Kings..."*

The population in all the four regions of ancient Au Lac, from the mountainous region to the plain, women as well as men, enthusiastically responded to the two heroines' call. Within a little more than one month the entire territory - "65 districts and citadels" - was liberated. National independence and unity were restored.

The Trung Sisters' insurrection - the first major conflict between the Vietnamese people and foreign invaders - eloquently testified to the Vietnamese consciousness of national independence and unity inherited from the founders of the nation. The unification of the country by the two Trung sisters, though of short duration (40-43 A.D.), was a glorious period which showed the Vietnamese people's determination to destroy all attempts by any enemy to assimilate and divide their country, even by the greatest Asian empire in those days, then at the peak of its power.

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FOREIGN rule was imposed on our people for nine more centuries. The aggressors tried to destroy all that had been built up by the efforts to preserve the independence and unity of the country - the language, capital, political and cultural life, ideological system. A new division of Viet Nam into districts and regions was made. But one thousand years of foreign domination could not suppress the Vietnamese people's determination to regain national independence and unity.

In China, the Tang dynasty was then on the verge of collapse, with the division of the country into numerous fiefs, and the peasants' spontaneous uprisings. A notable in Hong Chau (in present-day Hai Hung province), named Khuc Thua Du, with the support of the population, in 906 declared himself Tiet do su (1), and used the administration machine of the former regime to consolidate independence. The Tang court, no longer able to carry out repression, had to recognize a *fait accompli*. Though nominally an official of the Tang regime, Khuc Thua Du had in fact achieved self-government for Viet Nam. That was the only time in our history when power was seized with the use of violence but without bloodshed. Khuc Thua Du had fundamentally ended the one-thousand-year domination and division of the country by the Northern feudalists.

(1) Representative of the Tang Emperor in border regions, invested with great powers.

HIS work was completed by Ngo Quyen in 938 with the Bach Dang victory which defeated the scheme of aggression of the Southern Han dynasty. But Ngo Quyen died six years later (944). Revolts and conflicts at the court had weakened the central government. Availing themselves of that situation, the feudal lords rose up, each reigning as absolute master of a region, and they fiercely fought one another. In 965, the central government collapsed and the country was divided among twelve feudal lords, each one occupying a territory equivalent to a few present-day districts. They built walls and fortresses and were constantly fighting one another. This brought great sufferings to the people whose condemnation of these internal struggles was expressed in these lines:

*A clever person will vie with
people from outside,
Chicks of the same mother-ben
should not fight against one
another.*

Dinh Bo Linh, a native of Hoa Lu (in Ninh Binh province), raising high the banner of national unity, made a resolve to put an end to the division of the country by the twelve lords. In only two years (965-967), with the support of the entire people, his historical mission was fulfilled. The country was again unified under a new name Dai Co Viet (The great country of the Viet).

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IN the early 16th century, after nearly six centuries of independence, the feudal regime in Viet Nam began to decay. At the Le court rival cliques had appeared, scheming to usurp power. They used their own armies to fight against one another.

In 1527, the victorious feudal group headed by Mac Dang Dung, a native of Nghi Duong (Hai phong), overthrew the Le dynasty and founded the Mac dynasty. But a general of the Le, Nguyen Kim, claiming that he was fighting to restore the former dynasty, rallied forces to oppose the Mac and occupied the region of Nghe An and Thanh Hoa where he set up his own administration.

The country was again divided into two opposing zones. The Mac regime which ruled over present-day Bac Bo was called the Northern court, and the Trinh(?) regime, which controlled the zone lying south of Thanh Hoa, was called the Southern court. The two rival groups were pitted against each other in a fierce civil war which lasted more than half a century

(1) In 1545, after the death of Nguyen Kim, his son-in-law Trinh Kiem came to power.

(1533-1592). This devastating war and the uprisings of other lords brought great suffering to the people:

*A house with two masters knows
no concord
A country having two kings enjoys
no peace.*

To be able to deal with the Trinh, Mac Dang Dung submitted to the Ming dynasty of China to whom he surrendered part of the national territory.

He was condemned by the people, and that was one of the main reasons why he was defeated by the rival Trinh. In 1592 the victorious Southern court occupied Thang Long (present-day Hanoi). The Le dynasty was restored, as the Trinh feared that its elimination would be opposed by the people. "Support to the Le" then embodied the population's desire for national unity.

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BUT even before the war with the Northern court had ended, acute conflicts broke out at the Southern court, after Nguyen Kim's death, between the Trinh and Nguyen families. Trinh Kiem then in power was scheming to weaken the Nguyen. Nguyen Hoang - Nguyen Kim's son - obtained his appointment as governor of Thuan Hoa (present-day Tri Thien) and of Quang Nam (1570) and in those regions he built up his own domain.

Once more, in the interests of their families, the ruling groups partitioned the country and caused long bloody conflicts and untold sufferings to the people (1627-1672). The Gianh River (in Quang Binh province) was made the demarcation line: north of it was the zone under Trinh rule, to the south was the zone under Nguyen rule.

The partitioning of the country caused bitter resentment:

*In the north and the south, the sky
and the land are ours
Why should the mountains and
rivers there be divided among
different peoples?
(Bui Duong Lich)*

In face of that situation, Nguyen Hue, the peasant hero of Tay Son (in Binh Dinh province), took up the historical mission of the time: to safeguard national territory, to unify the country, to increase its strength. After several punitive expeditions (1773-1783), the Tay Son forces annihilated the feudal army of the Nguyen. Advancing to the north, Nguyen Hue issued a proclamation which stressed the people's desire for national unity:

*In Quang Nam the enemy has
been swept away
Thuan Hoa has returned to our
territory
In the south, to a vast, tranquil
land, peace is returning
In the north, there are still distur-
bances in many places,
How can we then delay our expedi-
tion?*

(Tay Son proclamation)

With the great might of the nation-wide revolutionary movement, the Tay Son insurrection soon overthrew the Trinh family's rule of nearly three hundred years (1786). On the one hand, the Tay Son movement removed the obstacles to national unification - the Trinh and Nguyen families - on the other hand, it defended the country against foreign aggression: in 1785, 40,000 Siamese troops were annihilated at Rach Gam - Xoai Mut (Nam Bo); in 1789, 200,000 Ching troops (China) were wiped out at Ngoc Hoi - Dong Da (now a Hanoi suburb).

TO COME OUT IN 1976 (in English)

- An Outline History of the Viet Nam Workers' Party (1930-1975)
- Nam Hong (1945-1975) (Revolution in a Village)
- The Stars Far-away (Short Stories)
- The Fighting Elephant (a novel)
- A Village called Faithfulness (a novel)
- Vietnamese Lacquer Paintings (album)
- Beauty-spots and Landscapes of Viet Nam (album)
- Why is the Toad Called Heaven's Uncle? (A story for children)
- The Lord Giong (A story for children)

After defeating enemies from within and without, the Tay Son movement – the peak of the peasant movement in the 18th century – was in control of the whole country from Lang Son to Ca Mau. For the first time in our history, the unification of the vast territory of modern Viet Nam was achieved.

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INHERITING the achievements of the Tay Son movement, the Nguyen dynasty, founded by Gia Long, with French support, could in the beginning of the 19th century establish its rule over the whole country, from the north to the south. Only half a century later, the conservative and reactionary Nguyen court was gradually surrendering the country to the French colonialists. Vietnamese territory was again divided by the aggressors into three zones with three different administration systems: Cochinchina was a colony, Annam was a protectorate, and Tonkin half colony half protectorate.

However, the will to preserve national independence and unity which was in the blood of the Vietnamese, remained as strong as ever. It constituted the force which could rally the masses for a struggle against the invaders. When the French colonialists launched their attack against Da Nang, starting their war of aggression against Viet Nam, three hundred volunteers immediately joined the forces of Phan Van Nghi in Nam Dinh province to go south to defend that part of the fatherland.

Prevented from carrying out their plan by the defeatist Nguyen court, they felt profound indignation:

*Tra Son (Da Nang) was full of
enemy soldiers,
Our troops came, eager to fight,
The king ordered a retreat, fearing
defeat.*

(Phan Van Nghi)

The signing by the Hue court of the 1874 Treaty to surrender the whole of Cochinchina to the French colonialists further exasperated the masses, and also the intellectuals in the whole country. Than Van Nhiep, chief of the two provinces of Binh-Phu, sternly warned King Tu Duc: "Sitting in your sumptuous palace, you should think of the wrecked homes of the population of Cochinchina; contemplating magnificent Van Nien Co (Tu Duc's tomb built when the King was still living), you should think of the devastated burying ground of the common people..."

And all patriots believed that to reconquer independence, national unity must be consolidated:

*All parts of the country must unite,
Thirty-six provinces like a family,
Concord between north and south
must reign,*

*Twenty-five million people like a
single man.*

(Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc)

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EARLY in 1930, with the foundation of the Indochinese Communist Party (now the Viet Nam Workers' Party) the banner of national independence and unity was raised higher than ever. The fundamental

objective of the Vietnamese revolution was clearly defined: independence, unity, democracy and socialism (First Party Programme). The vitality of the nation already shown in early times was revived by the Party and strengthened by the forces of the new era. The Vietnamese people, in only two weeks, smashed the yoke of the French-Japanese fascists with the General Insurrection of August 1945. The partition of the country into three separate zones – north, centre and south – was put to an end.

But the Vietnamese had enjoyed recovered national independence and unity for less than a month when they had to take up arms again for a thirty years' struggle to safeguard the fruit of their revolution. The French colonialists (1945-1954), then the US imperialists (1954-1975), carrying out their traditional "divide-and-rule" policy, tried by every possible means to destroy our national solidarity and prevent national unification. Labels of "independence," "state," "nation"... were used, together with the farce of "Cochinchina State", "Republic of Viet Nam" and false titles such as "Chief of State", "President of the Republic", "Prime Minister". And combined with those manoeuvres were the bombing and shelling, imprisonment, tortures and repression; and under the US-puppet rule, there were also the dollars and the American way of life with its material and spiritual poison. But in face of the great truth – that Viet Nam is one, the Vietnamese people is one – that President Ho Chi Minh has solemnly affirmed, all enemy efforts were of no avail.

With the glorious victory of the general offensive and uprising of Spring 1975, the Vietnamese people have completely achieved their highest aim: to build an independent, unified, and socialist Viet Nam.

H. T.

Our Monthly Comment

(Continued from page 2)

the trade embargo decreed by the Ford Administration against Viet Nam, his refusal to honour the American pledge to contribute to the healing of the wounds of war and to post-war reconstruction, all these measures show that Washington has not learnt from the past how to give a new orientation to its Viet Nam policy. In face of a Gerald Ford with his new "Pacific Doctrine", which advocates counting first on "American strength" and again stresses United States interest in

Southeast Asia, the Vietnamese people must remain vigilant.

In persisting in that old track, the United States only succeeds in isolating itself. Viet Nam will resolutely march forward whatever Washington might do. 1976 will be for Viet Nam the year of reunification with the creation of a single national government. It will also be the first year of the 1976-1980 five-year plan which will lay the first basis for socialism.

December 25th, 1975.

THE VOICE OF VIET NAM

In English Daily at:

01.00

10.00

13.00

16.00

25 and 31 mb/12.035,

10,040 kHz

18.00

19 and 31 mb/15.012,

10,040 kHz

All times are GMT

Indochinese time: + 7

hours

THE VOICE OF VIET NAM

58 Quan Su Street,

Hanoi, DRVN

Our car moved into low gear and began to climb painfully for almost ten kilometres up the side of a mountain. Bi, a cadre of the movement for sedentary farming in Phu Yen district, Nghia Lo province, in the Tay Bac (Northwest) Autonomous Region, was so absorbed in talk—describing the plan to settle thousands of families of the Dao* and Meo—that he did not notice that the car had reached Suoi Bi villogge on the top of the pass. A dozen or so children wearing clothes of different fashions and colours rushed out and surrounded our car. They chattered in their own language, putting in a few Vietnamese words every now and then. The lively scene on the hill top was a complete contrast from the monotony of the view along the road we had just travelled.



Picking tea at Suoi Bi Cooperative

NEW VILLAGE OF THE DAO

Here and there stood clusters of houses, some with their roofs already darkened by time, others with freshly cut thatch and a number with just the house frames waiting to be roofed. Around these houses were green tea beds grown on terraced fields hacked out of the mountain slopes looking as regular as the steps of a staircase as they lay under the scorching sun of a summer noon.

Groups of Dao nationals were picking tea, weeding the tea beds, or stripping the tea plants of parasitic growths. On nearby hills bulldozers were diligently clearing lands for the coming tea planting season. The merry rumble of motors which was thrown back from the great mountain ridges brought an atmosphere of joy to what was otherwise a rather bleak wilderness.

Bi turned to us, beaming :

"We are in Suoi Bi village. This is the first tea-growing cooperative of the Dao people in our district."

Bi, who came from a village in the Red River delta, had joined the People's Army during the anti-

French war of resistance. In Winter 1953 and Spring 1954, together with other armymen, he was entrusted with widening the mountain track through Phu Yen district into a motor road to enable the army to move artillery from the Viet Bac resistance base in the North to the Northwest for the historic Dien Bien Phu campaign. After the war ended, Bi volunteered to stay behind in the Northwest to join the ethnic minority peoples in taking this remote and rugged mountain area of Viet Nam to socialism.

In the twenty years he had spent in Phu Yen district, he had been able to witness the innumerable bushfires kindled by the mountain people to clear forests for cultivation. He had seen more than one group of ragged Dao or Meo people leaving their denuded mountain slopes in quest of new cultivable lands. Only a score or so years ago, the bare hills along the motor road had been still covered with dense forests of bamboo. Now the major part of these forests were destroyed. This was one of the serious consequences of the nomadic slash-and-

burn agriculture of the local people.

Legend has it that the ancestors of the present Dao minority in north Viet Nam once lived in Southern China. In the 14th century, as their land was hit by a serious and prolonged drought, the Dao ran short of food, and the king gave each of them a hammer and a curved knife so that they could go into the forest and clear tracts for cultivation. Thus the Dao began an indiscriminate destruction of forests including some with precious timbers owned by the royal family. Nevertheless, the life of the Dao was far from being secure. As the population grew, part of them had to move southward.

Here, they settled in scattered groups all over the mountain regions between the Viet Nam—China and the Viet Nam—Laos border, even penetrating down to some of the midland provinces of north Viet Nam. Before the liberation of north Viet Nam in 1954, except for a small section of Dao who had come and mingled with the population of other ethnic groupings for sedentary farming, all

* Dao (pronounced Zao)

of them still continued to live a nomad life on high mountains usually around 400 to 600 metres above sea level, but sometimes as high as 800-1,000 metres. They burnt forests, chiefly primeval and bamboo forests, to make burnt-out clearings for rice or maize cultivation. When the fertility of such fields had become exhausted, they moved on to other forests. From generation to generation the Dao wandered like deer from jungle to jungle. They could not see all the disastrous effects of their forest burning. They only sow their immediate gains: the rice ears, the cassava roots, the corn cobs gathered from the land on which they had burnt down all vegetation. On the wider economic plane the food thus yielded was far outweighed by the losses caused by the burning. To pick out one among innumerable examples, in 1958, in the Ba Che area of Quang Ninh province, hundreds of hectares of iron wood forest were burnt down by the Dao to provide lands for cultivation. Apart from the incalculable loss in other domains on the purely economic plane the destruction in this case was enormous: one hectare of iron wood burnt down means the loss of 30 cubic metres of timber valued at 3,900 dong whereas one hectare of hill field created by forest burning yields an average of only 1,500 kilos of rice valued at 330 dong, or one-tenth of the value of a hectare of destroyed forest (a clearing which will be abandoned in a few years after its natural fertility has been exhausted). Moreover, the denudation of the forests caused by slash-and-burn farming has brought about big floods in the mountain regions as well as in the plains, to say nothing of the serious damage caused to the ecology of the region for many years after.

A host of backward customs and habits formed a logical corollary to this unsettled itinerant farming life. Everything in the daily life of the Dao, from the time for wedding and funerals to the building of a house or the choice of a hill slope for a temporary settlement, bore the deep mark of superstition.

During the past 20 years of economic rehabilitation and development, great and persistent efforts were made to persuade the Dao and Meo to stop their roaming life and settle in the low lands for sedentary farming. The results, unfortunately, were negligible. The causes were many but, according to Bi, our guide, the major one was the poverty of the State which,

however much it wanted to, was unable to create the conditions, both material and moral, for the Dao and Meo to settle down with peace of mind and start a new life on the new lands. Secondly, there were not enough capable cadres for the movement, especially those issued from the ethnic minorities themselves who would have the necessary prestige and ability to persuade their people to give up their backward way of existence, and help them organize a completely new life.

To make matters worse, the US imperialists escalated their air war of destruction to the mountain district of Phu Yen, causing added difficulties to this campaign of persuasion.

As a result, by mid-1974, almost 7,000 members of the Dao and Meo minorities were still leading a wandering life in a mountain stretch of more than 100,000 hectares of Phu Yen, or nearly one-seventh of the district area and continuing to practise their slash-and-burn farming.

For some years now a new drive of persuasion has been conducted in Phu Yen with a view to helping those Dao and Meo who are still living as nomads settle down for sedentary farming in three centres with climatic and soil conditions suitable for three different branches of agriculture: an area for tea planting in Suoi Bi, a plateau with wide pastures for the raising of cattle, and an area for reforestation of the parts denuded by forest burning.

The Dao in Suoi Bi welcomed the cadres of the resettlement campaign like relatives returning from a long trip. It was a very warm, very open-hearted welcome which outdid even the traditional hospitality of the Dao. Throughout the past five or six years, Bi had been sharing joys and sorrows, all of his thoughts and deeds being aimed at alleviating the plight of each family and each person in the area. They had responded to his call, which was also the Party's call, and abandoned their wandering existence to settle permanently here and start a completely new life.

Bi introduced us to the leading cadres of the local Dao co-op, and left us visitors from Hanoi in their care.

Dang Van Khin, chairman of the co-op, is a short but sturdy young

man of about 25, of Dao Tien descent. In 1967, after completing the fourth grade at the Phu Yen School for National Minorities, he and some other local cadres were assigned the task of persuading the Dao to come and settle in Suoi Bi and found a tea-planting cooperative.

Khin invited us to his home. It was a five-room cottage completely different from the old-type homes of the Dao we had visited earlier. It would take a well-to-do peasant family in the Red River delta several years to save enough money to build such a comfortable home. Khin let us know that every family here had been helped by the government to build such a home, in terms of materials as well as manpower.

After inviting us to sip a few cups of tea produced by his own co-op, Khin began telling the story of this first co-op of the Dao.

Suoi Bi—a local stream after which the co-op took its name—has a moving history. In the opinion of the old folk, in the remote past this was a prosperous area. At one time, several dozen Dao families were settled in the area. However, before long the practice of forest burning had denuded large expanses of the primeval forest, leaving only vast tracts of bare hills. The hills could no longer feed the Dao community. Hunger, disease and death came on the heels of this denudation. The Dao explained this bitter reality by a simple conclusion: the land was haunted, the ghosts no longer wanted the Dao to live in Suoi Bi, so they had to move elsewhere. As there was no one to buy their pigs and poultry, they slaughtered all their animals, dismantled their homes and then, carrying their children tied to their backs by pieces of cloth, they started barehanded in search of a new, more hospitable land. Thus began a long journey through deep jungles, exposed to all the vagaries of the climate. Many a time they had to take shelter in caves. As the last rags of cloth disintegrated, they had to cover their naked bodies with tree bark and feed themselves on wild fruit and tubers. Not a few dropped dead in the jungle before a new land could be found. Khin's parents and grandparents had once lived in Suoi Bi but they, too, were driven away by poverty and hunger. They wandered ever further away and a group of them went as far as the midland province of Phu Tho. The stream has borne the name of Suoi Bi (Dead-end Stream) ever since.

Over the past five or six years, responding to the call of the Party, more than 400 Dao who led a roaming life on mountain tops of Phu Yen district have returned to Suoi Bi to settle down as sedentary farmers and build a tea-planting co-op of their own. With government assistance, they have built at least 50 homes, a primary school and a 12-bed dispensary staffed by three assistant doctors. They have cleared the hills and planted almost a score of hectares of tea. Some tea beds began to yield several years ago. The life of the Dao living here has been visibly improved compared with the days of nomad wandering.

But the present gains have been made only after overcoming numerous hardships.

To agree to leave their old life and settle permanently has meant a radical change from centuries-old customs and habits including the deeply-ingrained superstitions which were believed to have a decisive influence on the destiny of their community. To build a co-operative is for them a big leap forward from their self-sufficient natural economy to the planned, scientific economy of modern times. And first they had to give up the traditional growing of rice, maize and cassava to plant tea — a completely new undertaking for them.

At first, heated discussions were held between Party cadres and members of the Dao people. Some said that sedentary farming would

not provide enough land for the Dao. Others said that it would deprive them of their indispensable freedom of movement. Still others objected to the programme because, they said, the Dao are not used to tea planting and this would "force them to eat State-supplied rice which is not to their taste". "Then," another argued, "if we are not allowed to grow rice as well as tea planting, where can we get money for our daily expenses and good rice for the cult of our ancestors?"

The cadres first concentrated on persuading the other Dao cadres to fully realize the disastrous effects of the nomadic way of life and the benefits and importance of a settled life in building agricultural coops for the Dao and helping the building of socialism so that they would be the first to volunteer to come to Suoi Bi and settle for sedentary farming.

On the other hand, unlike in previous campaigns, this time the government took a series of positive measures to secure the settlers against all hazards. For instance, they were supplied with means of transport to take them and their belongings to the new settlement. Then the government sent carpenters to help build houses, a school and a dispensary, teachers to teach Dao children, and medical nurses to look after the dispensary. Large basins were built to store rain water all the year round, production loans were offered and bull-

dozers sent to help clear hills and build terraced fields for the planting of tea...

The settlers also received loans to buy food and clothing until the first tea-picking season should come and trade teams came along to sell necessities to the settlers. The core provided them by the government rapidly helped the newcomers to settle down to their new life. On the first days, only seven families, mostly of Party members, came for resettlement but the effect of the government policies with regard to these seven families was a living example for the others. In fact, the life of these families has changed radically compared with the past.

Rumours about the co-operative of seven Dao families in Suoi Bi soon spread to all the other forest villages of Phu Yen district. Some Dao walked a hundred kilometres to Suoi Bi to see with their own eyes whether these rumours were true. They returned home and talked about what they had seen. More and more families returned to Suoi Bi which in the process became a centre of attraction for all the Dao in the district. In summer 1970, there was a large exodus to Suoi Bi from the high peaks as well as from the "middle heights". But then tragedy struck: the summer of that year was unusually fierce. Many caught fever, four died suddenly, three from sunstroke and a child from ascarids. Many newcomers and even some of the old settlers were bewildered; the place was definitively haunted, some said, and they went away.

The co-op cadres urgently asked for a medical team which arrived at once, cared for the sick and distributed anti-malaria and piperazine pills. Those who had been laid up recovered and the children also put on weight. This won back the confidence of the newcomers and caused those who had left to come back one after another.

As an illustration of his story, Dong Van Khin took us to visit the family of Trieu Van Vinh, one of the first volunteers to settle in Suoi Bi. Now 64, he had lost one of his eyes following an ailment in his boyhood which he could only treat with wild leaves.

"Over the past five or six years," he told us earnestly, "my old legs have been able to rest because I no longer had to climb the mountains in search of new lands. My descendants have been freed from the scourge of having to eat wild



School children of the Dao national minority.

(Continued on page 30)

A Catholic Hamlet after Liberation

THAI LAC is a hamlet set up in Long Thanh 17 years ago by 133 Catholic families, natives of Thai Binh province (north Viet Nam), compelled in 1954 to go to the south. Not being able to live on 45.7 mau (one mau=3,600sq.m.) of ricefields, the young men in the hamlet had to enlist in the puppet army and the young girls to work for the Americans. Near the hamlet was a rubber plantation (owned by a Frenchman) and a vast estate of 400 hectares belonging to Nguyen Thi Ly, a woman M.P. in the puppet regime, who enjoyed the protection of the puppet authorities and bled white the Thai Lac farm-hands.

Thai Lac hamlet was turned, by the quislings, into a stronghold

defending the east of Saigon. It was surrounded on three sides by a 3-metre thick barbed wire entanglement and a moat one metre deep and two metres wide. All around it had a system of surface and underground fortifications made of prefabricated concrete, and was defended by a platoon of puppet troops who compelled all the youth over 15 to obey military commands and the adults to join civil guard units. After the withdrawal of the US troops, the Thai Lac people still received quantities of weapons such as mortars, automatic rifles, anti-tanks, grenade-throwers and sub-machine guns...

The puppet administration carried out a frenzied anti-communist propaganda campaign, especially to

broaden the gap between the evacuated Catholics and the revolution. At their eleventh hour, they threatened them, saying that after the triumph of the revolution the Catholics who had fled to the south in 1954 would be punished.

As a result, when the liberation troops first arrived in the hamlet, the atmosphere was tense. The hamlet was wrapped in a deadly silence; many Catholics stood for hours before their altars praying. Our soldiers who visited them spent a lot of time trying to quieten their misgivings and to explain the policy of unity and freedom of belief of the PRG.

As the Catholics began to calm down our men continued by speaking of the crimes committed by the Americans and their henchmen against our people, the significance of the victory of the revolution and the role of the people, which led to the setting up of the revolutionary power.

When the inhabitants understood the revolution better, a drive was launched to recover the weapons the quislings had issued to the Catholics in order to oppose the revolution. Many people who had thrown their firearms into ponds now fished them out and handed them to the revolutionary authorities. Others revealed the hiding places of the counter-revolutionaries.

The soldiers also encouraged the Catholics to speak of their sufferings when they had been forced to leave their native villages in the north, to live a wretched life in the south under the oppression and exploitation of the puppet authorities. The inhabitants had the opportunity to compare the cruelty of the arrogant puppet soldiers with the simplicity, sympathy and devotion of the revolutionary army-men.

Then a movement was launched to urge the Catholics to tackle production. With regard to the poor, with the permission of higher authority, the liberation officers proceeded to distribute the land of Nguyen Thi Ly who had fled abroad. Many teams were organized to clear the land.

A new life has begun at Thai Lac hamlet.

Vung Tau Changes for the Better

VUNG TAU, formerly called *Cape Saint Jacques*, is a well-known seashore resort in south Viet Nam, 123 km southeast of Saigon.

It was turned, by the puppet administration, into a city with nearly a hundred big hotels, a large number of villas, hundreds of which belonged to the generals and other field officers of the puppet army, and big capitalists, and 142 pagodas. Among its 180,000 inhabitants, there were 20,000 prostitutes. Vung Tau was a city of consumers, not of producers.

Besides the big hotels such as the Palace and the Rex (a nine-storey building), most of the ordinary houses are low and covered with corrugated iron sheeting or fibro-cement tiles. The inhabitants lived mainly by fishing and by serving the ruling class.

Seven months after liberation, the city has been through many changes. A healthy atmosphere now prevails in which the population work enthusiastically in production.

85,000 people who were in the city have now returned to their native villages or gone to newly organized economic regions. Industry and trade have been rehabilitated. Nearly forty state stores and marketing cooperatives have been set up to supply the population with groceries, medicines, and many other commodities.

The development of fishing and the production of handicrafts and objects of art are encouraged and there is a plan to restore the frozen crayfish factory for export. A fish sauce factory has been set up by the State. About 900 motor fishing boats in 45 fishing cooperatives go to sea every morning and come ashore with big hauls of fish. An average of 50 tons of fish are caught daily at Vung Tau.

The revolutionary administration pays great attention to education: 40 general education schools have been opened with an attendance of 20,000 children. To combat illiteracy among the adults, 94 evening classes have been organized. Thanks to the revolution, a great number of children as well as grown-ups can now read and write.

Now in these days the people who spend their holidays at Vung Tau are not members of the upper classes, the parasites, but the workers, cadres and soldiers who come there to mend their health after periods of hard work.

New Days

NOBODY would believe he played the leading role in the rehabilitation of the factory after the liberation of Saigon. His small figure with a nose spotted with sweat on a bony face proclaimed an ill-fated man. Everything on him was tiny and withered but for two big, bright eyes which gave him some strength. By all outward appearances, he did not seem proficient; he even looked dull and timid. However, when speaking of him, everybody, from the military manager to the door-keeper, set great store by him, as if the fate of the factory was in his hands. To the military manager, he was "a kind man" while the trade-unionists considered him "an outstanding worker in the factory."

There was nothing special about his past, apart from a family tragedy. At first his life was fortunate but soon he met with bad luck. After finishing his secondary school, he took a job at the factory when it was first making flavouring powder. He used half his first month's salary to treat his mates and the other half to buy a gift for his sweetheart, which made his mother weep a whole night. Life was most enjoyable; he had a lot of dreams and few cares. He fell in love only once, and married his sweetheart two years later. His wife was a gentle and diligent girl; she gave a lot of attention to her husband, and knew how to please him. So he was very satisfied with his marriage and confident of his future. But life was not such smooth sailing as he thought. Misfortune soon befell him, quite unexpectedly.

His family happiness was broken with the introduction of the American way of life, which emphasized material enjoyment and destroyed all human values. His wife fell a victim to it,

first by a desire for fashionable clothes and foreign cosmetics; and then wild love-affairs and material passions. At first, he mistook this for a rich life and overlooked it; but by the time he realized the truth, it was too late.

In pre-liberation Saigon the murderers would preach philanthropy to the religious; the robbers would preach virtue to the plundered, and the swindlers prevailed upon the righteous so that countless families were broken up and innumerable people were killed. His family tragedy being no exception, he consoled himself: "Mine is a dog's life" or "No regret for the renegade". He thus forgot his wife and took pity on his three small children. The more he thought of them, the more he perseveringly struggled with life, convinced that he would manage to survive. However, despite his effort, he met with one difficulty after another. For him life was a gulf teeming with sharks while he was but a lonely cod.

The day after his wife's desertion he kept on working, disregarding his wounded heart. Giving up all amusements in order to earn a living for his small children and old mother; he did not take to drink as many people would have done because he did not feel desperate. He did not bother about time or his health, or even about a sudden illness. One thought spurred him on: to fulfil his tasks as a father and a worker. So he went to work thirty days a month and three hundred and sixty one days a year - missing only four days on the occasion of the Têt festival. Every month he got his wage and a bonus and every year an extra fifteen days' pay. In addition, he was promoted to key jobs in the factory. By dint of

working hard and saving, he managed to buy a three-roomed house with modern appliances. Thus he felt, from his experience, that a diligent man could live comfortably in any society.

However, the life he had built up with his sweat and tears soon collapsed: he had two call-up papers. When he received the first one, he had to sell all his furniture in order to bribe everybody, from the military policemen to the district chief. One year later, he was again called up. He had to choose between his house and the army. "Whom I shall shoot? Who is my enemy?" At times he thought of the military policemen. Had he been obliged to join up, he would shoot them, and then himself. The thought of leaving behind three small orphans restrained him. After several nights of thought he sold his house and became homeless. Life robbed him of everything and drove him into an impasse. "I make sweet tasting powder but am repaid with sour things!" he cursed.

Meanwhile, his employer laid off sixty workers under the pretext that the goods produced could not sell because the GIs had withdrawn and the government-controlled areas had shrunk. A struggle against the sackings began. Though he was not among the sixty unfortunate ones, Hung anticipated the day when he would suffer the same fate, and was very worried. So he took part in the struggle out of sympathy rather than because he was class conscious. His action, nevertheless, infuriated his boss.

One day, when he had finished work and was going down the stairs, the assistant manager handed him his call-up papers, saying:

"Read it. A wedding-card".

Then he added mockingly :
"This time you'll leave your skin in the Highlands, old man."

With the papers in his hand, Hung saw nothing. The assistant-manager stared at him. It was a dreadful moment. Drops of sweat fell on the papers.

Knowing that he was frightened, his interlocutor smiled and said :

"You look dismayed, eh !"

Then he guffawed and patted Hung's shoulder :

"I'm joking. Don't worry. The boss has already fixed it."

And the assistant-manager tore up the papers and said :

"Where else would you find such a kind boss ?" Then with a threat : "Pity has its limits, so try to behave well !"

Hung left him in a worried mood. When he first saw the papers he intended to shoot at his foot in order to avoid the army because he could not afford a bribe for the third time. This corrupt society was draining his last drop of blood.

Next morning he learnt that the scene arranged by the assistant-manager was part of the plan to deal with the workers' struggle. The boss, as Hung was fully aware, treated well the workers that lined his pockets, and the bribe he made to the recruiting agent was nothing compared with the profit he earned by keeping Hung in the factory.

That afternoon, the struggle against sacking failed after the military police had arrested ten workers. Sixty workers were laid off to Hung's desperation.

LIKE many Saigon people, Hung expected a radical change. He was fed up with a society which recognized money as the only value and ignored justice and dignity. "You've no faults, but you are too poor. I cannot live without money. Everybody is racing for money. I must join the race !" his wife had said when leaving him for a plantation-owner. Abandoned by his wife, Hung nurtured

an aspiration for a better life, in which everybody had values more sacred than money and had noble aims than gratifying themselves.

When Huê, Da Nang, then Xuan Lôc fell and the puppet army and the population thronged to Saigon, Hung awaited the entry of the Liberation Army. Early in April, the foreign engineers had left along with their Embassy. The factory closed down. That morning, the workers gathered before it. They spoke of many things ; of the big wigs treading upon each other to scurry away ; of the puppet soldiers murdering and plundering ; of the evacuees in their sorry plight. Hung did not join them for time was pressing.

He entered the factory and climbed a long flight of stairs to reach the control-room. He felt an appalling silence, punctuated by the faraway booming of guns. Hung opened the breeding-room door ; the automatic machine kept on running like the pendulum of a grand-father clock. He stopped it and divided the cultures in the container into three parts : he left behind one part, brought another to the company and the third he took home to rear it in case the others died. These cultures, he hoped, might be useful.

The following days were not easy to forget for a worker. Hung witnessed the death throes of the Saigon regime. In its agony, everything rotten in its body was exposed in the streets.

The cultures Hung brought home grew fairly well thanks to his devoted care and the various improvisations he devised to replace the technical means he lacked. These tender cultures reared in those stormy days were meant to create a sweet flavour for life.

On the seventh of June, Hung was invited by the factory military management committee to restart production. All the foremen were convened. The military manager was an old, sturdy and severe looking man with white hair.

Like the others, Hung followed all his gestures. It was the first time in

twenty years that he had met a representative of the Revolution of which he had heard so much slander.

The meeting lasted two hours, but to no avail. Everybody was aware that the reopening of the factory was an urgent task in order to provide the workers with jobs and the population with goods. However, many difficulties cropped up. First of all, nobody knew the complete process of making the flavouring powder, for the foreign engineers had not disclosed any professional secrets so as to exact from the owner the best terms for their work and the certainty of a new contract when their contract expired. Thus, all techniques of calculation, fostering cultures, the ratio of glucose and various acids needed for the cultures to grow, everything was in their hands. These materials were necessary for the making of the powder. Indeed, many factories went bankrupt for want of the basic chemicals. Only the foreign engineers had the knowhow. The workers had no right to inquire about anything beyond their individual job : to watch clocks and press buttons. In fact, automation turned them into robots. All the owner needed from them was profit and not creative spirit. Technique was the business of the foreign engineers. The assistants knew only how to carry out their orders and write down the figures on the clocks. Not surprisingly, nobody present in the meeting knew how to restore production.

"If the military management committee does not send us engineers, we can do nothing," they said.

Hung knew more than anybody what was the real difficulty, and he racked his brains to try to deal with it.

The others also thought about it and from time to time looked at one another inquiringly. While waiting for their answer, the military manager looked at each of them encouragingly and tried to read their thoughts. When he saw that Hung answered his look, he nodded slightly to him. And the worker understood : "Cheer up ! Master of the factory, life is in your hands !".

BACK home in the afternoon, Hung sent his children into the next room and began working. Rummaging through the papers he had brought back from the factory, he looked for the figures he needed and jotted them down in his notebook. After scribbling four pages he heard a knock on the door. Thinking that his mother called him for dinner, he said :

"I am busy. Please eat with the kids, mum !"

A second knock was heard. He stood up, annoyed but was struck dumb when he opened the door. A young woman's face appeared behind his mother's back. The face was very familiar to him. Before they were wife and husband, he had said that those eyes were "the doors of a lively soul", that nose was "typical of Asian beauty" and those lips were "the incarnation of concupiscence". Well, that face with gracious and fresh features had at one time belonged to him. Now she was quite a different person. Her eyes were clouded with deep sorrow while her formerly rose lips hung tiredly.

Fearing, perhaps, the look of her former husband, the young woman hastily stammered :

"I... I come to see the children."

Blood rushing to his face, Hung dryly replied : "Next room," and slammed the door.

Only now did he feel tired. With his shoes on, he threw himself on his bed, his head resting on his crossed hands and his eyes staring at the ceiling. On the yellowish ceiling paper two lizards were looking for mosquitoes.

"She called on the children. And I thought..."

He repelled that thought but another one flashed through his mind : "Had she apologized to me, would I pardon her ?" He shut his eyes not to look at the lizards which were chasing each other, "No, no. On what ground should I pardon ? She..." Then another thought cut across : "What a pity for her !" He heaved a heavy sigh. Now he felt a terrible pain in his head and wanted to sleep a few minutes but couldn't. Old memories merged with scenes of the new life in his thoughts.

The quiet streets were plunged in their night sleep. From time to time some military cars patrolled the city but their noise did not disturb the prevailing stillness. Feeling thirsty, Hung took a bottle of beer from his refrigerator, poured one glass and sat at his table. He reviewed the columns of figures copied in his notebook and tried to work out the relation between them. At times a column of figures made him think for hours ; at times he seized his pen and wrote rapidly or wearily put his pen on the table and scratched his head until a flush of joy came to his face. In the end he found the answer to the problem and solved the relationships between columns of figures, which he then put into words.

Being diligent and careful, he re-read what he had written, underlined the important phrases and queried the doubtful ones. Now the entire process of making the flavouring powder was before him in all its details.

Carried away with relief, Hung stood up and opened the window. A draft laden with dew blew the sheets of paper on the table. Enraptured he looked up at the starry sky and hummed a tune. Far from weary, he felt free in his mind. For the first time, he realized the happiness of a man who had done useful work for the Revolution, and he was transported with joy.

The horizon in the east turned rosy. A new day full of hopes was beginning.

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WHEN he opened his work-room, Hung saw a note somebody had thrust under the door.

The paper read :

"The boss sends you his greetings and tells you to beware."

Hung frowned : "What does this mean ? What boss ? He has been arrested as a spy !" He was amazed ; he put his papers on his desk. The room seemed stuffy. Certainly it was a threat. But why ? And who wrote this note ?

He tried to discover whose writing it was but could not. Feeling a shiver at the back of his neck, he looked round at the door. It was

clear that somebody was shadowing him, and deliberately trying to hinder the restoration of production that the military manager had asked him to study and to report to him this morning. What was to be done ? If he did not do as the note said, his life could be in danger. In crowded Saigon, agents of the old regime were many, and he lived with no guarantee of security. However, if he gave up useful work for his country, which provided jobs for hundreds of workers as well as himself, because of an insolent threat, he would be a coward... His life had taken a new turn. Though still difficult, it was full of promise. And his children would have good schooling and live in independence and freedom.

Hung had not yet decided how to deal with the anonymous note when the military manager summoned him. He took up the papers he needed and locked the others in his drawer. The work-room which had belonged to the foreign engineers had all the modern conveniences, some of them beyond Hung's understanding. On the four walls hang drawings or embroideries of Taiwanese, Korean, Japanese and American landscapes in big, polished glass frames. All the windows were fitted with fresh blue velvet curtains. The desk and the filing-cabinets were made of metal, their heavy drawers fitted with automatic locks. For nearly ten years working in the factory, he had seen this room. It was not until yesterday afternoon, after over an hour's talk with the military manager that he was told to move in here, so everything was unfamiliar to him.

When he entered the manager's office, many people were already there, among them the foremen. Upon seeing him, the manager beckoned him to come and sit near him.

The meeting began, Hung stood up and reported on the formula of the ferment. At first, he was nervous, for he had never before spoken in public. All eyes were encouragingly fixed on him. A few minutes later, he recovered his nerves and spoke fluently. When asked questions, he answered them by writing rows of

figures and ended his technical report amidst warm applause and admiration.

Hung felt a flush on his face while his heart beat fast. With a light head now, he imagined himself flying in the air. He could not know all the joys brought by the Revolution, but at least he knew this one.

However, the shadow of the old regime still haunted his thinking. He felt malicious eyes on him. He tried to dispel this fear by reasoning, but to no avail. His knowledge of the Revolution was too small. The new social order which fulfilled the aims and desires of working people like himself, was nevertheless too new to be understood fully. In spite of that, his confidence in the new regime was firm - which gave him the strength to go ahead.

The following days were very busy for Hung. The manager decided to try out the production of a hundred and twenty tons of flavouring powder; so his time and energy were completely concentrated on that task. He stayed in the work-room and took his meals in the factory. Some nights he could sleep only for one hour. Sometimes he could not finish his meal without being called upon. Along with the workers he did three shifts on the machines. Many workers tried to persuade him to go to bed, but he refused. There were old workers who rebuked him:

"You don't trust us, it seems. You must let us to be masters, too. You always stand at our side, like a boss."

Far from displeasing Hung, this reproof made him better understand his work mates and sometimes moved him to tears. On the management's orders and out of esteem for him, the cooks brought him every night a bowl of soup or a bottle of sweet drink. This kindness had not been seen in pre-revolutionary days. Being a man of feeling, Hung was really affected. He rightly thought that money had an end while feeling lasted forever, especially a revolutionary feeling.

The production entered its fourth day. The fermentation was excellent and the first neutralization achieved. The cultures grew fast because all the making processes were correctly done. As the difficulties were readily

solved by the workers, there was no infection.

On the fifth day, when Hung was dozing the telephone rang up: "Second neutralization was coming, please come!" It was a quarter past two a.m. Hung was pleased with the success. Only two days more and one hundred and twenty tons of flavouring powder would be sifted and put into sachets. Though he had almost no rest for the past five days and nights, he did not feel tired and wondered why he was in such good form.

The passage leading to the machines where the second neutralization was being worked was a small corridor. The big glucose boilers with crisscrossed pipes were quiet after completing their work. "If all is well, from next week these boilers will have to work continually," Hung smilingly thought to himself.

While stepping down the staircase, Hung suddenly felt a heavy weight on his shoulder, then a violent pain reaching up to his head. A few more steps onto the ground floor, and he collapsed, unconscious.

In his coma he heard foot steps and voices in the distance. He strained his eyes, but again lost consciousness.

It was not until next afternoon that he came to and realized that he was in a hospital. After drinking eagerly a glass of milk given to him with a spoon by a nurse, he felt his thirst gone and his body warm again. In a weak voice he asked:

"Do you know when I came here?"

"The factory brought you here at a quarter past two last night."

"Who brought me here?"

"A white-haired man saying he is your father."

Hung frowned, then stammered:

"No, my father died long ago, when I was twelve. The white-haired man is the military manager of the enterprise."

The nurse was astonished:

"That is a surprise for me. This morning he called here twice and was upset because you hadn't regained consciousness."

"Did anybody else come?"

"A lot of workers from the factory, but I didn't let them come in. Only an old woman and a young one, after many entreaties, were allowed in.

The old woman said she is your mother and the other a neighbour of yours."

Hung smiled with a flush on his face:

"Well, the old woman is my mother but I don't know who is the neighbour as yet. What did my mother say?"

"She wept pitifully. Then she implored me to help put you on your feet again. As if we would abandon you to your death! She said that somebody had beaten you. Is that true? Strange, that you fight at two a.m. like children."

The girl's candid words amused Hung. She might not know what sorrow was.

"Can I go home tomorrow?"

The nurse looked at him:

"How can you? You have to stay here one week at the best."

Hung was worried about the batch of flavouring powder in the making at the factory. Second neutralization would be achieved tomorrow noon. The powder would be poured into troughs then put into a centrifugal machine to separate water from it, and tomorrow night it would be sifted and conveyed to the packing section. This important moment in the process made Hung anxious. Unaware of his thoughts, the nurse teased him:

"You miss your mother, it seems."

Hung answered with a lie:

"Do you know why I must go home tomorrow noon? I'm getting married..." Hung smiled.

Then the girl said mischievously: "If that is true you must stay here."

"Why?"

"Because your health cannot stand such a great happiness."

Upon this the girl left while Hung gazed at her white blouse disappearing behind the door and smiled.

His wound was a slight one. The villain perhaps intended to break his head but had failed, and Hung only got a bruise on his shoulder. Fortunately his clavicle was unhurt, so he was able to go home after two days of treatment. The more he feared the anonymous note, the more he hated and despised his enemy.

*
* *

HUNG went home in a car provided by the factory. His appearance made his mother weep. Smelling a concoction of oriental drugs, he asked her:

"Whar drug is that?"

Drying her tears with the lap of her dress, she answered:

"Yesterday the old man at the factory came and gave me forty thousand piasters to buy you some oriental drugs. I am making a concoction and intended to bring it to you in the hospital this evening. How are you now?"

"I am quite well. Do you have anything to eat, mum? I have to go to the factory."

"A meal is ready but you have to take a rest. I have been anxious about you these last days. If anything happened to you, my only son—the old woman felt a lump in her throat—the children and I would be alone."

Then she burst into sobbing. Very moved, Hung tried to comfort his mother:

"Death does not come so easily. Even in the past we managed to live through hard oppression. There is no fear if we love and help each other."

"And we have to be virtuous too. When you were in the hospital many people both men and women from the factory came and inquired about your health. They brought gifts and asked if we needed anything. I don't have anything to say about the gifts, but what is precious is the friendship in time of misfortune. So you have to appreciate your fellow-men."

Thinking of what the nurse had said, Hung asked his mother:

"By the way who came with you to the hospital yesterday?"

"Well, the children's mother. Abandoned by the plantation-owner, she called here before going to settle in the new economic zone but you didn't receive her; I was ten times more indignant with her than you, but now I feel sorry for her. Truth to tell, it was not entirely her fault; the corrupt society had also its part. She is now sorry and is having to rebuild her broken life. One should not beat people who come to you. Unlike the former society, this one prizes virtue. And it is precisely because we are virtuous that she comes to us, my son."

Hung was moved by his mother's generosity. Like her, he took pity on the woman. It was, however, a long way from pity to conjugal love.

"Is she still in Saigon or has she gone away, mother?"

"She went away yesterday noon. She said that she would invite the children and myself for a visit once she had her house built."

"Did she ask anything about me?"

Her mother smiled:

"She asked why you did not get a wife."

"What did you answer?"

"I said that you are afraid the children would be unhappy. Her eyes filled with tears and she answered: 'I am ashamed that I only thought of my own happiness.' I had to comfort her for a long time before she stopped sobbing. And not only she but the children also were unfortunate. So you have to solve the problem yourself. As for me, I am already old, I long to see you happy."

The story puzzled Hung. Mother and son understood each other quite well. He knew that his mother wanted him to pardon his wife but she did not say it openly, for she was aware that he would do as she wished, and she did not want to use her influence as a mother so that he would obey her. For his part, Hung could not give his mother a firm answer. To please her he said:

"Let me think it over. Such an important affair cannot be settled in one day."

Then he put on his working clothes and took his canvas cap and said:

"Now I have to go to the factory. The batch of flavouring powder will be ready for the sifting this afternoon."

While Hung was leaving home, the factory was in a bustle. The workers on the first shift who had finished their work an hour before, now gathered in front of the chemical testing room to wait for the result. The manager was discussing with the foremen the future plans for the factory. The cooks were preparing a large meal with deer meat to cele-

brate the production fulfilment. An atmosphere of festivity prevailed.

Meanwhile, the chemical testers were busy at work. They were excited at each result, and were embarrassed as people asked them over and over again about the test. While talking with the foremen the military manager kept on glancing at the room. The entire factory was waiting for the result.

At last, the chief tester went and reported the result to the management. Soon the workers who sat chatting in the yard rushed toward them.

"Ninety-nine degrees of protein," said the chief tester.

A whisper went round the crowd:

"How much, old chap?"

A foreman then cupped his hands to his mouth and shouted:

"Ninety-nine degrees of protein! The same as before the liberation!"

The clapping of hands came from one corner. A young woman worker jumped up and cheered.

The crowd milled toward the canteen, excited and speaking about the first batch of flavouring powder produced by themselves. Only those who had done the work could fully appreciate the success.

Hung arrived when the party was in full swing. Advancing quickly, he was immediately noticed by the manager who then went to meet him. Seeing that, many workers also gathered around him, inquiring about his health. It was ten minutes before order was restored.

The manager led Hung to the table and said to the whole gathering:

"Hung has just told me he will try to bring production to two hundred tons of powder each month, twenty tons more than before the liberation. Do you agree?"

A chorus was heard:

"Agreed! Agreed!"

Then a loud voice:

"Let us drink to our victory and to Hung's health!"

Many people approached Hung. Amid the clinking of glasses Hung was very moved. For the first time he was filled with an immense joy.

Saigon, November 1975.

XUAN DU

The Invisible Star of the Milky Way

(True story of pilot Nguyen Thanh Trung)

ON a runway of Bien Hoa puppet air-base, three F.5E fighters, standing side by side, were ready for the take-off. Two pilots, Ngo Hoang, captain, and Duy Anh, were chatting quietly, waiting for their mate: Lieutenant Ngo Luom, to complete the squadron.

The weather was most favourable for their bombing mission. Their craft would be the A.37 bombers. As in April 1975, divisions of infantry, marines and other crack units were badly mauled, the enemy stepped up his bombing raids to such an extent he had no more bombers available.

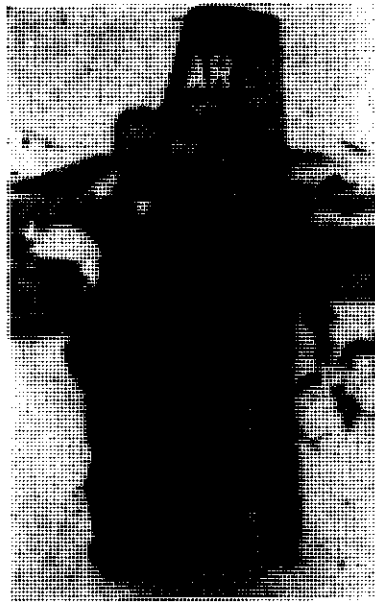
It was nearly time for the take-off, yet Luom was not in sight. On the runway, a young officer was scrutinizing the sky, impatient.

"Lieutenant Trung," said captain Ngo Hoang, "You are chafing at having no mission today!"

"Oh yes, of course. In such fine weather and in such circumstances! We've lost all the Central Highlands. And as a reservist, I'm twiddling my thumbs here!"

Editor's Note: On April 8, 1975, while the PLAF big offensive was going on in the provinces of central Viet Nam, Thieu's "Presidential Palace" was attacked by a mysterious F.5E, a type of warplane available only to Thieu's air force. On April 28, there was another air raid by A.37s American jet planes against Tan Son Nhat air-base. Nguyen Thanh Trung, an aviator of the puppet air force, took part in these acts of great courage and daring.

Who is Nguyen Thanh Trung?



Nguyen Thanh Trung (left), back from the bombing raid on the Tan Son Nhat air-base on April 28, 1975.

Ngo Hoang nodded his head in assent.

"Well," Trung went on after a short pause, "if Luom does not turn up, I volunteer to take his place."

His proposal came at the right moment: Hoang agreed, first because, being chief of the mission, it saved him a lot of trouble, then because Trung was one of the best pilots in the squadron.

Nha Trang, the target of the mission, was one of the two last provinces in central Viet Nam then under heavy pressure of the PLAF.

As he was about to taxi off, Hoang heard Trung's voice in his earphone:

"I'll join you in a second, captain! There's a fault in my plane which needs a small repair."

Troubles occurring at the time of the take-off are frequent. Hoang gave his consent and taxied off.

A few seconds later, when Trung left the runway his mates were already far away. Instead of catching up with them, he climbed and then turned to the right. Saigon was below. He could distinctly see the main thoroughfares, and at a crossroads a huge T-shaped building: the "Presidential Palace". It was half past eight. "Thieu is there, for sure," thought Trung.

In fact, arriving at 8 a.m. in his palace, Thieu immediately headed for his office where Vu Quang Chiem, chief of his military cabinet, was waiting. At the look of the latter, he had the premonition that no welcome news was expected. The PLAF were progressing toward Saigon from two directions. On the air, the Saigon colonels captured at Da Nang called on their troops to lay down their weapons while inveighing against Thieu and his regime.

Thieu ground his teeth. The army, which together with the police was the foundation-stone of his regime, began to disintegrate. However one last ray of hope remained for him: his air force — the third in the world according to the Americans — was still loyal to him.

All of a sudden, his palace was shaken by an explosion and a jet plane passed in the sky. No aircraft was allowed to fly over the "capital". He did not come to, yet a second explosion was heard. The AA batteries defending the palace cracked and increased his confusion. Like a robot, he was pushed into his shelter by an officer of his guard unit.

When General Cao Van Vien, chief of the General Staff, came

to the palace, he danced attendance for a long while before seeing his president who, wild looking, appeared in a dirty dress.

Thieu was facing the hard truth : at this crucial moment, he received a mortal blow from those whom he had considered to be the most trustworthy. Cao Van Vien hastened to express to him the loyalty of the army.

At noon Thieu appeared on the T.V. to thank God for having saved him from a "thoughtless act" performed "individually" by an airman.

That very night, the security service received orders to sift the records of all the officers and to immediately carry out investigations to find out the criminal among his men.

An officer not like the others

That morning, while she was about to go to market, Mrs Trung noticed something unusual in front of her house : two officers of the security forces were pacing to and fro. This augured ill. However she felt reassured, as she was the wife of an officer of the Saigon airforce. Her husband had left the house a short while before to go to Bien Hoa. He told her he was on the reserve list and would come back as usual. Immediately she realized that she was mistaken. The door opened and there stood an officer.

"Mrs Trung ?"

"Yes, I am."

"Will you please follow me !"

She started. A car was there to take her away.

"What have I done to be arrested ?"

She wanted to offer some resistance.

"Don't say this is an arrest, Madam ! A simple invitation to you to go on a business regarding yourself."

At Bien Hoa airbase, she was greeted by Truong, head of the security office, with a smile. But soon she "smelt a rat" and became vigilant.

After some honeyed words, Truong showed his hand :

"Has your husband any brother or sister ?"

"One sister and one brother."

"True ?"

"Why not ?"

"Has he any nickname ?"

"He has borne his name : Nguyen Thanh Trung since our wedding."

Truong shifted to another subject :

"Where is his father ?"

"Dead !"

"How did he die ?"

"By illness."

"No, it's not true"

"Why, you're surprised that an old man dies of illness ?"

Truong tried in vain to worm things out of her, who, anyhow, told all that she knew about her husband.

They had met each other after a trivial incident : she had trouble with her Honda ; a young man, kind, handsome and correct, came to her help. They met again many times afterwards. The romance led to a marriage and two children were born to them. Trung was very loving and kind to his wife and dear little ones. They lived a happy life.

Outwardly, Trung looked like the others. He wore a Nguyen Cao Ky-type moustache. With his mates in the air force he was boisterous, but at home he was a serious and thoughtful father, alien to drinking and smoking.

She knew that her husband had a mother and a younger sister, and perhaps some brothers. But he spoke little of his family.

Beside the time devoted to his dear ones, he liked to seclude himself with his radio set to which he listened with an earphone, sometimes very late into the night. Was he a crypto-revolutionary ? She suspected this since long and was afraid for him. But where he was now ?

A new mission

Towards the end of May 1969, Nguyen Thanh Trung, who was attending the second year of the Saigon Faculty of Sciences, was admitted to the Flying Officer Training School to which he had made an application the previous year. This time he joined an elite

unit in the army. Before leaving for Nha Trong where the school was located, a friend came to see him. The visit was short as the man only said laconically : "Come this evening to Mr Ba Hoan, at 7."

Ba Hoan, his uncle, lived in My Tho town. He was punctual at the appointment. His uncle presented him to a fifty years old man and vanished discreetly, leaving him alone with the stranger.

They talked at length or rather it was Trung who listened to the soliloquy of the man. Trung was visibly moved. The importance of the subject was gauged by the very cautious attitude of the stranger.

"Tomorrow, you'll enter the Flying Officer Training School. This will be your battleground. As a revolutionary, be firm and loyal to the Party. Be ready to face all eventualities. The Party has confidence in you and will guide you in all your actions. Be worthy of this confidence, of your father and your dear ones..."

Thus a new life began for Nguyen Thanh Trung.

At the school, he was appreciated by his American teachers. Once, the colonel director of the school patted him on the shoulders and said : "I am sure that you'll become a good chief. Bear in mind that the Vietnamese pilots are among the best in the world..."

Then he went through two years' probation in the US.

After his return to south Viet Nam, he manned first bombers, then fighters.

After each mission, his behaviour did not escape the inquisitive looks of his wife. Sometimes he was merry ; sometimes he was sad and crestfallen and preferred to sit alone in a corner.

The death of a Viet Cong

1963. An Khanh village in Ben Tre province was in utter confusion. Sergeant-major Thao, an unthinking supporter of the regime, led his men in an operation to hunt a "dangerous Viet Cong" whose presence in the locality had just been revealed.

The hunted man was Dinh Van Dau, secretary of the underground

District Party Committee, held responsible for all the misfortunes of the local administration. All attempts to capture him had failed up to this time. Dau, coming for a meeting of the cadres in his native village, called in to see one of his children who was sick. His house had been secretly watched by Thao and his men: Dau was shot dead and his corpse thrown into the river and his house burnt down.

Dau had three other sons, one of whom, Dinh Thanh Trung, lived with a relative in My Tho, to continue his secondary education. On that day, Trung and his brother, attracted by the smoke rising over their village, located 5 kilometres from the town as the crow flies, wanted to return to their house. At mid-way they were halted by one of their acquaintances who said: "Run away quickly! Your father has just been killed, your mother and sister led away and your house burnt. They are after you."

Dinh Thonh Trung retraced his steps; he saw Uncle Bay, a comrade of his father, and wanted to join the ranks of the militia, thinking that this was the only way to avenge his father and his village.

Uncle Bay advised him against such idea: "You're too young to do anything," he said. "Return to your study. Each has his role to play in the revolutionary struggle and a right place in it."

Dinh Thonh Trung made strong protest.

His uncle reassured him, saying: "There will be a job for you. During his life, your father and I had chosen a road for you, your brothers and sisters. For you, we had a special plan. We wanted to give you long and exacting work, so I say: go back to your school!"

"But..." said Trung, abashed.

Uncle Bay had a broad smile: "Of course, this is not for diplomas. But you must have a solid basis. Look!"

Uncle Bay stopped and pointed to the Milky Way in the sky.

"The night is serene and a myriad of stars are scintillating," he said. "Many are not visible to your sight. It's the same for the revolutionaries. Many are glittering but others have to be kept in the shade. Understand?..."

"Yes!"

"Then, from now on, your name Dinh Thanh Trung, son of the Communist Dinh Von Dau, will be changed into Nguyen Thanh Trung, son of Mr So-ond-So. Remember this."

Under that new identity, Nguyen Thanh Trung went on with his secondary education, then part of his scientific studies before applying for admittance to the Flying Officer Training School, while receiving a strict order not to reveal his true identity and personality. Being the son of a revolutionary killed by the traitors, and yet compelled to work with them and the aggressors, there were many times when he wanted to fly at the throat of his instructors, the American officers, and the torturers of his fellow countrymen. When, after his admission to the officers' school, he returned home to see his mother in his puppet army uniform, the old woman did not believe her eyes: had he so quickly forgotten his father and his brothers who were now underground fighters? Nguyen Thanh Trung felt the same pain, and promised to tell the truth to his mother some time in the future.

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The truth was so simple.

The wing lieutenant Nguyen Thanh Trung waited for the moment when he was able to carry out the "bombardment" for which he had made elaborate preparations. This occurred at last on the morning of April 8, 1975. He had no time to inform the liaison agent who, as agreed, should send his wife and children to safety.

Twenty days later, April 28, Nguyen Thanh Trung commanded a squadron of A. 37 bombers to storm Tan Son Nhut airbase. He was unaware that the Saigon security services had detained his wife and children at that airbase. Taking advantage of the confusion caused by the bombing, two PLAF men came and rescued the woman and the children.

Later Trung returned home to his wife, children and mother. This explains his action. A star has reappeared in the Milky Way.

Ha Dinh Nhuong
adapted by MAI HO

THE 10th Information Conference of Archaeologists in the DRVN has just been held in Hanoi. Meeting regularly for the last ten years there was gathered together this year nearly two hundred research workers of the Archaeological Institute, of the Social Sciences Committee, of the History section of the Hanoi University, the Institute and the Museum of History, in addition to those of various adjacent disciplines - anthropology, paleontology, geology, physics, chemistry, ethnography, linguistics... The scientists, members of the south Vietnamese delegation taking part in the 30th anniversary of the founding of the DRVN, deliberately prolonged their stay in the capital to attend the conference - a significant action carried out just at a time when preparations were being made to achieve the national reunification so much awaited by all the Vietnamese in the north as well as in the south.

Opening the session, Prof. Pham Huy Thong, Director of the Viet Nam Archaeological Institute, underlined the striking progress made by the recently formed archaeological branch in Viet Nam during the war years, and pointed to the ever increasing amount and quality of the work done in the last few years.

In fact, it emerges from the 90 reports and speeches made at the conference that our research workers had gathered a good harvest since the last conference held in 1974. Not only were some hypotheses corroborated and some data made clearer, but many gaps in time, as in space, were also filled.

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The attention of the audience was first drawn to the reports on the Tham Om cave, west of Nghe An province. The discovery, in that cave, of remains of a fossil man, of anthropoid and various fossil animals together with an implement made from a fragment of the late paleolithic age, confirms the presence of man in these regions as early as the remotest time; this was furthermore confirmed late in the fifties by the discovery of the important paleolithic site at Nui Do which dates back, according to some Vietnamese research workers, over 300,000 years. Among the find-

The 10th Information Conference of Archaeologists in the DRVN

ings the anthropologists and paleontologists of the Archaeological Institute noted:

- The presence of three fossil teeth of sapient characters mixed with those of the pithecanthrope with a predominance of the former. They think that in the present stage of the research, these remains can be classified half-way between *homo sapiens* and *homo erectus*, pending more profound studies.

- An implement hewn from a quartz fragment cut according to the clactonian technique very similar to those of the late Searian in India. The interest of the object is the fact that it has been discovered together with the probable remains of its maker, rather than in itself, a thing that had never happened in Viet Nam before.

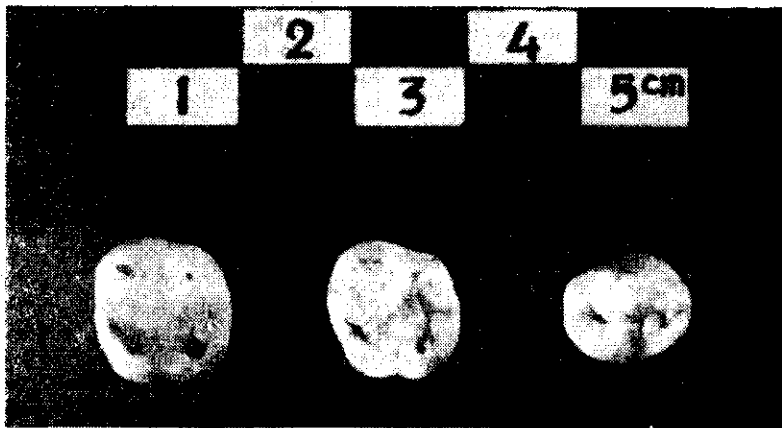
- An incisor of the upper jaw of the *gigantopithecus blacki*, this main fossil of the Villafranca fauna which was discovered in China and Pakistan some time ago. It is however the first time that it is found at such a southern latitude.

The authors of the report also recall, among other things the findings made previously at Thám Khuyen (Lang Son province) and Hang Hum (Yen Bai province) - teeth of *pithecentropus pekinensis* at Thám Khuyen and teeth of *homo sapiens* in a layer containing the fauna of early pleistocene at Hang Hum - which, added to the last discovery, made it possible to obtain a glimpse of part of the evolution of man in these regions of Asia in the period corresponding to the end of the Mindel-Riss inter-ice age and to the Riss glaciation in Europe (dated back for 250,000 - 140,000 years to the present time).

Within the same framework, there is another series of reports of great interest regarding the discovery of human remains in sepulchres with coffins made of grooved tree trunks in the Chau Can, Phú Xuyên district, Hà Tây province, with two skulls (the best ones ever preserved by Vietnamese anthropologists), one belonging to a woman

about thirty, and the other to a man of sixty. These ovoid dolichocephalic, and hypsicephalic, with short, large, lightly prognathous faces, and low orbits and metopic suture, were examined by Dr Do Xuan Hop who pointed to some Australoid traits. Other research workers, on the contrary, laid stress on the Indonesian predominance. Let us recall that the anthropologists call Indonesian those who had a mixture of Australoid and Mongoloid features represented now by the majority of the population of the Central Highlands in south Viet Nam. In any case that important discovery supplied a new element of the "yellowing" process of the Australoid which would finally have led to the present Viet, going through, as upheld by some research workers, an archaic form of Mongoloids. It also enables us to fill the gap on the onthropologic map of Viet Nam at the neo and cholcolithic periods, not to mention that the mode of interment and the black lacquered teeth of these persons undoubtedly offer some interest insofar as paleaethnology is concerned.

While there was no important finding (save the quartz artefact belonging to the late Paleolithic age), this astounds nobody as rarity is the characteristic of the discovery made of remote times - the archaeologists have excavated many sites belonging to a more recent epoch. Many reports regarding the discovery of important deposits at Ban Pho, Cum Don and Sap Viet were furthermore presented at the conference. These three sites located either on the river terraces or on the hills along the Da river (Black river), in Son Lo province, supplied lithic material interesting in many fields. Though found in a cultural stratum without apparent stratigraphy, the typology of artifacts is such that the



Fossil molars of cavemen unearthed in Thám Om (Nghe An province).

archaeologists could easily recognize a succession of many industries. The oldest is composed of pebble implements roughly hewn, akin to those of the Son Vi culture discovered in the hilly regions of Vinh Phu province. Those at Ban Pho which have a rough workmanship are certainly older still; according to their discoverers, they could be classified in the "pre-Son Vi industry". Then comes Hoo Binh material: implements hewn on only one side; tools of a big sub-rectangular section; short axes and amygdaloid implements. It is worth recalling that that industry, discovered in 1925, in the grottos of Hoa Binh province (North Viet Nam), has since then become the subject of a great number of works of foreign and Vietnamese research workers, and is generally considered as belonging to the mesolithic age. The dates obtained with C14 for various sites in Viet Nam and Thailand vary between 9,000 and 11,000 years ago. From the sites at Son La were discovered polished stone implements comparable to those of the Phung Nguyen industry considered by many as belonging to the bronze age and coinciding chronologically with the beginning of the Hung Kings' period, the period of the foundation of the Van Lang State. The research workers conclude that the discovery of that group of deposits has on the one hand confirmed the existence of a pebble industry "in the open" — the Son Vi industry, — and even added a new and earlier link to that industry, regarded at present as the oldest of what the Vietnamese archaeologists called "pebble tradition"; and on the other hand, enabled us to follow the evolution of local lithic industries since that "pre Son Vi" of Ban Pho dating from the end of the paleolithic age to the Phung Nguyen culture.

This leads us to speak of the reports regarding such and such aspects of the Hung Kings' period which coincides chronologically with the more recent industries of the Phung Nguyen, Dong Dau and Go Mun, and with the famous Dong Son era. Their great number shows that the subject remains the most important of the archaeological research in the DRVN. In addition

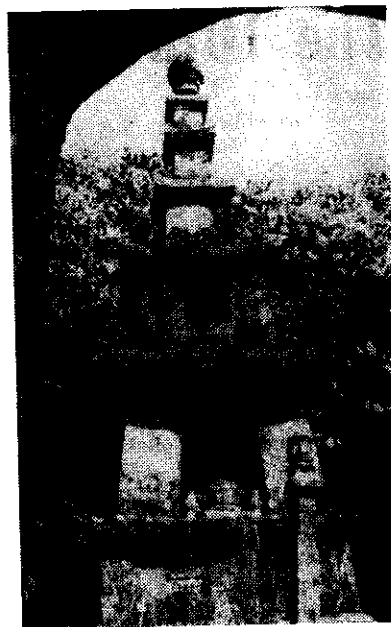
to the far-reaching study carried out on the materials collected during the previous excavations, the spectrographic examination of earthenware; the experimental manufacture of stone bracelets and the interpretation of an engraved tablet found at Phung Nguyen — the research workers devoted their efforts to the discovery of new deposits with the aim of recognizing the limits of the country at the moment of its birth. The successes are numerous such as the discovery of the Hoa Loc and Phu Loc sites in the district of Hau Lac (Thanh Hoa province), of Tri Oi site (Nghe An province), that of Me Bac cave (Lang Son province). Though of recent date, the archaeological collections gathered at these sites show each several particular characteristics. Excavations made at Hoa Loc and Phu Loc covering an area of 1,500 square metres reveal mainly:

- the lithic objects generally found in the neolithic deposits in Viet Nam (rectangular axes, shouldered axes, polishers...) and also lesser known artefacts such as true hoes having nearly the same size as the present day metallic hoes; asymmetrical blade implements, prefigurations of bronze implements of identical shape; ploughshares; and

- particularly abundant and richly decorated pottery: containers of various shapes, bracelets, earrings, pearls, matrices having variegated designs, probably used in the decorations of earthenware, whose reproduction however has not been found up to the present time; a type of article of parallelepipedic shape similar to the old inkstands of Chinese scribes whose use still remains enigmatical.

The study, still limited, of rich material which dates back, according to the discoverers, to the third millenary B.C. already enables us to confirm the existence in these regions of tribes of husbandmen whose regular activities were hunting and fishing.

The open site at Trai Oi and the Me Bac cave have not been entirely investigated. However, a collection has been made at Trai Oi of a lithic implement set composed solely of stone axes (about thirty) the polishing of which did not



The Hue Quang tower (Yen Tu, Quang Ninh province) built under the Tran dynasty.

erose all the traces left by the rough dressing. It is interesting to note that on all the artefacts found, the angle formed by the edge of the implement and its shoulder is obtuse. Together with that implement was found earthenware decorated with parallel lines and covered with a red slip. The excavators think that all these particularities make of Trai Oi a neolithic site nearer to those in southern Trung Bo than to those in the midlands of Bac Bo, dating back roughly to the third millenary B.C. The Me Bac cave, dug on the flank of a limestone mountain, contains archaeological material far less important than the two previous ones. It is also a material of the latest neolithic.

Other reports acquaint us with the excavations of lithic objects made virtually everywhere: Hoo Binh implements in the districts of Tuong Duong and Con Cuong (highland of Nghe An) and along National Highway No. 7; pebble implements in the lime stone mountains of Nghia Lo, in the provinces of Hoa Binh and Quang Ninh and on the hills of Ha Bac...

The new discoveries of bronze articles have been mentioned in a

great number of reports made at the conference. We cite several bronze drums of Heger type I and II, found in Nghe An (where was also discovered a statuette of Buddha of the same alloy), in Nam Ho, Ha Toy and Thanh Hoa. Others findings were made at Dan Phuong and Binh Tan (Vinh Phu province), at Yên châu (Son La province) at Dan Ne Thuong (Thanh Hoa province)... Regarding these discoveries, the research workers propose to make new classifications of drums type I found so far.

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A great part of the work was devoted to the feudal epoch. Large-scale excavations were made in the premises of the domain belonging to Prince Tran Quang Khai, a high-ranking dignitary of the Tran dynasty (13th century), at the necropolis of the kings of that dynasty at Tam Duong (Thai Binh province). The research workers were also interested in the pagodas and stupas at Yen Tu (Quang Ninh province) of the same period, and discovered in that holy land of Buddhism, sanctified by Tran Nhan Tong (who spent the rest of his life there), a stone statue of that monarch, who was victorious over the Yuans.

Other archaeologists are furthermore interested in ancient cities, among others, Lam Kinh (located in the present province of Thanh Hoa), second capital of the Le, Long Yên (Ha Bac province) and chiefly Thang Long (now Hanoi).

In this respect, it is worth noticing an interesting fact: as everyone knows, President Ho Chi Minh's mausoleum was inaugurated in August last. The monument is built in Ba Dinh square, on the old site of the western gate of the ancient imperial citadel. It was necessary to save at any cost the vestiges of the past which could have lain underground, a problem which constantly occupied the minds of the builders working in the countries having a rich past and where the building of roads and factories could risk, at any moment, the destruction of precious vestiges of that past. Here the

officials responsible for the site met with the representatives of all the research bodies concerned and asked them to do the work in such a way that these traces be saved from the bulldozers but without hampering the progress of the work. During the session, an ad hoc committee was set up and immediately got down to the task. Thus, it was possible to discover a section of a wall west of the old imperial citadel, together with an important collection of articles dating back to the Ly and Tran epoch, including stone projectiles, architectural motifs, chinaware, bronzed bricks and tiles, and a round structure, kind of well full of bones of animals belonging to some fifty types of savage or domestic species having a kinship between them, as certain discoverers thought, with magical rites. The present study of these articles has supplied precious information in relation to the history of the capital, which fully justifies the efforts made by the archaeologists and also by the officials responsible for the site, whose example, in our opinion, should be followed.

As said above, many research workers connected with various branches of archaeology took part in the conference. Thus we were able to get acquainted with such branches of research as geology, palynology, paleontology, chemistry, physics. For example, an ethnologist presented, together with other archaeologists, an essay on the interpretation of the rupestral engravings found at Chapa: they are designs engraved on nearly one hundred blocks the size of which varies between $1 \times 2 \times 2$ metres and $12 \times 6 \times 8$ metres, disposed without any apparent order in the Muong Hoa valley. From these extremely complex designs the authors of the report gave the following opinions:

- absence of representations of birds, animals and scenes of hunting as frequently seen in rupestral paintings all over the world;

- the designs seem to reflect the knowledge of a population in the first stage of agriculture, having some details more apparent than the others: representation of the

valley of Muong Hoa with its streams, tracks, terraced ricefields, in deeply engraved lines partially covered with moss; men and women having protuberant genital organs, sometimes coupled, which could give an idea of fecundity; squares and circles grouped by couple, doubtlessly symbols of yin and yang; rings with irradiations or beams inside similar to the wheels, both of which are perhaps two images of the sun; a house on stilts with curved roof, looking like that of the Malayo-polyesian people and, not in the least like the local dwellings, save those of the Phu La living about one hundred kilometres from there.

Though brief, that essay attracted much attention, which was an important part of bringing to the forefront that type of vestige which was very rare in those regions.

Finally, in another short report, an official of the Archaeological Institute summed up the situation of archaeology in south Viet Nam before liberation, thus supplying some data for the elaboration of a plan of research covering the whole country in the years to come.

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Closing the conference, Prof. Pham Huy Thong pointed to the orientation of future archaeological research; he was sure that in the flush of the present achievements, archaeological science now spreading all over the country bids fair to make considerable progress.

He said: "To develop archaeological research means to tackle new problems, possible only with the liberation of the whole country, and also to continue the studies which have been started in the north, but in more favourable conditions. Our ranks are swelling with people ready to do that work. We are encouraged by the success obtained during the years of resistance against the American aggressors, and we are resolved to contribute to national construction in the new stage. The archaeologists in the north as well as in the south are not only ready to take this work in hand; they have begun it."

D.N.H.

The Vietnamese College for Theatrical Arts



Tuong costume and make-up.

ONE of Hanoi's noteworthy cultural institutions is the Vietnamese College for Theatrical Arts (*Trường Nghệ Thuật Sân Khôu Việt Nam*). Over 200 students and teachers are learning and teaching in this school built in 1959 under the name of School for Traditional Theatre (*Trường Ca Kịch Dân Tộc*). As can be seen by the name, the curriculum included, from the outset, the three genres of Vietnamese theatre: the *tuông*, for a long period fostered by the feudalists and improperly termed classical; the *chèo*, popular theatre much in vogue with northern peasants; and the *cai luong*, reformed theatre hailing from the south, — and the popular traditional musical instruments. Subsequently two other disciplines were added, the spoken theatre (*kich*

noi) and the staging. Thus the name, Vietnamese College for Theatrical Arts. There, future actors, instrumentalists and producers are trained; stage professionals are improved, and research is conducted into Vietnamese drama.

The teaching body secured the participation of reputed artists Tam Danh, Ba Du and Le Dau, two dramatic singers and a moon-guitar player in the *cai luong* genre, Nguyen Nho Tuy and the married couple Ngo Thi Lieu — Nguyen Lai for southern *tuông*, Doan thi Nga and the pair Bach Tra — Quang Ton for northern *tuông*, Nam Ngu and his female colleague Minh Ly in the *chèo*... Most of those stage veterans with over half a century of practice and past masters in their profession have been rendering remarkable services by their efficient assistance right from the early years of the school, in training a team of young coaches who since then have matured in their work. By their comprehensive understanding of tradition coupled with a clear vision of Vietnamese reality, and also for many of them with long theatrical activity they are now the guarantee for a high standard of instruction which has already proved fruitful.

The didactic method perfected after much experimenting is decisive of the results attained. Dramatic study for four years is planned under vocational secondary education schemes. Beside the main subject matter, it includes stage theory, general cultural studies comprising Marxist aesthetics, literature, history and geography. The first two academic years are spent in general studies on the theatre. In the third year, the students are introduced to classical roles and excerpts from classical works such

as *Quan Am Thi Kinh* (Thi Kinh Deified) and *Kim Nham* (or the Betrayed Wife Turning Mad) for the *chèo*, *Dao Tam Xuan* (on a woman's patriotism under the feudal regime) for the *tuông*, *Phung Nghi Dinh* and *Kieu Nguyet Nga* (two subjects from popular literature) for the *cai luong*. These are treated in their technical details, from the gesture of drinking and straking one's beard to more elaborate stage actions and gestures. After some technical ability is reached, seniors in the fourth or final year practice personal creation on modern plays which give priority to historic themes. If the *chèo* play *Tinh Rung* (Love of Forest) deals with socialist construction the *tuông* play *Tieng Goi Non Song* (the Nation's Call) is dedicated to Ngo Quyen, a Vietnamese hero who in 938 drove out the Northern invaders and regained national independence. Another play, *De Tham*, tells of Hoang Hoa Tham's resistance against French domination, while the *cai luong* piece *Vo Thi Sau* refers to the young heroine by this name who fought the French colonialists. In the music section all students are obliged to get acquainted with three traditional instruments.

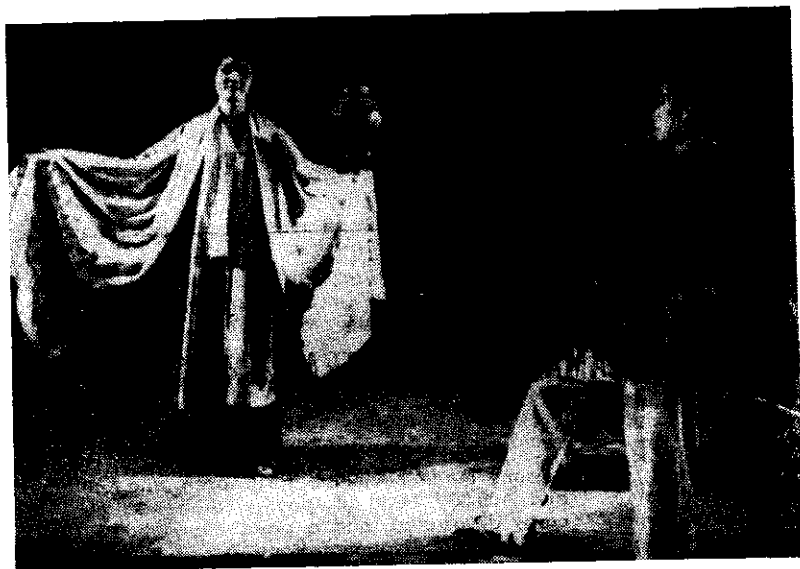
Previously, oral work merely require students to learn by heart the songs and tunes, dances and sequences. This process ran counter to the national dramatic spirit the general tendency of which was improvisation and individual creation, and not to servile copying. Moreover, one could not speak of rigid formulae and canons with Vietnamese theatre, both professional and folk, which is a social process always evolving. So is *chèo* extempore, an artistic communion

VIET NAM COURIER

between the actor and his public, and one of this genre's great delights, in which popular verve will be at its best. The distinction between northern and southern *tuong* does not mean a generic classification, but mere stylistic nuances also noticed in individual performances. Bach Tra's acting is not the same as her husband Quang Ton's though they both pertain to northern *tuong*. Lastly, the *cai luong*, and the *tuong* as well, will develop frequent variations as they are sung in northern or southern intonations. Nowadays the accent is laid on critical assimilation which encourages personal initiative: the interpreters are invited to analyze each role and play and fathom their psychology in order to be able not only to sing and move with artistry but also to grasp the deep reason for such and such scenic behaviour and realize a constant unity between

selection of *cheo* tunes (*Su dung lan dieu cheo*) by Hoang Kieu, a research worker and the College's director; the *cai luong* choreography course (*Giao trinh vu dao cai luong*) by Tam Danh, the septuagenarian artist known both in the north and the south; the moon guitar course (*Giao trinh dan kim*) by Le Dau, responsible for the *cai luong* section. Other synthetical works are being written with a view to enhancing the theoretical level of imparted subjects. A music course prepares the student to make use of musical scores. If they fail to convey a faithful translation of vernacular themes (for lack of an appropriate notation) but produce nevertheless melodic sketches which are helpful for memorization, direct reference is then necessary for the execution of specific embellishments. Basic choreography is likewise essential to attaining an original, intelligent and sensible plastic

complete 30 strong *cai luong* cast. Graduates of the 70's displayed a solid stage knowledge and a progressive understanding of advanced general cultural studies. One thousand active professionals have in the meantime received supplementary instruction. Lastly, the most qualified musicians have taken in hand two-thirds of all traditional orchestras created within DRVN artistic companies. Former students are starting promising careers. Thanh Vi who belongs to the first *cai luong* course (1959-1963) is nowadays the *prima donna* of the *Doan Cai Luong Nam Bo* (Southern *cai luong* company). She was chosen on three occasions to join the DRVN art ensembles on tour in Paris for her genuine embodiment of the South Vietnamese heroine Vo Thi Sau in the play of this name. Nguyen Anh from the Central Company of Spoken Theatre, Kim Cuc and Hoa Binh from the Southern *tuong* Company, Man Thu from the Northern *tuong* Company who also graduated from the College for Theatrical Arts, are already making a reputation before the public.



A scene from the *cheo* opera "The Jar of Magic Water".

form and content at the service of the realization of the dramatic work. Photos and tapes illustrate the explanations and complete the master's examples.

This pliable and dynamic instruction bases itself on written courses which contribute to the study of Vietnamese traditional music and dance. Examples are the analytical

language. Trial performances allow social flow and exchange. Each time our future actors' technique will gain in freshness and subtlety.

Over 800 young actors, musicians and producers have been granted their artistic diplomas. The two first courses trained most of the present teachers. They supplied moreover Vinh Phu province with a

End-of-the-year performances show the continuous progress of theatrical instruction. They crowned in the October 1974 season at the traditional Hong Ha playhouse the third course of 12 producers (among them four women) and consecrated the social and professional growth of these actors who all record a long service in culture and the arts. With the May 1975 performances in celebration of the national victory, five successive soirées at the Hanoi Municipal Theatre for the four specialities *tuong*, *cheo*, *cai luong* and *kich noi* were drawing full houses. The first-night public was given an opportunity to see for themselves the rise of a generation of stage workers whose common feature is their creative individuality and their earnest quest of a proper stage language which does not break with tradition. Their inborn sense of theatre helps them fulfill all their jobs either scenic (satirical, lyrical, burlesque or dramatic roles) or scenographic (setting, costume, realization) involved in a regular presentation.

Last year's slogan "to prefer quality to quantity" is, so to say, overreached. Young talents matur-

ing each year are numerous and cover all fields. In 1974, a third course of *kich noi* actors graduated. It is followed this year by a fourth *cheo* course. 27 actors and instrumentalists of both sexes around twenty years of age completed with success their last tests. Before returning to their respective groups the new graduates had their first official performances with *Quan Am Thi Kinh*, a traditional play, and the premiere of *Ngoi Saa Dau Nui* (the Star over the Mountain), a modern creation drawing its material from the anti-French resistance at the time of Dien Bien Phu. They all possess a substantial traditional fund of solid theoretical knowledge for the production of stage environment and the representation of characters. Among them is the grand daughter of the late actress Trinh Thi Lon (1880-1972) alias Co Tam (the elder Tam). As a worthy scion of her illustrious grandmother, Young Thanh Binh gave a flowless reading of various roles, traditional and modern, in vocal discipline as well as in style and expression. She was at once

cast into the *Cheo* Central House (*Nha Hat Cheo Trung Uong*). The liberation of the South is for the College an opportunity to extend its activities to national scope. With a view to fostering the *cai luong* on its favourite terrain, four young teachers, chosen among the most qualified, went to the south to work at the Saigon Music and Theatrical College. Three best students of the 4th *cai luong* course also left for the south one year before their graduation to complete the cost of the Liberation *cai luong* Company.

These achievements have great political and social value when compared to the pitiful situation of Vietnamese traditional theatre prior to 1945. The French colonialists and the so-called native elite trained only to entertain them were working hard at disparaging anything that was likely to make people think of a national culture. Traditional theatre was looked down as an amusement of the "mob". In "indigenous" areas private companies were keeping body and soul together with their mediocre plays

cleverly arranged by colonial censorship to better noax the people and corrupt their tastes. Actors and musicians regarded as riff-raff were a "dirty crew" (*xuong ca va loai*). It was a gloomy time for national theatre. Even in the first years of the people's power, traditional stage and its social standing were far from being properly appreciated. Witness that strange decision by an art congress in 1950 finding the *tuong* "not proper to serve the resistance". Patient education undertaken by the Party in the light of the "Thesis on Vietnamese culture" (*De cuong van hoa Viet Nam*) published as early as 1943 put our artists on the right path to their present progress.

"WHEN the bamboo grows old, the young shoots sprout." This saying permeated with optimism, this poetic image of the ascending younger generation finds its illustration in the results achieved by our Colleague for Theatrical Arts, a genuine nursery

FACTS AND EVENTS

MAKING GOOD THE FLOOD DAMAGES IN CENTRAL TRUNG BO

IN October last, central Trung Bo suffered a major flood. In this region of Viet Nam, October is usually regarded as the month of floods and typhoons. Of the 84 storms taking place between 1930 and 1974, the 29 biggest occurred in October. The narrow plains in central Trung Bo are watered by many short but turbulent rivers; thus in the rainy season, the water level rises very swiftly, causing big inundations. In 1932, from 2.30 metres in went up to 6 metres high within 10 hours in certain areas.

In October 1970, under the US-puppet rule, Trung Bo experienced a flood unknown for a quarter-century, caused by the Lewis typhoon: the whole area, running from Quang Tri to Quang Ngai, was under water. The damage stated by the Thieu administration was, of course, far below the truth and was given as follows: nearly 400 people dead or missing; 27,104 houses were carried away by the current; 35,932 houses seriously damaged; 350,000

persons made homeless, 1,518 oxen and buffaloes and 100,000 head of poultry drowned; 60% of crops devastated and a great many boats sunk; the traffic on National Road No. 1 was interrupted for one week. In face of the catastrophe, the puppet authorities showed a most irresponsible attitude. Together with the epidemics which followed in its wake, the flood was a godsend for the US quislings. They pressganged the youth into the puppet army and the comprador capitalists engaged in illicit transactions and got rich on the sufferings of the flood victims.

The flood which, from October 16 to 19, 1975, devastated the four provinces of central Trung Bo, was the sequel of a whirlwind, not of a typhoon, taking place at a low altitude near the seacoast, and of a gust of cold wind blowing from the north. Within three days, from October 16 to 18, the rainfall was 350 mm at Da Nang, and over 1,000 mm in Thua Thien and Quang Nam provinces. Thua

of young talents. One of the far-reaching policies designed to this end by the Party was the solicitude shown towards artists of the old stock. With peace and reunification they can now compare their lot to their southern colleagues. The septuagenarian lady *Doan Thi Nga* heard that her octogenarian husband and colleague *Do Chi Duc*, who had gone to the south in 1954, only suffered deception and rebuffs under American occupation and the puppet regime. This *tuong* veteran, though talented, could not escape strains and moral distress. He was finding himself among the first recipient of an emergency subsidy granted by the new power to social outcasts. On her part she remained in the north, enjoying great regard from a State institution where she could cultivate her art and transmit it to the young artists. Her grand daughter *Thu Giang* is a living image of hers. This four-year old little girl shows an exceptional gift and already performs for the public and on Vietnamese T.V. As regards *Ba Du*, an old *cai luong*

artist regrouped in the north in 1954, he realizes all his happiness after a two-month pilgrimage in his beloved native south. Old colleagues such as *Nam Chau* and *Ba Van* acquainted him with the misunderstanding and the isolation they had long suffered from a society alienated by the Yankee presence, where the theatre moved towards a vocal contest especially for young folk, and lost much of its expressive playing which made it so attractive, and of the realistic content which gave it a social bearing. The same may be said with regard to the other traditional artists now teaching in our College for Theatrical Arts and national companies. Brought up in dignity, these pious veterans of the cultural heritage have grown conscious of their noble mission. Their dedication and experience give our stage workers the use of past treasures of knowledge, snort of which all artistic creation would be factitious and doomed to failure.

Teachers and students are convinced that just as in other cultural fields, the sources of theatre

lie in the people's life which each generation discovers in the light of contemporary knowledge; that Vietnamese theatre, a total art by its technique integrating in a perfect symbiosis songs and dances, music and mimicry, is before all, in term of content, a social and national message, that of a patriotic people fond of liberty and peace; lastly if scenic dance is to be expressive and excludes all formalistic show, scenic singing irrespective of the genre reveals an operatic character all the more attractive as it marvellously respects the most delicate inflections of the national language according to inherent laws that must be understood in order to develop its further expression and that of the whole of Vietnamese music.

Both in practical and theoretical spheres the Vietnamese College for Theatrical Arts stands as an example of the development of the cultural and artistic life in the DRVN at its present stage of nationwide socialist construction.

DAO TRONG TU

Thien and Hue city were the hardest hit. In Hue, the water level which is usually 2.5 or 3 metres above sea level, rose to 4.9 metres. In Quang Tri and Quang Ngai provinces, the damage was light but Duy Xuyen and Dien Ban districts, Quang Nam province, were the first to be rescued.

During the flood, the local authorities mobilized the guerillas and militiamen to combat the flood and save the population with the assistance of the regular forces. On October 17, 38,000 people in Hue and 11,000 others in Quang Nam, most of them old people, women and children, were brought to safety. The engineering units quickly repaired the damaged roads and built bridges to facilitate the transport of rescue parties and supplies.

In the north, immediately after the decision taken by the Government Council, a delegation composed of ministers and vice-ministers of the various ministries concerned, visited the flood-stricken areas, and relief was very quickly sent to the spot, even by planes: 90,000 loaves of bread were airlifted on October 18 for the victims at Quang Nam and Da Nang, and rice and other primary commodities were sent in by the State Trade services. In Thua Thien, 300 medical workers carried out a campaign of prophylactic hygiene to prevent epidemics.

During the flood, security and order was maintained and people's property was properly protected. In Hue, a city of 230,000 souls, only 23 cases of petty larceny were recorded. The inhabitants took care of public property: at Tan Huong, a village of 4,000 families near Hue, 148 ran out of food, but nobody thought of taking rice from a State granary nearby; the population was so grateful to the revolution and respected the leaders and militia who rescued them.

This calamity was an occasion when the local people could make a comparison between the present regime and the former one. From his heart, old *Le Van Ngoc* from Duy Xuyen district said: "Thanks to the revolution which has liberated the country, we are no longer afraid of dying from floods and hunger."

At present the aftermaths of the October 1975 flood in central Trung Bo are being overcome step by step. From the north and from the south of the country, lorries, trains and ships transport to the flood victims all kinds of goods: foodstuffs, clothes, medicines, farm implements, rice seeds, fertilizers, sows, piglets, oxen and buffaloes, to help restore normal life and production.

The strength of reunified Viet Nam finds its full expression in this fight against flood.

BOOK REVIEW

TRẦN VĂN GIÀU: *Ideological Development in Viet Nam from the 19th Century to the August Revolution (Sự phát triển của tư tưởng ở Việt Nam từ đầu thế kỷ XIX đến Cách mạng tháng Tám)* Vol. II: *The Bourgeois Ideological System and Its Failure in the Historical Tasks (Tập II: Hệ ý thức tư sản và sự bất lực của nó trước các nhiệm vụ lịch sử)*. Social Sciences Publishing House (Nhà xuất bản Khoa học Xã hội), Hanoi, 1975, 612 pages.

III

WHILE in the 19th century, the feudal ideological system exercised absolute authority and failed in its historical tasks, in the early 20th century in Viet Nam, two ideological systems exerted their influence in similar historical conditions: the bourgeois ideological system and the proletarian ideological system.

Volume II in the three-volume work of Professor Tran Van Giau deals with the bourgeois ideological system, its manifestations and transformations during nearly half a century. The book has five chapters. Chapter I contained a survey of ideological development in Viet Nam from the first years of the 20th century to World War I. Chapter II is reserved for Phan Boi Chau. Chapter III is about the historical conditions of ideological development in Viet Nam between the two world wars. Chapter IV deals with the activities of the main religious groups: Cao Dai, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and Christianity. Chapter V, the last, discusses the various shades of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism: "moderate" nationalism, reformist nationalism and revolutionary nationalism.

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After twenty-five years of aggression (1858-1883) and nearly fifteen years of "pacification" (1883-1897), French imperialism had turned Viet Nam, formerly an independent country, into a colony. When their colonialist rule had been consolidated, the French began the first period of large-scale exploitation, and a new division of Vietnamese society into classes took place simultaneously with the new developments. The peasants, who constituted the majority of the population, were the main victims of colonial and feudal exploitation and were consequently the principal force of the national revolution. But many new towns had appeared; the capitalist relations of production were developing, a local bourgeoisie came into being after the formation of the proletariat which, however, remained a class "by itself" and had not become an independent political force.

Japan's victory over Russia (1904-1905) brought a current of "renovation" and "self-reliance" into changing Vietnamese society. Because in those days Chinese characters were still used, Vietnamese intellectuals came into contact with Western bourgeois democracy through the works of modern Chinese scholars such as Kang Yu-wei, Liang Kai-hsiao and Sun Yat-sen. Although it had become out-dated in the West,

Western bourgeois democracy opened a "new horizon" to progressive intellectuals of the old school. The latter were trying to determine the causes of defeat and loss of independence, and find the way to national salvation. They wanted to "develop the people's mind" and "restore the people's spirit in order to "rehabilitate Viet Nam". Though of Confucian education, they tried to learn about new ideologies so that they might carry out the tasks of national salvation and renovation.

Phan Boi Chau was most representative of patriotic thought in Viet Nam in the early 20th century. He was, in the first place, a politician devoted to the cause of national salvation; and all his thought were closely linked with the realities of the struggle for national liberation. For national salvation, he stressed the role of "man" and his "natural goodness". He thought not of the "eternal man", but of man who could change the course of history, man with a will, with a determination to struggle for national liberation. He defined the Vietnamese man's "natural goodness" as love of the country and of the fellow-countrymen, love of independence and of freedom. And the type of man Phan Boi Chau was thinking of was that which the Vietnamese revolution needed. His "natural goodness", if obstructed or destroyed, must be restored, and on this basis, he would be urged to stand up and fight against the foreign aggressors. For these reasons, Phan Boi Chau's thought which was pervaded with humanism also showed confidence in his fellow-countrymen's patriotism and in the people's revolutionary capabilities. This confidence led to the advocacy of "a new culture" to develop the people's mind and the invocation of the national spirit to rouse the people to action.

To "rehabilitate Viet Nam", Phan Boi Chau founded the *Duy Tan Hoi* (Society for Renovation) (1904) of which *Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc* (The Tonkin Institute of Studies) (1907) was the legal and public body, and *Quang Phuc Hoi* (Society for Restoration) (1912). The conception and organization

of a patriotic political party of the Vietnamese people was characteristic of Phan Boi Chau's thought. The advocacy of "a war against the French to rehabilitate Viet Nam", that is an armed insurrection to gain national independence, was also characteristic of Phan Boi Chau and makes him different from other politicians, such as Phan Chu Trinh. Because he was always thinking of "fighting against the French", Phan Boi Chau spoke much about the role of women and the tradition of the Trung Sisters, Lady Trieu, about agitation work among enemy troops, unity between non-Christians and Christians. This again shows that Phan Boi Chau always looked at ideology from the standpoint of patriotism, that was why he could see the colonialists' scheme to use religion to divide the nation, and avoid the error of the policy of "fighting the French and killing the Christians" of those who advocated war in former days.

But owing to his stand, Phan Boi Chau also had shortcomings. For instance, to obtain aid for the revolution, he relied too much on the Japanese, a people "of the same race, same culture and living on the same continent." He forgot Japan's imperialist character, and "awakened" to that fact only when that country signed an agreement with France and expelled the Vietnamese revolutionaries. He then turned to the Chinese revolution and to countries "suffering from the same evils" as Viet Nam. In his "Letter written in blood from abroad", he spoke of ten categories of people grouped according to their occupations, position, religion, etc., but failed to mention the attitude of different classes and social strata toward the revolution, and to stress the role of workers, peasants and of the minority peoples. These shortcomings resulted from Phan Boi Chau's political thinking in those days. During the period of *Duy Ton Hoi* he advocated a constitutional monarchy. At the time of *Quang Phuc Hoi* he was leaning toward bourgeois democracy. The October Revolution, which would have enlightened him, had not yet taken place.

When World War I broke out in Europe, Phan Boi Chau thought that the opportunity had come for members of the *Quang Phuc Hoi*

"to start action, like ants stinging an elephant's trunk, mosquitoes penetrating into a lion's ears, to pester them to death" (*Tu phe phan* - Self-criticism). In 1917, when he came to Yunnan and saw French flags along the Kunming - Hanoi railway, he wrote: "I was dumbfounded, and my feet were numb." This dismay was common to most members of the *Quang Phuc Hoi*. It marked the failure of a revolutionary movement for national liberation.

* * *

In the twenties the second period of colonial exploitation by the French began; this was carried out at an accelerated pace, in order to make up for the period of war and avert an economic crisis. This resulted in an increase of the number of workers, thus developing a larger, more concentrated, more mature working class. The bourgeoisie, whose position had improved during the war, became more consolidated, but it was a bourgeoisie dependent on the French, less important than that of Chinese residents, and politically and organizationally weak. The peasants were increasingly impoverished, while the landlords grew richer and were more and more cooperative with the colonialists. In the ideological field, after the uncertain steps of the first days, a distinction was made between reform and revolution, the bourgeois ideology and the proletarian one. In bourgeois ideology, the author saw different shades - "moderate", "reformist", "revolutionary" - of bourgeois nationalism.

"Moderate" nationalism was accepted by a number of intellectuals of the old and new schools, devoted to their country and their people, who wanted to regain independence and freedom by "non-violent" methods. Phan Boi Chau himself in the end leaned towards that school of thought. He wrote *Phap Viet de hue luan* (About Franco-Vietnamese collaboration) which was brought to the French governor-general of Indochina by a messenger sent from Hong Kong, China. That "book of political ideas" was published in 1929. The reason given for that "collaboration" was the

necessity to join hands to oppose the common enemy then threatening Indochina: the Japanese fascists. But in his book, Phan Boi Chau said such things as: "Considering the right of the first occupants of the land, the Vietnamese are the hosts and the French are the guests. Considering the prevailing force and authority, the French are the elder brothers of the Vietnamese. If hosts and guests join hands, they can put down the fiercest fire threatening them. When brothers are united, they can drive away bandits who attack their house late at night." These ideas were so different from such oaths as "not to live under the same sky", "to wash off with blood the humiliation of the fatherland" taken in the days of *Duy Tan* and *Quang Phuc* societies. It should be noted that Phan Boi Chau had given up revolutionary violence to turn towards "collaboration" not only because he had been deceived by traitors such as *Le Du*, *Phan Ba Ngoc*, or - this is quite possible - because he wanted to make the enemy victim of his own scheme. There had been a real change in Phan Boi Chau's thinking, which he had shown in his books: *Du cuu nien lai*, so *tri chi chu nghia* (The doctrine I have chosen) (1920), *Cam dia* (Gandhi) (1922), *Thien ho, de ho* (Oh Heaven! Oh Lord!) (1923). This change reflected his illusion about "decolonization" which he believed the imperialist powers themselves would advocate after the Versailles Conference. But the world revolutionary storm, the bombing by *Pham Hong Thai* soon "awakened" him. "Civilized Revolution" was replaced by "Overthrow French rule". The "national revolution" was supplemented by a "social revolution", "the ten categories of fellow-countrymen" by "worker-peasant forces". The "people of same culture and same race" were replaced by the revolutionary front (Russia) and the counter-revolutionary front (France).

Beside Phan Boi Chau, Phan Chu Trinh cut a less remarkable figure. With his moderate patriotism, the latter made no mention of national independence, but only spoke of civil rights and democracy, he did not attack colonialism, but only

criticized some colonialist policies. It was because Phan Chu Trinh regarded France as "the vanguard civilization of the world". He wanted "to rely on France to achieve progress". "Progress" here only meant the overthrow of the monarchy with the aim of enhancing the role of "morals". Because on the one hand, he did not directly attack the French colonialists and on the other he was opposed to revolutionary violence, Phan Chu Trinh's political line was divorced from genuine nationalism, although he was a sincere patriot.

During that period, Nguyen An Ninh also represented the line of moderate patriotism. He was one of the first new-school intellectuals who took part in patriotic movements after World War II. He fiercely attacked colonialist policies, expressed hatred of the aggressors. He set all his hopes on the modern-educated younger generation whom he wanted to turn into men with ideals, fighting spirit and abilities, first to create a genuinely national culture, then to carry out a revolution to liberate the country. However, he then thought that this could be a peaceful revolution and not a revolution with the use of violence. It was to be "an evolution rather than a revolution, there would be no unnecessary bloodshed, but the promised independence must be eventually granted."

But in his thinking, this could only be a test during a few years. If "the Vietnamese youth find by experience that their efforts are of no avail, they should keep silent and make way for those who are more useful to the country", and "if the masses would rather die than suffer injustices, if the colonialists refused to give up their policy of barbarous oppression and exploitation, the most courageous and loyal Vietnamese would have the duty of finding appropriate methods of struggle in those conditions; for example, the organization of resistance against oppression." (*La cloche fêlée* - The Cracked Bell - issue No. 20, January 26, 1925).

Those tendencies, together with "moderate nationalism", were different shades of reformist nationalism. They might be called "nationalism" because they were voiced by

members of the local bourgeoisie who also spoke of the interest and the future of the nation and not by French or other foreign capitalists in Indochina. They were reformist because they dared not mention national liberation, even by peaceful means, but only wanted partial reforms within the framework of the colonial regime, in their own interests, and opposed all forms of revolutionary struggle of the masses. With the rise and struggle of the working class, those who belonged to these reformist tendencies quickly joined the ranks of the extreme right and closely collaborated with the colonialists, for whom they soon became efficient agents.

First, there was the *Dong Duong Tap Chi* (Indochina Review) group in Tonkin. The first issue of that periodical appeared in 1913, with Nguyen Van Vinh as chief editor. This group eulogized France's "civilizing mission", condemned the bombing attacks in Hanoi and Thai Binh against French officers and Vietnamese traitors as "madness" and demanded that all those patriots be "exterminated", that they "be put into cages and thrown into the river". The *Dong Duong Tap Chi* group advocated: "For all these reasons, we should now know only one doctrine: the Franco-Vietnamese collaboration."

Using this, the *Nam Phong* group headed by Pham Quynh (*Nam Phong* or South Wind, a review, the first issue of which appeared in 1917) took the task of explaining and propagating the ideas of colonialist politicians and colonial sharks, and causing the upper class of Vietnamese society to adopt these ideas. After 1930, that group adopted a "nationalist doctrine", the essence of which was the maintenance of the monarchy and its "spirit", Confucianism and the combination of Eastern and Western cultures; its target, "the return to the 1884 treaty". But even for the propagation of this deceitful nationalist doctrine, the *Nam Phong* group had to humbly ask for the permission to act "within the framework of law and order" and to rely on the "heavenly mission" and the "kindness" of the French rulers: "We ask Your Excellency for only one thing, which is dearest to us and is more important than any

other: give us a fatherland to adore" (*Letter to Paul Reynaud*, French Minister of the Colonies, *Nam Phong*, issue No. 166, December 1931). In the meantime, they used their "nationalist doctrine" to oppose revolutionaries then engaged in a struggle to free the fatherland from the foreign yoke.

The "Constitutional Party" and Bui Quang Chieu in Cochinchina did not even mention national independence, it only spoke of democratic freedoms, or more exactly, freedom and democracy for a group of reformist intellectuals, such as freedom to publish newspapers (in French), freedom of speech, etc. While speaking of these "freedoms", they did not forget to demand such right as access to French citizenship, to the function of judges, to the same positions and salaries as the French. They were opposed to strikes by students and workers, which they found "unwise", and considered the arrest of Nguyen An Ninh as "justified."

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The years 1925-1926 witnessed the transformation of "moderate nationalism" into revolutionary nationalism. Governor-general Sarraut's promises conveyed from France after World War I had proved to be empty ones. Phan Boi Chau's dream of "collaboration" with France and Phan Chu Trinh's dream of "relying on France to achieve progress" had been smashed. The colonialists were busily engaged in the second period of colonial exploitation. Hundreds of thousands of hectares had been turned into rubber or coffee plantations. Many mines were being developed and colonial exploitation increased the sufferings of the people. The revolutionary nationalist tendency which appeared in the beginning of the century and was represented by Duy Tan Hoi, Quang Phuc Hoi and other patriotic organizations, had been revived. Bui Quang Chieu who not so long before had been acclaimed in Saigon by a crowd of thirty thousand on his return from France, was now severely condemned by public opinion. Pham Quynh had been exposed as a cultural lackey

by Ngo Duc Ke. Huynh Thuc Khang resigned his position as chairman of the Central Viet Nam Council of Representatives. Pham Tot Doc's poem *Chieu Hon Nuoc* (Invoking the Soul of the Country) ended with these lines:

*Sitting alone in the deep of
the night
I'm thinking of dyeing the
land red with my blood.*

Nguyen An Ninh was warmly acclaimed by a large crowd in Saigon when he said these vivid words: "If your hands are dirty, wash them with water (*nuoc*); if your country (*nuoc*) is dirty, wash it with blood." (1). Even Phan Boi Chau who had advocated "Franco-Vietnamese collaboration" said in the end: "There can be no collaboration whatsoever. Our hatred will last long, let's grow bamboo to make sticks to beat them up." In his letter sent to the French government before he was executed, Nguyen Thai Hoc clearly said that because the French had always been deceitful, the Vietnamese had come to the conclusion that to regain freedom and self-government, there was no other way than to resort to revolutionary violence.

In the late twenties there appeared a number of patriotic, progressive publications. These contributed to the ideological preparation and the rallying of a variety of tendencies into forces for the founding of a revolutionary nationalist party. For instance, the *Nam Dong* Publishing House in Hanoi run by Pham Tuan Tai disseminated propaganda for patriotism, Sun Yat-sen's San Min doctrine, and was the core of the Viet Nam Nationalist Party. The *Cuong Hoc* Publishing House in Saigon sponsored by Tran Huy Lieu; the *Ton Viet* Publishing House in Saigon sponsored by Tran Huu Do published books exalting patriotism, giving examples of national heroes and publicising the circumstances in which revolutions had succeeded or failed.

The Viet Nom Nationalist Party was most representative of the Vietnamese national bourgeoisie in those days, although in its most glorious period (1927-1930) it was a party of the petty bourgeoisie (intellectuals, students,

functionaries and employees, small merchants, small owners, rich peasants, upper middle peasants, etc...) These people were not economically dependent on imperialism like the compradore bourgeoisie, and were not political supporters of the colonialists like the feudolists and the landlord class; they suffered from restrictions and coercion by the colonialists. For these reasons, they were strongly opposed to imperialism. But the Viet Nam Nationalist Party was the last resurgence of bourgeois and petty bourgeois patriotism, which flared up with the insurrections at Yen Bai, Lam Thao, Vinh Bao (February 1930) and then died out.

The Viet Nam Nationalist Party failed also because "it had no programme of action, and its ideology was vague". Although Nguyen Khoc Nhu had urged it to "set forth a party programme, and make clear the party line", the Nationalist Party was too busy with the preparations for a general insurrection to "Vietnamize" the San Min doctrine or to work out a comprehensive party programme. And in preparing for the insurrection, the party paid little attention to the theoretical aspect or to propaganda: during fourteen months of activity, only one book - *Hon Cach Mang* (The Soul of the Revolution) - was issued, printed by most rudimentary means. But the party was inclined to take adventurous action. It did not rely on the organized masses, frequently resorted to assassinations; regardless of the balance of forces it wanted to hasten developments, in the belief that "with good luck, success may be achieved, and even if we don't succeed, we shall have acted like real men". This has been criticized by historians, although the ardent patriotism and heroic fighting spirit of the Yen Bai revolutionary combatants have won general admiration.

During the years 1926-1927, besides the ideological evolution among the youth from "moderate" nationalism to "revolutionary" nationalism there also was a leap from moderate nationalism to

leftist patriotism leaning towards workers and peasants. *Thanh Nien Cach Mang Dong Chi Hoi* (Revolutionary Youth League) and *Tan Viet Cach Mang Dang* (New Viet Nam Revolutionary Party) had contributed to those historical developments which prepared for more important developments from 1930 onwards, after the working class had assumed leadership of the Vietnamese revolution.

A number of former nationalist revolutionaries, learning a lesson from the failure of the Nationalist Party, had shifted to a new revolutionary standpoint. Pham Tuan Tai, the founder of the *Nam Dong* Publishing House and of the Viet Nam Nationalist Party, in the testament under the title *Tuyen Coo Dang Chi* (Declaration to Comrades) he wrote on his bed in Bach Mai Hospital on November 30, 1936, said: "Experience in revolutionary activities has taught me that in order to destroy an old society and build up a new one, the revolution can rely only on the most exploited and oppressed social classes. And in order to overthrow the present regime, the revolutionary elements among the oppressed peoples must unite with workers, peasants and other labouring people in the capitalist countries to form a common front. Nationalism is outdated, even democratic socialism and the San Min doctrine are ineffective reformist doctrines. To be more exact, only Marxism-Leninism can overthrow imperialism and liberate the people, only Marxism-Leninism can destroy class society and build up a world community."

Before him, Tran Huy Lieu had become a member of the Communist Party. Tran Huu Do had rejected Darwin's theory of struggle for survival to adopt Karl Marx's theory of class struggle. Nguyen An Ninh had declared that he had adhered to dialectic materialism and historical materialism.

Phong Hiên

Editor's Note: Volume III is under preparation. As soon as it is published we shall review it in "Book Review".

(1) A play on words, the Vietnamese word *nuoc* has two meanings: "water" and "country".

NEW VILLAGE OF THE DAO

(Continued from page 9)

roots as substitutes for maize and rice. We no longer have to eat elephant grass ash to replace salt, as we had in the past. Today, they are selling tea buds to the State every day in exchange for rice, salt, kerosene and cloth. How happy we are! Really the life of the Dao has changed."

We also visited Ly Thi Mui, a Dao girl who had come to Suoi Bi only three days ago. Her family live at Suoi Pay, more than 100 km away but she had just married a settler whose family came to Suoi Bi fewer than 18 months ago. She was obviously surprised by our questions, perhaps considering them as too intimately inquiring into her private life.

"Many Dao youths asked my

hand," she said. "But I didn't accept any of them. Finally I chose Trieu Van Ooc of this village because I saw that he is thirsty for progress. He had gone to learn letters to help our Dao people. (Trieu Van Ooc was studying in the sixth form of the School for National Minorities of Nghia Lo province). His family has settled here for sedentary farming, and I thought that this would be the best guarantee of our happiness. I'll go back to Suoi Pay to persuade my parents and relatives to come and settle here."

The sun had set. Its last golden rays were lingering over the tea groves. A tropical rainstorm had just passed, quickly over but very refreshing and the luxuriant tea

buds shone in the sun. On several hill tops farther away, Dao girls in their national working dress were hurriedly carrying the baskets of newly picked tea buds to the State processing plant a couple of miles away.

Leaving this newly founded village of the Dao at Suoi Bi, we felt deep joy not only at having witnessed this striking change in the life of more than 400 people who had come to start a new life there, but also at hearing of the dream, which is also a promise, of the young chairman of the local co-op, Dang Van Khin, who also represents his community in the People's Council of Nghia Lo province: "We will turn this Suoi Bi area into a perpetual and most beautiful home for hundreds of families of our Dao people, and this immense barren hilly land into the biggest tea plantation in our Phu Yen district."

MAI QUANG

HISTORIC TURNING POINT...

(Continued from page 3)

the revolution forward and win more and more important victories until total victory. This is the glorious success of the Lao people's revolutionary heroism. During this long and hard struggle, the revolutionary armed forces and the various ethnic groups of the Lao nation always evinced a love of independence and freedom, courage, close unity and an unanimous will of resistance for national salvation. As the fighting went on, they strengthened their power and won more and more significant victories. The great victory of the Lao revolution as well as those of the Vietnamese and Cambodian revolutions are the results of the friendship and militant solidarity between these three peoples. Their solidarity and mutual support are the foundations of their invincible strength which enabled them to foil all the imperialist and puppet manoeuvres and tricks, and to bring their resistance to total victory. As Comrade Kayson Phomvihane stressed, the triumph of the Lao revolution reflects "the strength that results from the close alliance of the traditions of unity and the heroic and indomitable struggle of the Lao people,

with the most advanced revolutionary thought of the time... the strength of the alliance of enthusiastic patriotism with genuine proletarian internationalism, the outstanding manifestation of which is the great militant solidarity between the Lao, Vietnamese and Cambodian peoples".

Our people happily and warmly greet the historic victory of the Lao people. We wholeheartedly thank the People's Revolutionary Party, the Patriotic Front and the people of Laos for the strong support and precious help they gave to Viet Nam. Like the previous victories in the fight for independence and freedom, the establishment of the Democratic People's Republic and the new successes and achievements of the Lao people greatly stimulated the advance of a reunified Viet Nam to socialism. Our people will strive to consolidate and strengthen the friendship and fraternal cooperation with the Cambodian and Lao peoples in the best interest of each nation and of the revolution in Southeast Asia and in the world.

CHRONOLOGY

(Continued from page 32)

29 - The Vietnamese film "Dawn on the city", on the liberation of Saigon, was awarded a special prize at the International Festival of documentary and short films in Leipzig.

- The DRVN Government recognized the Republic of Surinam (former Dutch Guiana) which proclaimed its independence on November 25, 1975.

- Arrival in Hanoi of a group of cadres from the Bulgarian Communist Party Central Committee, for a visit of friendship to the DRVN.

- The delegation of the Lenin Central Museum ended its visit to the DRVN. During its stay, the delegation attended study conferences with the commission in charge of the building of the Ho Chi Minh Museum and promised help with the work.

- Abdication of the King of Laos Sisavang Vatthana.

- First voyage of the Thong Nhat - the new Vietnamese passenger ship between Haiphong and Saigon.

DECEMBER

1 - 2,570 teachers from the north have gone to various provinces in south Viet Nam since the liberation.

- The Commission for geological survey of the Song Da (Black River) has decided on the location of the dam to be built at Hoa Binh. The building of this hydro-electric work - the most important in Viet Nam - will begin in the five-year plan (1976-1980).

- Hanoi: Signing between the DRVN and the People's Republic of China of an agreement on scientific and technical cooperation for 1975-1976.

2 - The All-Laos Congress of People's Representatives (held in Vientiane on December 1 and 2, 1975) decided on the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of the Lao Democratic People's Republic. Tiao Souphanouvong was appointed President of the Republic and Kayson Phomvihane, Prime Minister.

- Signing in Budapest of an agreement on the postal service between the DRVN and Hungary.

3 - The delegation of the VNWP led by Nguyen Duy Trinh, member of the Political Bureau of the VNWP Central Committee, left Hanoi for Poland to attend the Seventh Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party.

- VNA: Many new teams for surveying the subsoil and continental shelves have been organised in Viet Nam.

- Hanoi: Signing between the DRVN and Laos of a protocol on the transport and transit of goods from Laos via Viet Nam.

4 - American democratic Senator Mike Mansfield demanded that the US Government should grant diplomatic recognition to the DRVN and the RSVN Governments.

6 - Signing in Hanoi of a financial agreement for 1975 between the DRVN and France.

7 - After his visit to many Asian countries, Ford

announced his new "Pacific Doctrine", emphasizing the US strength, its interests in Southeast Asia and its cooperation with Japan.

- 4th Congress of the Association of Vietnamese Residents in France: The Vietnamese residents pledged to do their utmost to contribute to the building of a united and socialist Viet Nam.

8 - Signing in Hanoi of a financial agreement between the DRVN and the Republic of Finland.

- To Huu, Secretary of VNWPPC, received the delegation of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with Foreign Peoples and the artistic company Batey of Cuba, on a visit to Viet Nam.

9 - The delegation of the UN World Health Organisation led by Mr H. Mahler, head of the organisation, arrived in Hanoi on a visit to Viet Nam.

10 - The delegation of the VNWP led by Vo Nguyen Giap, member of the Political Bureau of the VNWPPC, left for Cuba to attend the First Congress of the Cuban Communist Party.

12 - AP: The Japanese company Nippon Koei sent three engineers to Viet Nam to help with the reconstruction of the Da Nhim hydro-power plant.

- The Vietnamese Committee for Solidarity with Afro-Asian Countries made a statement supporting the struggle of the Eastern Timor people and strongly protesting against the Indonesian authorities' interference - supported by the US - in the internal affairs of Eastern Timor.

- According to the General Department of Statistics, the 1975 State plan for animal husbandry was overfulfilled: 100.2% for buffaloes, 100.07% for oxen and 101.9% for pigs.

- The first batch of good quality fertilizer has been produced at the nitrogenous fertilizer factory of Ha Bac (north Viet Nam).

13 - The delegation of the Norwegian Red Cross Society led by Mr Hans Hogher, its Chairman, ended its visit of friendship to Viet Nam. The Norwegian Red Cross Society will continue to help the Vietnamese people in national reconstruction.

14 - The Third National Congress of the People's Representatives of Cambodia held in Phnom Penh approved the new Constitution of Cambodia.

- AFP: Sadruddin Aga Khan, UN High-Commissioner for refugees, ended his official visit to south Viet Nam. During his visit he stated that the aid for the Vietnamese refugees will be 7 million dollars for 1975-1976.

15 - The delegation of the Party and Government of the Lao DPR led by Phoun Sipaseuth, member of the Political Bureau of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party Central Committee, Vice Premier and Minister for Foreign Affairs, arrived in Phnom Penh for an official visit to Cambodia.

- In an interview granted to the *Nhan Dan* correspondent in Vientiane, Kayson Phomvihane, Lao Prime Minister, stated: "Under the leadership of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, the Lao people will have favourable conditions for building a peaceful, independent, democratic, united and prosperous Laos, advancing to socialism".

CHRONOLOGY

(November 16 — December 15, 1975)

NOVEMBER

16 - Ho Chi Minh City : A meeting was held by representatives of 178 parishes under the chairmanship of Archbishop Nguyen Van Binh to greet the Political Consultative Conference on the reunification of the country on the level of State institutions.

17 - Bucarest : Signing between the DRVN and the Rumanian Socialist Republic of agreements on long-term loans from Rumania to Viet Nam, and on economic cooperation and exchange of goods between the two countries for 1976-1980.

- The organisation "The British Hospital for Viet Nam", presided over by Lord Carandon, organized a concert to raise funds for the construction of the Ky Anh hospital (Ha Tinh province).

18 - The delegation of the VNWP and the DRVN Government, led by Lê Duân, First Secretary of the VNWPCC, ended its official visit of friendship to the Rumanian Socialist Republic.

- Prime Minister Pham Van Dong received a delegation of the Menonites (a Protestant sect) and another from the "American Friends Service" (an organisation of the Quakers), on a visit to Viet Nam.

20 - The organization "Fraternité Viet Nam" decided to call an International Conference : 60 organizations from various countries will participate in the conference to discuss measures to aid Viet Nam in national reconstruction.

- Moscow : Signing between the USSR and the DRVN of an agreement on the construction of a Children's Palace in Hanoi with Soviet aid.

21 - Closing of the Political Consultative Conference on the reunification of Viet Nam on the level of State institutions. A communiqué was issued : general elections will be organized throughout Viet Nam during the first half of 1976 to elect a National Assembly for the whole country.

- Viet Nam News Agency : The Gia Sang Steel Works (Bac Thai province) have successfully produced 8 mm diameter steel bars and is experimenting with ten other types of steel.

- Signing between the DRVN and the Swedish Government of an agreement concerning the development of cooperation between the two countries for the fiscal years 1974-1975 and 1975-1976.

- Warsaw : Signing between the DRVN and the Polish People's Republic of an agreement on non-refundable economic aid from Poland to Viet Nam for 1975.

22 - Budapest : Signing between the DRVN and the Hungarian People's Republic of an agreement on

cooperation between the two countries, on long-term loans from Hungary to Viet Nam for 1976-1980, and a protocol on the exchange of goods for 1976.

- The delegation of the VNWP and the DRVN Government, led by Lê Duân, returned to Hanoi after its official visits of friendship to the USSR and other socialist countries.

- In north Viet Nam, the harvest of the 10th month was completed on 80% of the rice cultivated area. The average yield in many districts reached 3 tons per hectare.

23 - 80,000 chicken eggs have been sent to south Viet Nam by the DRVN General Department of Animal Husbandry to help develop poultry breeding there.

24 - Vice-Premier Nguyen Duy Trinh received the delegation of Chinese athletes on a visit to Viet Nam.

25 - Arrival in Hanoi of a delegation from the French Government, led by Geoffroy de Courcel, General Secretary of the French Foreign Ministry.

- Special Conference between the National Political Council of Coalition and the Provisional Government of National Union of Laos.

- Arrival at Saigon harbour of the cargo-boat "Krickvenica" carrying emergency economic aid from the Government of the Yugoslav SFR to the Vietnamese people.

26 - In a statement, the DRVN Foreign Ministry condemned and demanded an immediate end to the repression of Vietnamese residents in Thailand by the Bangkok authorities.

- Giai Phong News Agency : Starting of the construction of the 618-kilometre long Saigon - Phu My railway section.

27 - Establishment of diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level between the Republic of South Viet Nam and the Kingdom of Iran.

- The Standing Committee of the DRVN National Assembly approves the activity of the north Vietnamese delegation and the results of the Political Consultative Conference on the reunification of the country.

28 - Mass meetings and demonstrations throughout Laos to demand the abolition of the old regime and the dissolution of the National Political Council of Coalition and of the Provisional Government of National Union, and the establishment of a Democratic People's Republic in Laos.

- Starting of the construction of the Yên Xuân bridge (Nghê An province) - the second biggest in the north - on the Reunification railway line (Hanoi - Saigon).

(Continued on page 31)



*Ca Na beach
in Phan Thiet province*

*The Dong Van highlands
in Ha Tuyen province.*





The Flag Tower in Hanoi