

of IVS in Saigon and IVSers and Vietnamese teachers together would participate in sessions on problems and methods. But IVS requested permission of the Ministry of Education for these people to come to Saigon to participate in the seminar. So there is a lot more over-all control and particularly central control than we have in American schools.

Regarding the comment by an American education advisor that Vietnam could do a lot more education and handle many more students if their administration was better, I don't know how they could handle more students unless the administration built some more classrooms and trained more teachers. Of course, now, with the war, teachers are really at a premium. It's terrible that so many of the teachers, especially primary school teachers, have been drafted. Most of the teachers at my school were women; being a girls' school, I suppose that's to be expected. We have a few men teachers; a very rough guess would be perhaps 10% men. In the boys' school next door there was probably an even smaller proportion of women teachers.

At the high school level the schools are not coeducational, except at what is called the semi-public school. In this school, I believe the government assists so that the tuition can be lower. These semi-public schools are usually pretty crowded. Children who don't pass the examinations for the public schools often go to the semi-public school. The Catholic private high schools are usually divided--a boys' school and a girls' school. The Buddhist private high schools in Hue were all, I think, coeducational. By all, I mean the different physical setups. There was one administration, but there were several schools, the main ones being one large one in the citadel and another on the south side of the river. Whether the seating was separate or not, I don't know. I taught a couple hours a week during one summer at a Buddhist school--many of the students were from the Buddhist orphanage nearby. There didn't seem to be a set seating plan, but the girls always tend to sit together toward the front and maybe on one side; it appeared to be a preference, not a rule or even a rigid custom. Elementary schools are coeducational. I think the children are divided according to sex; I suspect that here again it's customary practice.

There are, of course, private high schools owned and operated by individuals as money-making propositions. These schools teach courses to help people prepare for the baccalaureate examinations and courses in English--there are many small schools that teach only English. These private high schools are particularly numerous in Da Nang and Saigon; in fact, there is only one public high school in the large city of Da Nang. When I was living in Saigon, I taught some hours at a private school there; this was my first experience in teaching English in Vietnam. In this class there were both sexes and all ages--a few high school students but mostly adults who worked during the day. And they sat in any order all over the room; I don't know

whether this was because they were adults or whether they just didn't think about those things generally. My impression is that in Vietnam separation of the sexes isn't as sharp as it is in some other Asian countries

Regarding comparative educational systems, my own opinion about the relative value of educational systems is that the American system, with all its faults, is probably the best in the world. Relatively speaking, I think it's very good--at least for us. I think there are a lot of American ideas about education that are very applicable to Vietnam or could be used by Vietnamese people. There's always this problem of our imposing our ideas--I don't feel that we have any right as individual advisors to go in and say it should be done this way and that way and try to get the Vietnamese to see our point of view and cooperate with us.

I think the moving away from the European education system can come about mostly by the efforts of young Vietnamese who are themselves concerned about the situation. Some of them come to this country and study and go back, and then there are those who haven't left the country and yet who are concerned. I think that they would be open to new ideas. But it has to have at least the appearance of growing from the inside, and there's a lot of old chaff that has to die out. Most of the educators over 30 were educated in the French system, but I would say if they're in their 30's there's still hope--I don't agree with the American youth who say if you're over thirty you're dead. Of course, it depends on the individual; in Vietnam as everywhere there are individuals who are limited in their views and who resist change.

This resistance to change was particularly strong in Hue at the Faculty of Pedagogy. It became a political thing; many of the professors were adamantly opposed to anything that smelled of Americanization, and it became a strongly anti-American stand. But I think their political views were very, very closely tied up with their own positions being threatened: They were French educated and they were holding on to their little havens, their little systems. With changes, they would be out unless they change with them, but they've been thinking in the old terms a long time and I think that many of them aren't able to change. The difficulty is that these older influential educators are the people who have prestige and power and they're not going to release this prestige and power if they can help it. I think this is where the biggest difficulty lies, and it takes time for these people to be replaced by younger people with new ideas.

That education advisor said that during the two to three years he was there they trained 3,000 teachers but that these 3,000 teachers had a fifth-grade education to begin with and were trained only one to three months. He was talking about the need to substitute quality for quantity. I would agree that quality is important. Without quality, quantity is rather meaningless. I believe he's talking about

training teachers to teach in elementary schools and I worked with high school teachers, so I can't say too much about quality in elementary school teaching. The quality at my school was quite high.

This is the thing in Vietnam: the higher the level you teach, the more training you have to have, the more qualified you have to be and the more prestige you have. The elementary teacher is sort of middle or lower-middle class economically and socially, though he has some prestige because education is a prestigious field. It depends of course on the school. In urban areas elementary teachers usually have had normal school training, which is a two-year program, not a three-month one. To go into the normal school I believe they have finished junior high school. In urban high schools, teachers have to have at least passed the first baccalaureates, which means they have finished their high school education. If I understood correctly, those who have had some university training teach in senior high school. This isn't absolute, of course; I know some teachers who have had university training who are teaching in junior high school, some at their own choice.

It's hard for Vietnamese persons to understand that the lower levels of school are so important. For example, many Vietnamese people would expect me--especially a college graduate--to teach senior high school if not at the university,--to teach advanced level--conversation and discussion. It takes a lot of explaining to make people understand that I feel that, as a native speaker of English, I can do the best good by teaching the very beginning students so that the students just beginning to learn would hear the correct pronunciation and natural way of speaking. I think that those in my school who didn't have some of this notion already were beginning to appreciate that it was a good thing for me to teach at the beginning level. I often had the feeling, however, that they still felt that I was being very generous and kind to lower myself to that level--demonstrating my volunteer spirit when I could do something more prestigious. And, of course, I with my American up-bringing was very proud to say I taught the beginners.

### The People of Hue

It seems true that the people of Hue consider themselves to be different from other Vietnamese people. But we might also include all of Northern Central Vietnam or what the French call Haut Annam--Upper Central Vietnam. This would be the provinces of Thua Thien--the province where Hue is; Quang Tri; and going across the 17th parallel, Quang Binh, Ha Tinh, and Nghe An. This is really what Central Vietnam is; as far as language is concerned, it's a very distinct grouping. North of Da Nang at the southern border of Thua Thien province there's a high pass and that seems to be a natural border. I just learned recently that language change in Vietnam has been much slower in this area. This area is much more conservative in many ways. I think this is natural. There isn't the easy communication, physically there aren't the rivers of the delta areas and the easy ways of getting

around; life is more difficult and more of a struggle without the fertile delta areas, and so there has been less mobility. Thus the language has changed the least there. This also has been the area out of which the strongest nationalists have come: the nationalists who fought the French--Phan Boi Chau, Phan Chu Trinh, many others--and more modern nationalists such as Ho Chi Minh who comes from Nghe An. Nghe An seems to be the breeding place for the discontent--the strong individuals who want to change things. It seems funny to say that this area is conservative and yet you have this kind of individual. Perhaps it's a combination of young hopefuls who want to fight the conservatism, and the struggle for life making it natural to struggle politically. In fact, now that I think about it, I think it's probably true for the whole world--that revolutionaries tend to come from conservative backgrounds, and they spend their lives fighting the entrenched conservatism of their childhood environments. I do feel that the feelings of nationalism are much stronger in Hue than in Saigon. Saigon is a more cosmopolitan city, more adaptable in some respects to the French or at least didn't have such strong emotional reactions to the French.

Furthermore, Hue was the imperial capital of Vietnam. Vietnam was united as a single country only as late as 1802, at which time Hue was made the capital of the whole country. Vietnam was a united independent country including all the areas of Vietnam today for only about 50 years of all of its hundreds of years of history. It was Hue, of course, where the French attacked and took over the government of Vietnam--the home of the emperor. So naturally this was the place where resentment was very, very strong against the French. There were two or three emperors, in the 80 years of time the French had Vietnam as a colony, who joined the underground against the French while still being titular emperors above ground. They were exiled, one to France. I think this was Duy Tan. He fought as a pilot with the French against the Germans in World War I. In gratitude, the French offered to return him to Vietnam, but he said only on the condition the French would give Vietnam its independence. The French refused, and in the process of sending him back to his Mediterranean isle prison, his plane mysteriously developed difficulties and went down in the sea. The Vietnamese believe that this was a deliberate murder, because as long as he lived and held out and everyone knew that he was in prison because Vietnam was not independent, this would be a disgrace for France. So, nationalism is very strong in Hue and throughout Central Vietnam. This is some of the background of nationalism.

One person from Hue told me once that Hue provided more teachers not only for Central Vietnam but also for South Vietnam than any other part of the country, meaning that it is out of Hue that culture and education come. Hue feels this type of prestige very much, that education is an important thing. Of course, this is generally felt in Vietnamese and Chinese society--that education is very important.

(I presume that part of their education system is Chinese rather than French; the practice of learning by rote is quite Chinese.)

I myself think there are other more ethnic reasons for this difference between Hue people and the southern people. The Red River delta in the north is, of course, the home of Vietnamese civilization. Vietnamese legends go back about 4,000 years B.C. Their conflicts with China go back 3,000 years. The Vietnamese are pretty aggressive people and have continually pressed south. There are indications they came from southern China and mixed with mountain groups further south. Their legend is that the daughter of the God of the Sea mated with the dragon of the mountains and produced the Vietnamese people.

But, at any rate, there has always been this pushing south; Saigon, I believe, was not settled by the Vietnamese until the 1600s, which is pretty recent in Vietnamese history. So the south is a very recent conquest. The whole delta area was primarily Cambodian, and the southern coastal areas were part of the Cham civilization which was pushed mountainwards by the Vietnamese and has long since died out, leaving some Cham people who have been pretty much absorbed by the Vietnamese and some of the mountain tribes in southern Vietnam; the Vietnamese consider them to be a mountain tribe themselves. The decline of the Cham Kingdom was not only by conquest; I think prior to that, the Vietnamese bargained with the Chams for territory. Someone told me that Thua Thien and Quang Tri provinces were given by the Chams for a Vietnamese princess in marriage. At any rate, the push south seems to have halted with the acquisition of the rich Mekong delta; though the Cambodians are skeptical--they don't trust the Vietnamese--and for good reason.

Probably the further south the Vietnamese moved, the more mixture of peoples there was, particularly with Cambodian people. I don't know too much about this, but I suspect there is more mixture in the south. It seems to me that physiologically the southern Vietnamese tend to be a little different from the northern Vietnamese, though I may be wrong in this broad generalization. It seems to me generally speaking that the southerners don't have as much epicanthic eye fold--that their eyes are more round. The seeming tendency to be darker may be delta sunshine; in Hue we have several months of rain, which may account for lighter complexions. It's not really fair to judge northerners by those we see in the south; they may not be representative, but I think that there are both physiological and ethnic differences.

Maybe I should say a little about feelings of Hue people toward the Communists. It may be that there is more sympathy for the Communists than in other parts of the country, but I would think it wasn't so much for Communism as it was strong feelings of nationalism and resentment toward a government that is not only far from ideal but is corrupt and unwise, and there's tremendous resentment against the military. It's been pointed out about the traditional grouping of people in Vietnamese

society: The top group--the group with the most prestige--are scholars, the second group are farmers, the third group--a low third--are the business and trade people, and the bottom are the military. To have a military government, particularly one that cannot even be respected in terms of judgment, integrity, or political enlightenment, is a kind of indignity, especially for Hue people who pride themselves on being the source of government families. Of course there is strong anti-government feeling in Hue; I suspect sometimes it's a matter of principle as well as a matter of specific government.

Also there are more anti-American feelings because of the feelings of nationalism and the feeling that the Americans are more and more intruding themselves on Vietnamese decision-making. (A Vietnamese friend here in this country said to me the other day, "Now American planes fly directly to Da Nang and Cam Ranh. Now Americans come into my country without even permission from my government.") There is, of course, ambiguity there in that they want the Americans to help change the government or make it better and yet they don't want the Americans to interfere in the government. Yet, in the expressed desire that they want the Americans to do something to better the government, I think they're being quite realistic in that they know the Americans can. The Americans have the wherewithal to pressure the Saigon government in almost any direction--not always and not in any direction but pretty much, and the Vietnamese people know this. This is another cause for resentment--who of us would like to feel that we're just kind of owned by another people no matter what the good intentions might be? My own experience is that there are many people in Hue who appreciate and are grateful to the Americans for coming and helping to fight the Communists, but they don't feel the Americans should take over the country or tell them what to do.

#### Youth and Students

Besides my teaching in Dong Khanh School, I taught a few of what IVS calls "volunteer" classes: classes we do on our own outside of our regular teaching assignment. I did most of my outside teaching to a Boy Scout group and to the Voluntary Youth Association, because I wanted to help and associate with these young people who were engaged in the kinds of activities that their country so badly needs: activities that develop a feeling of community and activities to better the welfare of their fellow countrymen.

The Boy Scout organization in Vietnam is a member of the International Boy Scouts and has been quite active. The organization in Hue has been particularly viable with a minimum of internal conflict, which is something to say in view of the situation of complex conflicts which exists in Vietnam. There are Catholic troops and Buddhists troops and one mixed, there is a group of Girl Scouts and Girl Guides and some girls are Cub Scout leaders, and all groups cooperate with

each other. At least this was the situation before the Tet offensive last year. Since then the Scouts have attempted to help in the rebuilding but it's very difficult because of the situation and atmosphere of uncertainty and the fact that the Rover Scouts and most Scout leaders are draft age. In fact, most of the leaders I knew have been drafted. The group I taught were mostly Cub Scout leaders who happened also to be mainly primary school teachers--young men of draft age, some with families, some not yet married. There were in the class two or three university students and one high school student who were active in the Scouts.

The university students for whom I have a great deal of respect are those in the Voluntary Youth Association. This is a group of students who have mixed backgrounds--Catholic, Buddhist, prominent families, rural homes--who have gotten together for, one, to establish a community spirit among themselves; they get together, sing songs, go on day camps together. They gave a wonderful feeling of togetherness which is very much needed in Vietnam. The main purpose is to do things in their spare time for their countrymen, things that are needed. For instance, they held a work camp to build a fence around the school yard in a poor district because buffalos went across the school yard, and the fence would keep the buffalos out and the children in. At Tet time they make Tet rice cakes and take them to the leprosarium along with other little gifts that they have bought and prepared themselves. For preparing the rice cakes, they have an all-day and all-night party to make and cook the cakes which have to be cooked many hours. They dig a hole in the ground, make a fire and cook the cakes in a barrel buried in the ground, and while the cakes are cooking they sit around the fire singing songs, playing games until late and then a few of the boys stay watching the fire all night. They not only do things for people, they give of themselves in a wonderful way. I was very close to a lot of these students; I not only taught English classes there, I went with them on a work camp and attended many of their activities. A lot of IVSers have worked closely with the VYA since the organization's inception in Saigon several years ago. Not all the students were inclined to these kinds of group endeavors or were able to find such constructive outlets for their frustrations.

I've tried a lot to figure out the motivations, especially of those who were active with the Struggle Movement. What was the whole scene in Vietnam? It seemed to me that the whole thing was largely one of great big frustration. None of these university students have ever lived at a time when their country was not involved in some kind of struggle. There were relatively quiet years in the middle to late 50s--seemingly quiet--it was not until about 1958 or 1959 that there were terrorist activities on the part of the Communists, but there was always the memory of the war with the French and the disruptions caused by that war, the partition of the country, political instability and the increasing tyranny of the Diem government. The intellectuals, I know, in the late 50s were becoming increasingly disaffected with

the Diem government. So there has always been this uncertainty of the future, to say nothing of the present.

We can ask why are these kids in college? One answer is that this is what an upper middle class person does, and also this is a means of acquiring a profession so that one can have the means to lead a good life. But is there an answer for the student who will study in school only to leave school to go to war, who sees no meaning in the future, whose primary hope is simply to survive? What do they have to look for? Surely the thinking student is a very troubled and frustrated person, helpless in what seems to be Vietnam's fate. And the songs and literature for many years have reflected this kind of tragic environment.

This element of frustration and helplessness is everywhere, and for the student who desires to overcome this frustration and make something of the future, where is he to channel these desires, through what outlet can he work off his feelings of frustration? The South Vietnamese government has been ineffective in building some sort of ideological program or something that will unite people--that will draw people to anything; there's just no unity in South Vietnam. And I'm sorry to say, the American government and its efforts in Vietnam have been just as if not even more ineffective in this respect than the South Vietnamese government. The government, especially after the struggle against the Diem regime, was so apprehensive of student power that they did everything they could to try and hold the students down rather than to channel their energies or their frustrations into something constructive. Mr. Stubbs, who talked in his debrief about the struggle against the Huong government, said that the Buddhists claimed that the Huong government was against the Buddhists. What he didn't mention was that Huong put out an order or it was believed that he put out an order that university students were not to participate in politics, they were not to be politically active, they were not to organize themselves into political groups, and the same went for the Buddhists. If it weren't for this, the students might have gone along with the civilian Huong government--I think there was a great deal of respect for Huong as a man of integrity, but this seemed to put the top on the pressure cooker and the pressure mounted and blew, because students are naturally interested in politics; they're interested in their own futures and the future of their country, and most of the students I know are very much concerned about Vietnam as a nation and what is to become of Vietnam.

There are just so many mixed feelings--ambivalent feelings: feelings of pride in Vietnamese traditions and Vietnamese culture and particularly in Vietnamese literature and poetry and music; and feelings of inferiority--they've been dominated by the Chinese, they've been dominated by the French and are dominated now by Western technology and they feel inferior in this respect. So, with these ambivalent feelings, one moment they may be fiercely proud of their country and the next moment this hopeless feeling of, "Oh well, we can't do anything right anyway."

## Politics and the Struggle Force

Into this atmosphere of uncertainty, ambivalence, and futility comes a group who will channel the frustrations and desires. This was the Struggle Movement or Struggle Force--not the Buddhist struggle against the Diem regime, but the Struggle Force (Luc Luong Tranh Dau; hereafter referred to as SF) which bubbled and boiled through most of 1964 and 1965 and burst into full bloom in the spring of 1966 in Hue and Da Nang, and whom most American newspapermen called the Buddhists.

I have a rather different view from Mr. Stubbs regarding the beginning of the 1966 struggle movement. Perhaps it's irrelevant, but he seemed to feel that the popularity of General Thi played the major role in the struggle in Hue. In my opinion and in the opinion of others--in fact I was told this by an American newspaperman--the SF was planning and organizing for an outbreak and push in May when Thieu and Ky provided the logical cue by kicking out General Thi in March--the match to light the pile. But by this time I think that General Thi would have been effective with the SF only if he went along with them. By this time they were pushing along on their own and they just used Thi's oust as a weapon, because after they got underway we heard very little about Thi. Maybe Mr. Stubbs, in his official position, heard more about him, but my impression was that talk very quickly went on to other things that they were using to rouse the public.

What I want to do is connect all this up with the involvement of the students. There seems to me to be a big tendency on the part of the Americans to lump all the students who opposed the Vietnamese government and the Americans under the label of Communist. This has been the tendency of whatever government has been in power in Saigon as long as I have been there; this was something the Diem government used to do--anyone, from political opponent to highway bandit, was a Communist. I think our government went along with this, and there was a lot of feeling, I think, that the students in Hue were more Communist than those in Saigon. This may be true to some extent but I rather doubt it. I don't mean to say that there may not have been more sympathy for the Communists, but as far as being Communists is concerned, my feeling was that no, most of them were not. I believe most of them thought of themselves as being anti-Communists. I don't mean to say that there weren't Communists among the students; of course there were.

My own opinion--and I may be wrong--is that the SF was, if not controlled by Communists, at least manipulated by Communists to the extent that was necessary for Communist control. Whether or not every aspect was controlled by Communists was not important as long as they could use the movement for their own ends. Most of the students believed themselves if not fighting against the Communists at least not fighting for them. The reason why I felt that the SF was pretty

much Communist controlled was that it was so well organized, and I know of no group in South Vietnam that is so well organized. Even the Buddhist church was first, split on whether or not the church should be politically involved, and second, those that were politically involved were split as to what direction it should take. This was my impression. So, whereas the toppling of the Diem regime might have been made possible by the Buddhist church because they had the wherewithal in 1963 to organize and implement what was necessary, the SF was not a strictly Buddhist organization.

The SF tried to identify themselves with the Buddhist cause in the Diem regime for very obvious reasons: This would give them the support of the vast majority of the people, would give them respectability, and they tried to utilize some of the martyrs and even some of the causes that were so effective in 1963. In Hue soon after the struggle movement took over the radio station and in effect took over the town, there were signs all along Le Loi Street--the street that runs along the south bank of the river--about Quach thi Trang, the girl who was shot by Diem soldiers in front of the Saigon market in the summer of 1963. The market had been renamed for her and a statue of her built in front of the market. The struggle movement, I think on its first day of broadcasts, said the Ky government had destroyed this statue. They made it sound as though the Ky government had done this to show their disregard for the Buddhist struggle. I felt it was ridiculous to believe such a thing--why would Ky do that, what would be his purpose in destroying the statue? But many of the Hue people believed it, perhaps because so many things had happened with the various governments and so many awful things were believable in situations like this, and they have a tremendous tendency to believe anything that is said in the news, on the radio, or in print. The next day the struggle radio came out and said there had been a mistake; they had gotten this from the Saigon newspaper and the paper was wrong, that only the plaque had been stolen.

It was all right for them to make this correction the next day because the emotional reaction they wanted to create had already been created and people paid little attention to the correction--who cares what really happened if Saigon hates the Buddhists? (I suspect that it was the Buddhist activist group in Saigon that took the plaque so as to start things going.) So then they had all these signs down Le Loi about this girl, trying to recreate her martyrdom. I think one time an American walked up to one of the signs to see what it was all about, and an uproar was made about that. It was very obvious that an little thing could be a spark to light the emotional fire that was needed to make the movement roll and capture everyone's support. That is why they were trying to reclaim a three-year-old martyr, because they were desperate for a martyr for their cause, and at that time no one was willing to burn themselves to get rid of Thieu and Ky. There just wasn't the same feeling behind this.

The SF tried for about a week to make something of this girl but it didn't work. Then there were a couple unsuccessful attempts at self-immolation on the steps of a pagoda in Hue. There was a nursing student girl who nailed her hand to the table and wrote a protest letter in blood from her hand. The nurses around tried to stop her or dissuade her but she continued until they toted her to the hospital. At this point, a lot of young kids got carried away and did terrible things, but there was no one of real stature, such as in 1963, who martyred themselves. In 1963, there were several highly respected people who martyred themselves for a valid cause and they were very effective. But in 1966 there was not this same cause nor the same feeling, and such attempts just didn't come off, and the SF went without a big martyr. They almost got one--if General Ky had been stupid enough to send in his tanks at the time when the SF in Hue was expecting him and were all set up on the streets with road blocks and young students out manning them. There were big rock piles along some main streets ready for handy throwing. A group of university students were organized as a suicide squadron with flashy orange neck scarves and rifles they'd been issued by somebody. All the SF needed (and I'm sure wanted, because there were plenty of dispensable students) was for the tanks to come, the students fight, and for one student to get killed. One would have been enough, and the movement would have had a martyr to carry all Hue. But someone in Saigon was very wise and didn't send in troops at that time and we lost none of our students.

Here was an organization that was going full swing; there were people to write up incendiary articles, people to manage the strikes and demonstrations and the market shut-down, people to run the radio station--they had the station going almost all day. They began having broadcasts in English for the Americans. I'm afraid the student announcer with the best English was one of my very close friends who had learned some of his English from me. But I'm sure he was quite naive as to the behind-the-scenes operations. It was very interesting to watch all this--the obvious manipulations. They would say one thing on the radio one day and the next day contradict themselves, and each time the people would believe even the contradictions. Of course there were some of the well-educated people who were skeptical and who were forced to just sit back and be quiet and wait and see what was going to happen.

This unwillingness to come out on one side or the other is another thing that Americans don't fully understand--and Bill Stubbs indicated that prevalent among the American officials was an attitude of resentment and injury that the Vietnamese were ungrateful in their destruction of American "gifts" to the Vietnamese people and that some of the people wouldn't come out in support of the government. What Americans really don't realize is that it is frequently not only a person's job and livelihood that is at stake, but it could be his life. As long as the SF was able to control the town and the people and control the police force and the army--which was

really the thing--no one would dare to resist. No policeman could keep order contrary to the SF. In fact, no policeman has dared make a move since the fall of the Diem regime because of the unpopular moves they made during the Diem regime, and they fear retaliation on their families. As a law enforcement agency they couldn't do much more than direct traffic and collect fines from overloaded buses. For an ordinary citizen, even one in a responsible position, to take a stand was risking his neck. He might be willing to do that for himself, but what about his family and all the people who depend on him for their livelihood? These too are things that we don't realize--how interdependent Vietnamese people are, and in what uncertainty and danger they live; individuals are not free, either in terms of independence or in terms of political safety, to expose themselves as we do.

There was one brave soul in Hue, an independent-thinking woman who had been involved for years in activities to help her country's people. She got along well with Americans (causing jealousies and suspicion among some people of Hue), was extremely helpful and friendly to the IVS people in Hue, thought always in terms of meaningful projects, and was not sympathetic to the Communists. Because she remained friendly with the Americans through the SF's anti-American campaign and because she was well known in Hue and yet was critical of the SF, she finally found it necessary to leave Hue since she felt (with good reason) that her life was in danger. She then took action to get her sister out of the area. Because one couldn't predict the direction the struggle in Hue would take, speed was advisable.

Her sister was working for an AID contract medical team in Quang Tri when she received word to leave Quang Tri as soon as possible. I believe she left with only a day or two's notice, which was an unfortunate thing, but she had little choice under the circumstances. The top AID man in Quang Tri was justifiably put out, but, unjustifiably, he refused to try to understand the reality of the situation and the type of family responsibility that exists in Vietnam. In fact, he was so lacking in understanding and so spiteful, that for a long time after that he quite deliberately tried to make trouble for the older sister who got a job working for AID in Nha Trang. It's ironic that a Vietnamese person who had been so supportive of American efforts should suffer as much trouble as she did at the hands of official American agencies.

(In the younger sister's situation in Quang Tri there is another example of American lack of understanding of Vietnamese cultural values. The Americans liked to have parties and would invite the Vietnamese girls working for them. Vietnamese as a rule don't have the kind of parties that Americans like and those girls preferred not to go to the parties. However, they felt obliged to go, felt that in order to hold their jobs they were expected to attend the American parties. Whether this was the intent of the invitations

or a misperception on the part of the girls, it was nevertheless how they felt. As if that weren't enough, the American men nagged the Vietnamese girls to dance with them, often would not take no for an answer. It was as though they couldn't conceive that the girls really didn't want to dance. I'm sure it never crossed their self-confident American male minds that such behavior might be offensive or even repugnant to the girls. But, worse than that, was that those Americans--quite unaware of the significance of the differences in values--were actually trying to alienate those girls from their own society. They were trying to force them into social behavior that was not generally acceptable in Vietnamese society and that would identify them as being the Americans' girl friends. From a Vietnamese point of view, particularly in the conservative Hue and Quang Tri areas, there's not much worse you can say about a respectable Vietnamese girl.)

The remark is often made that the people in Hue are always anti-this and anti-that but never for anything. I think this is typical of protest groups. This was my feeling particularly at the time of the protest against the Huong government. There had been so much clamor for a civilian government and Huong had been appointed or chosen by a group of people who were supposed to represent all factions. It seemed the best of all possible governments at the time, despite some failings and the dictum against political activities. It was the anti-anti-expression in the protests without any pro- that impressed me at the time.

I talked to one monk who was very active in the Buddhist protests. I asked him three times in three different ways what it was he wanted to replace the Huong government, granted that the Huong government was at fault in denying the Buddhists and students the right of political activity, and he side-stepped my question each time--very obvious side-stepping. I was wishing afterwards I had been clever enough to have asked him in Vietnamese for the benefit of his young admirers in the background, but perhaps it was just as well that I didn't make him lose face--if it were likely--in front of his cohorts and possibly compromise the safety of my companion--a Vietnamese girl, or compromise my own relations in Hue--the political situation was quite tense. This monk--who was a farce as a monk as far as I'm concerned--was very, very fluent in English--a little too fluent--he gave me his Speech for Americans, complete with beautiful analogies and appropriate shrugging of shoulders; he was a very smooth arrogant man who was disrespectful toward his superior (a real monk) and who, I heard later, used to work for USAID in Saigon and became a monk at the time of the overthrow of Diem. Whether or not he was a Communist I don't know; but he was certainly not a real Buddhist.

## Attitudes Since the Tet Offensive, 1968

Regarding the feelings in Hue since Tet, I should first say that my knowledge is limited because I know only what I hear from my friends, and not being there I have no contact with certain levels of people that I ordinarily would have if I were there. For example, I don't have contact with many students; many students naturally are strongly nationalistic and want to do something positive for their country, so, also quite naturally, some of them are very anti-American or at least anti-American-policy in Vietnam. But I don't have any way now to get any real reaction from these people. Letters are not sufficient because people can't say what they really think in letters. Even if there were no such thing as censorship or question of security, it's hard enough to communicate having to write things down and without person-to-person contact. So I don't have these contacts, but, from what I do hear, I have the impression that a substantial proportion of the population of Hue really hate the VC. The VC killed so many people. But there is growing feeling against the Americans--what I first heard was that some people hate the VC the most and the Americans next and the rest of the people hate the Americans the most and the VC next; there isn't much difference between them--they're both evil. An American who went to Hue a few months after Tet made the remark that the only difference between the VC and the Americans was that the VC were discriminate and the Americans were indiscriminate. The Americans succeeded in slaughtering more people than the VC did.

But what I've been hearing recently--over a period of months--first, was that the people in Hue feel that the Americans blasted Hue the way they did on purpose in revenge against the Hue people being anti-American and anti-government. I myself feel there's a great deal of justification for this feeling; because of what I've known of American feelings, this would be very consistent, it might very well be true that a lot more damage was done than might otherwise have been done. The feeling I've been hearing more recently is that they're blaming the Americans for letting the VC come in in the first place. The Americans let them come in so that the Hue people would see what the VC are really like, or they could have protected Hue but they didn't because they didn't care about Hue. Of course, a lot of this doesn't seem reasonable and my own feeling is that these feelings exaggerate, but what is important is what the people believe whether it's justified or not. (Since the time of this debrief (December 1968), I have learned that South Vietnamese officers received orders to show no mercy to the civilian population in Hue in fighting the Communists at Tet. The officers who received these orders, having no love for Hue people, were entirely sympathetic with the orders.)

I would like to make clear what I mean by the term "Viet Cong" (VC). When I say "Viet Cong" I mean what the words literally mean: Vietnamese Communists or Vietnamese Communism (Viet Nam Cong San).

(It is a customary practice in Vietnamese language to take one element from each of two or more compound words and combine them.) So I mean Vietnamese Communists, whether Southerners or Northerners, Northerners being the North Vietnamese regular army and Southerners being members of what is popularly called in the West the National Liberation Front but which is more correctly translated as Front for the Liberation of the South Region (Mat Tran Giai Phong Mien Nam) or People's South Region Liberation Front (Mat Tran Dan Toc Giai Phong Mien Nam). I had thought originally that the Liberation Front itself gave the title National Liberation Front in order to give more respectability in Western eyes, but I was interested to note in a book in English published in Hanoi that I saw in a bookstore here that their translation was a more correct one, without the name National.

I understand that in the VC groups in Hue at the time of Tet there were sometimes Northerners and sometimes local people. I presume that most of the Liberation Front people there were from Central Vietnam; there wouldn't be too much reason for bringing Southerners up to the Central region. But, at any rate, both groups seem to work very closely together. I heard this from the American girl who replaced me in September 1967, was captured by the VC at Tet, and spent two months as a captive in the mountains. I've also heard this from Vietnamese friends. For example, a friend of mine in Hue had been working for the Americans and was also well known in Hue. Her brothers who were in the army and were home for Tet were captured by the VC. She herself was able to hide. When she would hear VC around who spoke Northern dialect she would come out and help her sister with the cooking, but if she heard Hue dialect she knew they would recognize her and she remained in hiding. She was very lucky; she managed to escape.

#### Tet 1968

The story of Sandra's capture is an interesting one. I'm not sure my version of it is entirely accurate, but I think it's close.

First, I should explain that IVS likes to encourage its members to stay at their stations during Tet because this is the most important time of year for the Vietnamese, and this is the time when IVSers can visit their friends and be visited by them, exchange all the proper greetings, and participate in the many Tet season activities. At the time, three IVS girls were living in the house in Hue, but two of them went to Saigon for Tet. One of the girls has a Vietnamese family in Saigon whom she considers her family. (She used to teach in the south and nearly always spent what time she spent in Saigon with this family.) Of course, it was natural for her to go "home" to Saigon for Tet. The other girl also used to teach in the south and went to Saigon to visit friends. Another woman who was a Quaker doctor in Quang Ngai province came to Hue for Tet and was

staying in the IVS house with Sandra. In our house in Hue we had a typical Vietnamese bunker--a very heavy wooden bed which was three large five-inch-thick hardwood boards across two horses, and sandbags around the sides. This is where the girls would go if there was firing or mortar attacks. There had been warnings that the VC might attack at Tet, but Sandra assumed, as did everyone else apparently, that this would be the usual kind of VC attack--a small force coming in in the middle of the night and withdrawing before daylight. She was very wakeful, and when she heard heavy firing which seemed close, she woke up Marge, the doctor, who shrugged and went back to sleep--being accustomed to shelling and fighting in Quang Ngai. But the firing became more intense and was closer so the two girls got under the bunker.

The details and periods of time are not at all clear to me, but it must have been some hours later--during the day--that the VC banged on the doors, tried to get in but didn't break in the doors which were heavily barred against thieves, and called out asking if there was anyone inside to open up. The girls didn't respond and the VC went away. For a couple of days they remained hidden in the bunker, sneaking out of the bunker to the toilet which was closeby and subsisting on water from the bottle of boiled toothbrushing water and drier sweet potatoes that had been brought as a Tet present by a Vietnamese friend. (The door between the main house and the kitchen was locked and barred because it was so easy to break into the kitchen from the outside.) The girls were able to peer out and see that the VC had set up a gun emplacement in our yard, which was a good place (for them) because we had a well and there were lots of trees for camouflage. The next day or so they tried again to enter and fired some shots into the air. This alarmed the girls so they opened up and two or three VC came in and searched the house, presumably for weapons or other hidden people.

Then they talked to the girls, explaining what they were doing in the yard, that the girls were to stay in the house, and making clear that they, the VC, were not going to take anything from the house. (Both girls had been in Vietnam only about five months so their Vietnamese was not very fluent but communication was possible.) They asked the girls questions and when one of the girls asked them where they were from, they replied matter-of-factly that one of them was from the North and one was from Thua Thien province. While they were talking, the American military began dropping mortars in the area. It's interesting to note that when there was a close one the girls "hit the floor" but the VC didn't move, just nonchalantly waited for the girls to get up. Then they went back outside and the girls returned to the bunker, but Sandra just escaped being caught by one mortar that came right through the roof into the livingroom.

Sometime after that--perhaps very soon or perhaps the next day--the VC, apparently withdrawing from the area, came back in and took the girls away into the mountains. At times they were in groups

with other prisoners, including American men, and young Vietnamese men who were presumably being taken for training or indoctrination. For several days they were kept on the move; it was a difficult time because they weren't accustomed to long hours of marching, and sometimes especially at night it was cold. The girls were treated well, not mistreated in any way apparently. Marge, the doctor, was very helpful in giving small medical assistance and maintaining morale, but she became quite sick herself and asked the VC for medicine. They brought in a VC doctor for her who gave her better medicine than she had asked for. The first of April the girls were released. They were luckier than other Americans captured. Marge has just returned, eight months later, to Vietnam to continue her work as a doctor.

I would like to say one thing for the record because I don't know if it's been said anywhere publicly, and that is about the behavior of the American Marines in Hue. After the fighting was over and Hue was occupied almost solely by the military, many people were not in their homes; they had fled to the countryside or had refugeed to the University Faculty of Pedagogy area. During this time, the American Marines occupied many homes and defiled the Buddhist altars, defecating around the altars and in other places (such as in suitcases, as I know from one resident), destroyed furniture and shot up cars and other items of personal property.

The point I want to make is that this sort of thing happens often in war--soldiers behaving quite badly. The interesting thing is that the Viet Cong, though they killed many people and restricted movement in some areas so that people weren't able to escape the fighting, didn't do any of these wantonly destructive things. From all I gather, they didn't destroy property just to be destroying it; they didn't defile or do anything to the Catholic church or to any of the religious places, and they didn't steal. They make quite a point of this--of not stealing and not looting. There was a troupe of musicians from North Vietnam that came in; they took three instruments from the National Conservatory of Music in the Citadel, and left a note saying that they had taken them. After the fighting when the VC had withdrawn and the area was occupied by the South Vietnamese troops and the Americans, all the rest of the musical instruments were destroyed or stolen.

One district was occupied by the VC for 26 days, but one of those days the VC withdrew taking the people with them, and the South Vietnamese marines came in. (During the time the VC occupied the area, they didn't allow the people living there to leave so as to escape the fighting.) When the VC came back in to that district, bringing the people back with them, the people found that just in that one day so much had been stolen from their homes. I heard that from two sources. I've heard from several sources that the American Marines stole tape recorders and radios and the Vietnamese government troops stole everything else--clothes and other things. One

woman, when the streets were clear enough, went back to the home where she'd been living and not even her conical hat was left. Apparently there was a period of time during which, in some areas, the people were forced to withdraw because of occupation by troops--perhaps about the time the fighting was over. Some of the people who lived on the south bank of the river--the area first to be held by American troops--came back to their homes to find them first defiled and damaged by the Americans and after a second forced withdrawal, looted by the South Vietnamese troops. This kind of thing seems to be consistently reported.

I know these things go on in a war--these are the things that happen. The soldiers really don't care about the people in the area; it's not their home, their families are not living there--they just don't care. But of course, this has its effect on people. And it's interesting to note that the Communists apparently did none of this; they seemed to be for the most part very well organized, and I judge morale was quite good. There was some indiscriminate killing. I heard one case, which was told in a rather vague way, about one house where there were two cyclo drivers sitting in the back when some VC came to the front. I don't know whether or not the drivers were hiding or just sitting openly. (I have the impression that the Communists tended to kill people who attempted to hide or escape them.) The VC asked a girl in the front of the house if there was anybody there and she said No. Again, it's not clear whether she said no because the two drivers were in the yard behind the house or because she was attempting to shield them, but the VC came through and discovered the drivers. Without asking any questions they killed the two men on the spot; I don't remember whether or not they killed the girl. But we can be sure that these two cyclo drivers were not bad corrupt government officials or enemies of the people in any way--just two poor lower-class people. So this kind of thing went on, and I'm sure there was much personal-spite killing. Also, undoubtedly some units were not as well behaved as others.

It is extremely difficult to judge the reasoning behind many of the VC actions or to predict what they will do in any given situation, but it is evident that there is reasoning--and considerable discipline. Whereas, on the American side, the seeming lack of discipline and ideology, the certain lack of any attitudes of respect or concern for the Vietnamese people, and the lack of any real understanding of the political and psychological factors operating in Vietnam and in Hue only served to worsen the American image and position.

#### Youth Programs

In reading the "Debrief of a Youth Advisor, Vietnam"<sup>1</sup> which discusses Vietnamese youth programs prior to 1966, I thought that some of the observations and evaluations of the observations were good. I

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1. Debrief No. 186612

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felt that overall he was rather optimistic, but I suppose you have to be that way if you're going to push or instigate these kinds of programs. I myself am much more skeptical about the effectiveness of the way the American and Vietnamese governments are organizing such programs. One thing that impressed me so much about his discussion was that these youth programs are so much an American-initiated thing. Even though he doesn't want the American influence to be obvious, I'm sure that American influence and domination is quite apparent and certainly felt by the Vietnamese youth.

In connection with that, I want to bring up a statement he made about anti-American feelings. He said, "In varying forms there is an anti-American dimension to all of these tendencies. In some cases it is disagreement with the American way of working and in others it is a deep and violent resentment against the total American presence. While this does not receive a great deal of overt expression at the moment, it has within itself a great possibility for disastrous expression in the future." Yet I felt that he didn't carry this excellent observation into later considerations for American-implemented programs. My own feeling is, only by Vietnamese people actually doing the initiating and organizing can you get a really basic movement. A nation can't be built by outsiders, it has to be internal. There are a lot of young Vietnamese intellectuals who have already worked in youth programs, including initiating programs. There is the possibility, of course, that the bulk of them have become too disillusioned and resentful to be effective. Some of them have become so disgusted and discouraged that they've just quit these kinds of activities because they feel so helpless and the situation has so deteriorated. Others can no longer be effective because they've become too closely identified with top Vietnamese power groups; one previously very active and well-liked person is now working for the government and has thus alienated many of his previous associates who don't trust the government.

What role should the American government play? As small a one as possible, and whatever it is, it should be limited to pressuring the Vietnamese government to initiate its own programs and perhaps making available training programs in social organization and group dynamics. But it should be Vietnamese doing the organizing within a framework of Vietnamese values, not American values. The U.S. should not do the funding--Vietnamese people always know when the U.S. is behind something, especially they can always smell the CIA. Any association with the CIA cripples any program. The reason I suggest training programs is because the U.S. is probably foremost in the world in the field of social psychology. One of the biggest failings of the American government in terms of international relations is its failure to acknowledge and utilize the intellectual resources of its own country, much less those of other countries.



If there's going to be any alternative to Communism in South Vietnam, I think there has to be the sort of movement that the youth advisor talks about in his debrief, but it has to take place within a Vietnamese framework; Vietnamese values, not American, have to operate. And, if we as a nation are going to have our hand in it, we have to understand thoroughly these operating Vietnamese values and have to understand all the complexities of the situation itself, which we certainly don't now, judging by the decisions and actions that have been taken. If we're not going to do that, we might as well go ahead and agree to a compromise situation in which the Communists will eventually come out on top and which we will call a compromise or neutrality or something to save face. Maybe it's too late for anything else, anyway.