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THE FREE OBSERVER

THE FIRST
AND ONLY

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

IN ENGLISH
IN VIETNAM*Post Honolulu***BALANCE-SHEET****DEBIT**

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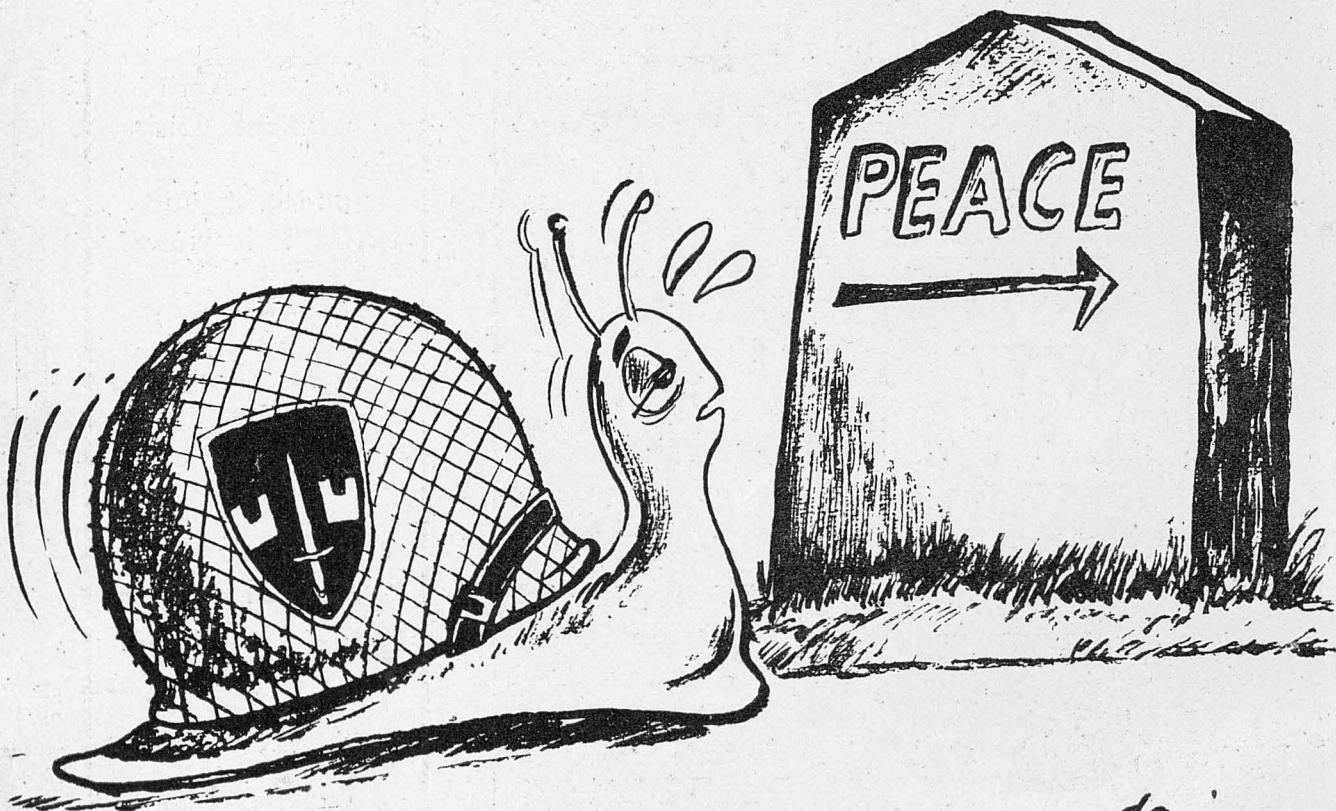
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(Gardner)**APRIL 66**

- * March - April Political Crisis
- * Buddhist and Catholic views
- * The Kennedys
- * Social Plagues And Executions
- * US Press in VN
- * From Advisory Council To Political Congress
- * 1st US visitor to VN
- * War and sex
- * Farewell to Psywar (*Censored*)

NEW SOCIETY

How Much Farther !?!



(Exclusively for THE FREE
OBSERVER)

**The Free
OBSERVER
MONTHLY MAGAZINE**

HEAD OFFICE :

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PUBLISHER :

Nguyen thi Nga

EDITOR :

*Phu Si,
Writer and
Journalist*

CONTRIBUTORS :

A group of intellectuals including Doctors, professors, political leaders, journalists and researchers.

A LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Chga

Dear Reader :

Magazines or periodicals, not unlike babies, are easier to conceive and harder to deliver.

The Free Observer was long in conception. I had long felt the need for an analytical monthly dissecting current issues for an English readership, and thereby establish better rapport between Vietnamese persuasions and orientations with those of the western mind.

Needless to say, extreme difficulties attended the production of our maiden issue. But just as motherhood is the supreme joy of any woman, I feel that its realization has been worth the sweat, toil, pains and tears.

I pledge to nurture this "baby" with the vitamins that marks the healthy paper: impartiality, sense of responsibility, accuracy, and dedication to the public interest.

It is my fond hope that a responsive readership guides it in its toddling steps. Even a mother can do only so much.

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APOLOGY

**We apologize to our readers for the delay of
this issue scheduled to come out early April.**

The reasons are :

- The shortage of type-setters which forced us to change printers twice.**
- The cut of 1/6 of our 32 pages against our will compelled us to end with the beginning.**
- Important events of the last three weeks which are still developing did not favor our decision on a deadline.**

The Free OBSERVER

EDITORIAL

Vietnam suffers again, since three weeks, a serious political crisis, after nine months of relative stability.

This time, not any political party has raised its voice.

Mostly we heard from the Government on the one side and from leaders of various religions on the other.

We wholeheartedly wish for the return of political stability, which is the condition preliminarily required to win the war.

We think however that politics should be the politicians' job first. We are afraid that a political stability, if any, which is not the work of politicians, would be unstable.

"Rendons a Cesar ce qui est à Cesar", that is one basic principle, also applicable to the building of a long-lasting political stability in Vietnam and elsewhere.



FACTS

We summarize here the viewpoints of the Buddhists, Government and Catholics on current issues

BUDDHISTS

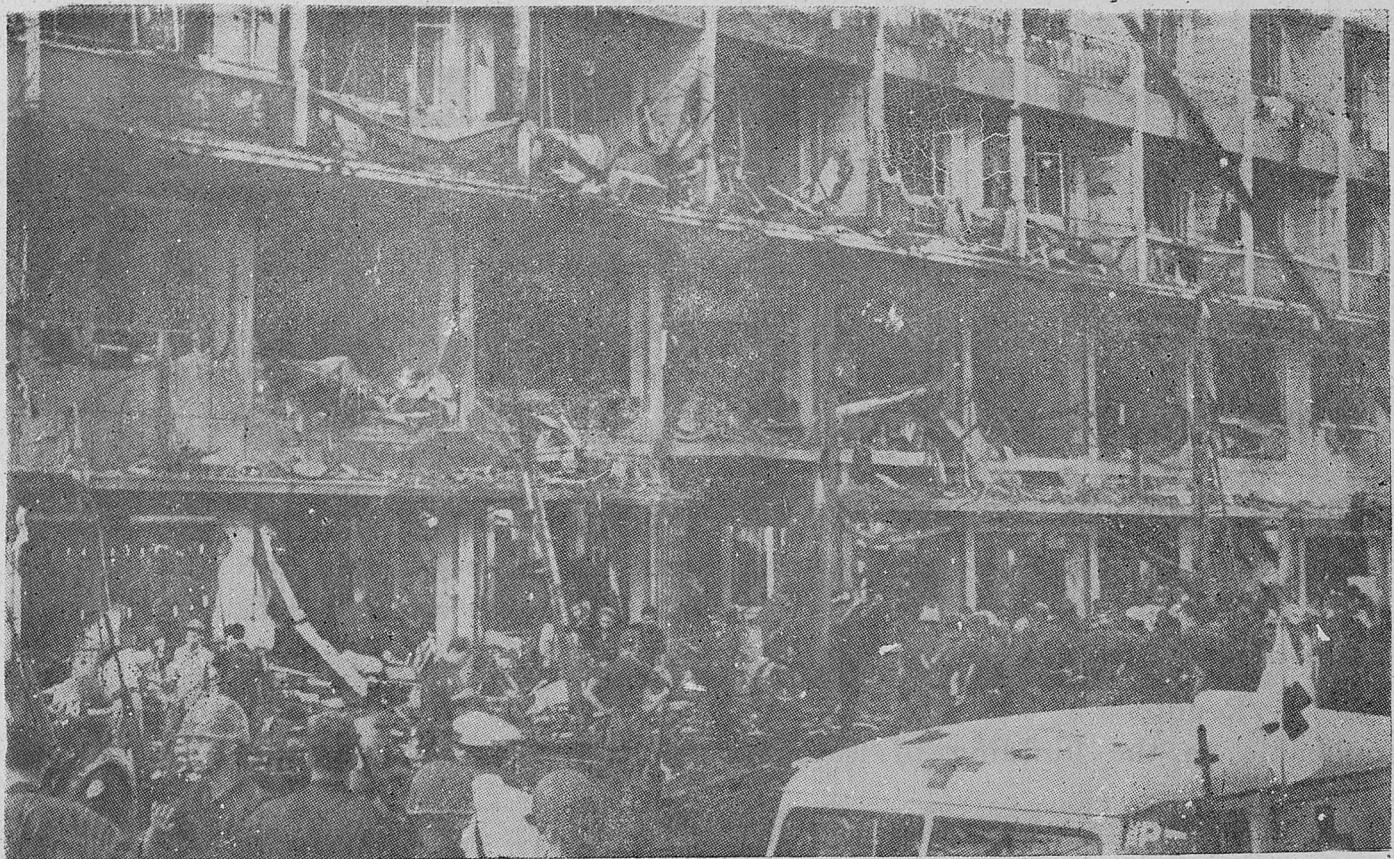
- Rehabilitation of all generals who were promoters of Nov. 1 1963 Coup, presently dismissed.
- Return of the Generals to their purely military functions.
- Immediate establishment of democratic institutions.
- Implementation of promises on social reforms by the Government, to achieve a real social revolution.
- LATEST DEMAND: establishment of an elected Constitutional Assembly within three months, (Apr. 5, 1966)

GOVERNMENT

- Entire agreement in principle with the Buddhist demands.
- A Constitutional Convention will be soon set up
- Constitution draft to be submitted to popular referendum by the end of 1966.
- General elections early 1967, or by October at the latest.
- Establishment of a political Congress to deal with a Constitution.
- LATEST DECISION: PM Ky agreed to the formation of a Constitutional Assembly (Apr. 6, 1966)

CATHOLICS

- National unity requires the union of the militarymen and the people first.
- The present situation requires political stability. Disturbances only endanger situation.
- "Struggle", if any, should be carried out orderly.
- For the Government, stability must not be a "goal" but it should be a condition favoring measures to be taken to solve urgent problems of the Nation.
- One urgent problem is the existing political vacuum in the country.



TERRORISM

New Tactics

The Victoria BOQ on Blvd Tran Hung Dao Cholon, was smashed in a pre-dawn Viet Cong attack on April 1, 1966.

Three U.S. MPs were killed in the gun fight and three Vietnamese died in the blast. Among the wounded, there were 67 Americans.

The Viet Cong "mad bombers" hit the cement and steel building in the same pre-dawn tactics they used in the December 4, 1965 blast that hit the Metropole hotel billet, killing ten and injuring 137.

Another major terrorist action between the above two were the double explosions by Claymore mines at the rear entrance of the ARVN General Staff Headquarters, at noon February 17, 1966, killing twelve and wounding 60.

The mines were obviously with the noon break for lunch to gain maximum casualties. All the victims were Vietnamese including 41 militarymen.

Through the three major VC terrorist actions in recent months, we can determine the new terrorist tactics of the Viet Cong:

To inflict maximum loss to the "enemy" by reducing damages to the people living in the neighborhood.

The targets, the time as well as the operational procedures they had adopted contributed to confirm the V.C. new move.

The V.C. intention was to show to the people that they only aimed at the "enemy," not at the people as before.

We are afraid however that it has been too late for the V.C. to make themselves understood, because their previous "exploits" in the "My Canh" explosions, in the "US Embassy" blast,... which made hundreds of innocent victims had given the people the definite belief that terrorism, under any form, is repulsive.

POLITICAL CRISIS

For Vietnam, the biggest issue of March and April was the **Buddhist affair**. It began a few days after the relief from functions on March 10, of Lt. **General Nguyen Chanh Thi**, former Commander of I Corps. On March 12, the Buddhists released a communique announcing four **Buddhist demands**.

A few days later, Gen. Thi returned to Central Vietnam from Saigon **«to see friends»** in the provinces which were under his command.

His visit initiated politico-religious **disturbances** in some northern provinces such as Hue and Danang.

Meanwhile, in Saigon, a series of speeches and commüniques by the Buddhist leaders during the second half of March caused another series of statements by the Country's leaders and some Catholic leaders and the Liaison Office of the Archdiocese of Saigon

«Civilian government, general elections, and complete sovereignty» were three hot demands at the end of March.

The national Leadership Committee's (NLC) decision to set up a Constitutional Convention was considered, up to the end of March, as a compromise which had some little chance to temporarily ease the tension.

Beginning April, the Buddhist struggle became more violent in both Saigon and the central provinces with repeated daily street demonstrations.

The general theme was the immediate organization of elections to establish a Constitutional Assembly.

In spite of an agreement in principle from the War Cabinet to establish a constitutional body within 5 or 6 months, demonstrations were continuing in the streets of Saigon to claim for a civilian government.

Prominent Buddhist leaders such as Venerables Tam Chau, head of the Buddhist Institute, Ho Giac, head of the Lay Buddhist Affairs, Tam Giac, head of the Buddhist Chaplaincy, had repeatedly urged moderation and non-violence. A lull might be expected therefrom, at least for the rest of April.

However, on April 9, a communique from the Vien Hoa Dao (Buddhist Institute) said that the United Buddhist Church will accept the responsibility of leading a nation wide struggle against the Government.

Meanwhile, the Catholic Youth Forces proclaimed on the same day its anti-agitation posture.

On April 12, the Political Congress of 92 men met to advise the NLC and the Government on how to set up a Constitutional Convention. Chief or State Nguyen Van Thieu, chairman of the NLC declared in his Opening address to the Congressmen that the Armed Forces were ready to hand over the power to a Civilian Government and agreed to the setting up of a "most democratic Constitutional Assembly". He stressed that to do so, "we must gather together at a conference table to find out a solution, in lieu of launching a "struggle campaign,"

However, the Buddhist Institute Leaders refused to join the Congress, and a settlement appeared to be doubtful.

As of April 12, there were three following main tendencies :

- 1) — GOVERNMENT : ready to compromise.
- 2) — BUDDHISTS : continuation of struggle.
- 3) — CATHOLICS : opposition to agitation.



CHRONOLOGY

MARCH 10 : Lt. General NGUYEN CHANH THI, I Corps commander was replaced by Maj. Gen. Nguyen Van Chuan, First Infantry Division Commander.

The decision was taken by the National Leadership Committee in full session.

MARCH 12 : 36 Generals and high commanding officers of the Armed Forces Council approved, following a secrete ballot, the replacement of Gen. Thi. There were 32 VOTES « YES » and four abstentions.

Ven. Thich Tam Chau, head of the Buddhist Secular Affairs Institute set four Buddhist demands :

- 1) All the Generals and servicemen who had played an active role in the Nov. 1, 1963 Revolution must be rehabilitated (over ten generals are now jobless).
- 2) The Generals now serving in the country or abroad are to return to their genuine military duties.
- 3) A civilian Government should be established.
- 4) The Government should carry out the promises it has made, especially in the social reform field.

MARCH 15 : PM Nguyen Cao Ky appealed for « vigilance and more sacrifices for the completion of the revolution, even at the price of more BLOODSHED. »

The appeal was made during the PM's visit to the Cao Dai Church in Tay Ninh province.

MARCH 16 : Lt. Gen. Nguyen Chanh Thi, former I Corps Commander told a press conference before he winged off for Da Nang that « the bonds of FRIENDSHIP between the PM and myself have not diminished in any way. »

MARCH 17 : Ven. Ho Giac, deputy Director of the Buddhist Chaplaincy elaborated on the four demands of the Vien Hoa Dao before a MAMMOTH GATHERING at the Buddhist Institute Headquarters.

MARCH 19 : Ven. Tam Chau, head of the Buddhist Institute urged NATIONAL ELECTIONS and a civilian government to replace the ruling Directory of Generals.

MARCH 23 : PM Nguyen Cao Ky reiterated his Administration's objective of setting up DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, before 185 delegates to the 2nd National Administrative Congress.

MARCH 24 : Representatives of all MAJOR RELIGIONS (Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Cao Dai) met at the Headquarters of the Catholic Greater Union Bloc, in Saigon. No official communique was released.

MARCH 25 : PM Nguyen Cao Ky declared, at the closing session of the 2nd National Administrative convention, he was ready to turn over the power to a civilian government to return to his old love : COMBAT FLYING.

MARCH 25 : Ven. Thien Minh, Deputy Chairman of the Vien Hoa Dao told thousands of Buddhists gathering at the Buddhist Institute that history had proved that Buddhist have never been POLITICS-MONGERS.

MARCH 26 : PM Nguyen Cao Ky, in a message to the Nation over Saigon Radio, warned that unrest might spoil Government reform programs and result in loss of FOREIGN AID.

MARCH 27 : Ven. Tam Chau, head of the Institute urged the Buddhist faithful to keep their calm. The appeal made in a communique stressed that the « Buddhist Church has not yet ordered whatever form of STRUGGLE ».

MARCH 27 : Father Hoang Huynh, Chairman of the Catholic Greater Union Bloc, told UPI (according to UPI report) he believed the present Government should be replaced by a civilian government made of REPRESENTATIVES OF all major RELIGIONS in the country.

MARCH 29 : Fr. Quynh clarified position saying :

1) Civilian Government issue was but an « OLD THEME, » Advocating for the preponderance of civilian authority over the military, of both the « Catholic Greater Union Bloc » and the « Citizens of All Faiths Front » whom he is the Chairman.

2) The « CITIZENS » of all religions are to be represented in the future civilian government. They participate in the Government not as representatives of religions but as citizens of the country, given that religions are not to be involved in politics.

PM Ngyen Cao Ky said the Government would take « APPROPRIATE MEASURES » if gentle persuasion failed to dissuade street demonstrators.

He also said Lt. Gen. Nguyen Chanh Thi, former Commander of I Corps will be assigned to a new position when his sick leave expires.

There will be a Constitution by the end of 1966, and general elections will follow, possibly early 1967 or by October at the latest.

MARCH 30 : The Saigon Archdiocese Liaison Office released Communique No. 6 defining official Catholic position on disputed topics:

1) The present situation of the country requires « stability » ; disturbances only complicate the Nation's problems and do not help solve any one.

2) Struggle, if any, should be carried out « in order » ;

3) For the Government, stability should not be a « goal » but must be a condition necessary for it to develop realistic measures aiming at solving urgent national problems.

One of the big urgent problem is the existing political vacuum. The problem had already been raised in a previous communique of the Liaison Office.

MARCH 30: Lt. General Nguyen Huu Co, Deputy Premier and Defense Minister warned, in an « Order to the Armed Forces », that militarymen of all grades participating in street demonstrations or engaging in destructive action would be severely punished according to military discipline, or tried before the Field Court.

PM Nguyen Cao Ky issued an « Order to all officials (civil servants) calling on all the functionaries to respect discipline. Any one who breaks again discipline imposed upon Civil Servants (by engaging in actions endangering national security and order) would be brought to Military to Court.



The National Leadership Committee decided to set up a Constitutional Convention to draft a National Constitution to be submitted for referendum.

Interior Ministry sources said the Constitutional Convention will be composed by 96 members.

Half of the members could be representatives of various religions and political parties. The rest might comprise members of city and provincial councils.

(Continued 28 page on)

WHY THIS WAR?

By MINH TAM

Foreign Domination

Viet Nam has existed 4000 years, according to legends and history. As the gateway to South East Asia it enjoys many advantages but must endure many hardships.

Foreign domination was one of the worst disasters to befall Viet Nam. History records a thousand years of Chinese rule, and there was a hundred years of French exploitation that ended in 1945.

Post World War II

Viet Nam was under Japanese military occupation in World War II, but continued to be administered by the Vichy French. Toward the end of the war (March 1945) the Japanese disarmed the French and removed them from their administrative posts.

A Vietnamese Government was formed a month later to set up a Vietnamese administration, headed by nationalist Tran Trong Kim. Although formed under Japanese occupation with a war going on, this government proclaimed the independence of Viet Nam.

But the Japanese, on the brink of defeat, hesitated to return to the new government the arms, money, tools, and buildings that they had taken from the French and which any government would require to function. Therefore, the Tran Trong Kim Government fell about a week before the end of the war. This left a vacuum, and the Communist-led Viet Minh had only to move in to fill it.

Viet Minh Revolution

The Viet Minh—abbreviation for Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh, or League for the Independence of Viet Nam—was formed during World War II by Vietnamese refugees in China. Its leader took the name of Ho Chi Minh, primarily to conceal his long Communist past, for he knew full well that the Vietnamese had no taste for Communism and were only seeking national independence. Thus were Vietnamese nationalists lured into the Viet Minh.

After the Japanese defeat, the Viet Minh staged a big demonstration in Hanoi, going through the motions of seizing power that no longer had to be seized.

As soon as they assumed power they discarded their nationalist masks; they purged and killed most of their potential opponents—especially true nationalists—and began a Communist revolution following the same pattern as other post-war Communist revolutions. Having seized power by surprise and deception, they had a stranglehold before their victims could recover from the shock. Thus, Viet Nam was plunged into an untimely and

shameful revolution at a time when the people needed unity and order to resist French re-conquest and to rebuild their country ruined by the war and four years of Japanese occupation.

Ho In Power

On his very first day in power, Ho Chi Minh took these steps:

— Released all convicts, even thieves and murderers. Many of them became active in the revolution, and some overseers of Ho's new society.

— Abolished all taxes and replaced them by confiscation and « voluntary contributions ». Corrupt committees exacted the contributions, which turned out to be much higher than the old taxes.

— Dismissed all regular judges and government officials and replaced them with « people's tribunals » and « people's committees ». Result was a period of anarchy and bloody terrorism.

War In Indochina (1946-1954)

Immediately after the Japanese surrender, the French returned to re-establish French sovereignty over Viet Nam. Their clash with Ho Chi Minh's Government made that government the standard-bearer for Vietnamese independence—a bitter trick of fate for the Vietnamese people.

France and the Ho Chi Minh Government signed an agreement early in 1946 that recognized the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam as a free state within the French Union. Disputes arose over the scope of Vietnamese freedom, and no supporting agreements could be reached. Result was a rash of bloody incidents that flared into the Indochinese War on December 19, 1946.

Politically, the French attempted to deprive the Viet Minh of popular support by separating the non-Communist Viet Minh from the Communist leaders. Former Emperor Bao Dai was asked to become Chief of State of a non-Communist Viet Nam, and by agreement reached in March 1949, Viet Nam was awarded « independence within the French Union. » Unfortunately, the Bao Dai regime was not independent and pushed even more nationalists into the ranks of the Communist-led Viet Minh.

A Vietnamese National Army was formed, but it was just an adjunct to the French Expeditionary Corps. A considerable number of fervent nationalists, whose only purpose was to stop the Viet Minh, rallied around this army in time to save the French from immediate defeat.

It was only after eight years of bloody war, climaxed by the fall of the French base at Dien Bien Phu (May 8, 1954) that the war ended in favor of the Viet Minh. This

Why This War?

led to the Geneva Conference and to the armistice agreement of July 20, 1954 whereby France abandoned to the Viet Minh approximately half of the territory of Viet Nam and almost 60 percent of its population.

This was a great injustice to the Vietnamese people and a major defeat for the Free World.

Except for a handful of Communist leaders, the Viet Minh officers and soldiers fought that eight-year war as their ancestors had fought and defeated the Mongol armies of Kublai Khan in the 13th century. They fought heroically and successfully against superior material strength. Their single purpose was to expell the foreign conquerors.

Geneva And Partition

Defeat of French forces at Dien Bien Phu led to an armistice and to the Geneva Conference attended by nine nations: the Viet Minh Government (North Viet Nam), the State of Viet Nam (South Viet Nam), Laos, Cambodia, France, Communist China, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The Geneva Agreements, however, were signed only by the French High Command and the Viet Minh High Command.

The Viet Minh demanded and obtained from the French a partitioned Viet Nam. All the territory North of the 17th parallel—about half of the country and more than half of its people—went to the Viet Minh, pending general elections that would bring about the unification of Viet Nam. Evacuation of French and non-Communist troops from North Vietnam and of Viet Minh troops from South Viet Nam was to be completed within 300 days—by May 1955. Free choice of residence was to be granted to any Vietnamese who wanted to move north or south within the same period.

The United States delegation at Geneva was not a signatory power to these agreements, rather made a separate declaration promising not to disturb the truce by the use of force or the threat of force, and declaring that the United States would view with grave concern any violent breach of the truce.

As for South Viet Nam, its delegation refused to sign the truce agreements, vainly protesting partition of the country. The delegation objected to the provision for general elections, because more than half of the electorate would be abandoned to Communist rule north of the 17th parallel. The South Vietnamese vainly asked that the whole of Viet Nam be placed under the control of the United Nations until peace and security could be established that would permit the holding of really free general elections.

There was one bright spot in the dark picture. For the first time in modern history, full independence for Viet Nam was recognized. Articles 10, 11, and 12 of the final declaration of the Geneva Conference assured national independence and it was confirmed in a letter to the Vietnamese Delegation by French Premier Mendes-France on July 20, 1954.

A New Nation

Out of a long war Viet Nam emerged as a sovereign, independent nation. Though devastated and divided, the people set about rebuilding, seeking to prove to fellow-countrymen and other Asians that social justice and economic prosperity can best be achieved under free democratic government.

In South Viet Nam, one month after the fall of Dien Bien phu, former Emperor Bao Dai who was then Chief of State called Ngo Dinh Diem to form a new Government of Viet Nam. Eighteen months later (October 1955) Diem was elected President in a national election. The Republic of Viet Nam was proclaimed October 26, 1955, and a year later a Constitution was adopted by the Constituent Assembly. The first Assembly served a three year term and was re-elected in 1959.

In 1960 an abortive military coup failed to overthrow Diem, and in February 1962 his palace was bombed but he was not hurt. Diem's Government ended when he was killed during the revolution of November 1, 1963.

Viet Cong Buildup

In the interest of peace and in the effort to rebuild the country, Diem had reduced the nation army from 170,000 to 150,000 men and disbanded the para-military forces that had been armed by the French. Meanwhile, the 170,000-man French Expeditionary Corps was withdrawn from South Viet Nam. Overall, the anti-Communist armed forces in free Viet Nam were reduced by more than one-half, while the Viet Minh in the north doubled their military strength in outright violation of the Geneva Agreements. Moreover, the whole population north of the 17th parallel was trained as popular forces, ready to serve as regular troops.

A detailed plan for aggression against South Viet Nam was steadily implemented, beginning as soon as the country was partitioned. First steps were in the political field with rash preparations for the general election referred to in the Geneva Agreements.

To that end, the Fatherland Front — a disguised Communists organization — was established in 1955. In South Viet Nam it attempted to incite people to demand normalization of relations between North and South Viet Nam and to support general elections that would have been Communist-rigged. Their maneuvers, so far, have failed.

A second aggressive attempt took the form of a politico-military organization called the "National Liberation Front (NLF) of South Viet Nam." Creation of the NLF was announced December 20, 1960, and it is the Viet Cong Communist's political arm today, with a program that is the same as the Lao Dong (Workers) Communist Party in North Viet Nam.

Communists of North Viet Nam want to see their offspring, the National Liberation Front, grow up to control South Viet Nam, so they provide material support and a list of phony ideals.

The NLF is but a puppet on the knee of the
(Continued on page 27)



THE U.S. PRESS IN VIET NAM IS RESPONSIBLE

Mr. Nguyen Trong
of *Tu Do Daily*

EDITOR'S NOTE—*Mr. Nguyen Trong, Managing Editor of the Vietnamese daily Tu Do (Freedom) recently returned from a 30-day visit to the United States. He wrote a series of editorial articles for the Tu Do daily, including the one we have partly translated and reproduced below. By giving the main reasons why some Americans do not understand the significance of the V.N. war, Mr. Trong defines at the same time the responsibility of the U.S. press.*



The insignificant minority of the American people who are ignorant of the implications of the Vietnamese war have inadvertently become the backing force of anti-VN policy demonstrations.

The reasons are :

1)— The United States is a nation where freedom of the press and of information is entirely respected. Newspapers, radio and television run by private organizations are free to publish news and show pictures on the VN war as they like. The majority of news and pictures are aimed at attracting a large readership and audience by keeping up with time factor. Hot news and views excite and give the people an uneasy feeling about the war.

Besides, press stories and war pictures do not speak out the reason why the Americans are involved in this war. On the contrary, they only show painful details on actually very noble and very significant sacrifices of the valiant U.S. troopers.

2) The American policy is to abstain from making «publicity» for any specific government, individual and concept.

Even if the U.S. government wants to carry out some propaganda for the policy it has adopted, it can only do that by holding press conferences but cannot use newspapers, the radio and television which all are private businesses.

The «Voice of America» (VOA), controlled by the United States Information Agency (USIA) does not operate in the States, but only in foreign countries. Very few Americans know the VOA in the same way that not many Vietnamese are aware of the «Voice of Freedom» broadcasting directly to North Vietnam.

For that reason, the clarification of the Vietnamese problems for the American public is the responsibility of the American Press and the Vietnamese Embassy in Washington.

Under these conditions, we are not surprised to see that quite a few Americans cannot understand why their men have to fight and die in Vietnam.

3) U.S. journalists and T.V. cameramen operating in this war-torn country pay too much attention to the American aspect of the Vietnam war. They tend to overlook the fact that this is a Vietnamese war first, and that U.S. and Allied troops only play a supporting role.

In this way, the U.S. press and T.V. lead the American people to understand that in Vietnam, American troops conduct the war while the Vietnamese soldiers have just a secondary role...

The American people are then entitled to ask: Why are there no Vietnamese soldiers on the battlefield, why only American? (1)



(1) *EDITOR'S NOTE : The Free Observer agrees generally with Mr. Trong's ideas, except for the last point.*

Transportation :

An effective way to solve the transportation shortage in Saigon is to encourage more taxis.

To avoid importation of more cars and worsen traffic congestion we suggest that the government authorize the use of private cars as taxis. Cars of all types and calibers now existing in Saigon (and in Vietnam) may run as taxis, as it is done in Japan.

At present, there is only one rate applicable to all types of taxi-cars, thus limiting the number of cars running as taxis to small cars, the « Renault 4 » in general.

Rates will be fixed according to categories of cars, classified in accordance with their power and fuel consumption,

Japan has three categories of taxis :

— Small taxis :	admittance cost : 80 yens (or 16 piastres)
— Medium taxis :	— : 100 yens (or 20 piastres)
— Big taxis :	— : 120 yens (or 24 piastres)

We are sure that such a step will make available at least 2000 more « taxis » of the Peugeot 203, 403, Citroen 11, Chevrolet and may be even Buick classes.

The Police will not have to stop illegal Scooter-taxis any more.

PICTURE :

A view of the daily military briefing at the National Press Center on Le Loi Street, Saigon.

3rd from left : Major Tran Van An, the Vietnamese military spokesman. Incidentally, Officers from the field come to afford details on specific events.

Photo shows from left : Colonel Bruce Jones, Senior Advisor, Colonel Dao Van Phu, Deputy Commander of the 2nd ARVN Division brief the press March 24 on the joint US-VN operation "Texas" in the central coastal plains between Chu Lai and Quang Ngai. At right, Mr. Buu-Nghi, Director of the Center.

Spokeman :

We have now a Vietnamese military spokesman and a number of American spokesmen, holding excellent daily briefings.

A political spokesman, because of Vietnam's politics at the present time, seems to be in order. The lack of an official political source at present results in rumors and the distortion of news which are very damaging to the country's interests.

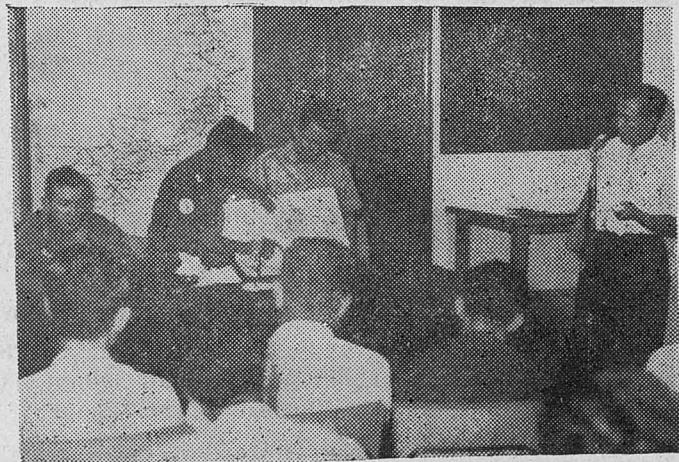
The way some pressmen are forced to "buy leaks" cannot stand longer. "Leaked out" news are usually highly sensitive and classified and when they turn out wrong, as very often they are, they become much more dangerous than the Viet Cong for their damaging effects.

We suggest therefore that the Government appoint a high-ranking official, with access to even "Secrets d'Etat" to brief the press daily. There is surely a way to inform people without betraying secrets.

Such a spokesman may have the rank of a Secretary from the Prime Minister's Office, the Foreign Affairs Ministry, or the Information Ministry.

We submit that this is imperative in view of sensitive situation of Vietnam.

The present system of "Press Attachés" at the Ministries is ineffective.



OUR SUGGESTIONS

We endorse the following proposals to the authorities concerned in the hope that they may be of help towards the general welfare.

Diplomas :

You don't have a diploma, you don't have the job. But if you have a diploma and can't do the job, you have it.

That is the biggest problem of the public function now in Vietnam.

The problem is big, because we have now too many diplomas,—and very high ones too with our young generations. But the young are so often too young for the jobs, and the old haven't diplomas, because they are too old to get one.

We suggest that for the efficient functioning of public affairs, all those who can do a good job, with or without diploma, would be appointed to responsible functions, and granted commensurate privileges in salary and grade in the administrative scale.

Children :

There are too many children roaming in the streets.

They are learning the beggars' profession while pretexting to watch the cars in the streets for a few piasters. They are specializing in the cowboys' business while throwing stones at the powerless beautiful ladies. They closely follow foreign visitors, in groups, for favors.

They lose their time the Nation will lose good citizens.

The authorities and their parents should take appropriate measures to stop the move for the interest of the children themselves, their families and the Nation too.

Buddhist Leader's Suggestions

Ven. Thich Ho Giac, head of the Lay Buddhists Affairs General Office told a crowd of 5,000 Saturday April 2, that the solutions for the present political crisis are "mutual understanding and tolerance."

He urged all his faithful to be moderate, to keep self control and avoid "blindness" in their actions.

He stressed that the enemy is a common one to all religions, all parties and groups.

"No division can be tolerated," he said, "no division between religions, parties and groups as well. We must unite ourselves into one bloc to face the enemy and live or die together."

The Buddhist Leader was warmly applauded by the enthusiastic crowd.

Ven. Ho Giac played a key role in the Buddhist movement against the Ngo Dinh Diem regime in 1963.

N - S Fight or E - W Clash ?

By PHU SI

This war has no front ; the enemy is nowhere and everywhere ; friends and foes are mixed together, and we fight by night and by day.

It has been an undeclared war from its beginning 10 years ago with small unit ambushes, to its present stage involving regiments.

It is neither a civil war nor a fight between ethnic groups ; in fact no Vietnamese really wants to kill his own countrymen when the enemy is of his own blood.

It is a war with both sides claiming to be against aggression in a land where the Ben Hai River flows peacefully, dividing the country.

It is a war of lies, of insults, of accusations and denunciation—all that hurts human feelings.

It is the most atrocious, merciless, inhuman and unfortunate war that has ever been fought.

It is an allout war involving politics, economics, culture, tradition, civilization — a war that follows no existing rules, strategy or concepts.

It perpetuates a type of warfare once believed outmoded in this nuclear age.

It is, finally, a long war that somehow must be won by the forces of Freedom, if freedom is to survive anywhere in the world.



North-South Fight ?

It is obvious that this war is not a fight between North and South Vietnam. It is simply beyond the capabilities of either North and South Vietnam, materially speaking, to wage such a long and expensive war.

It is not a war for the defense of South Vietnam only, because South Vietnam is about the size of a comma on a map of the world, and it was virtually unknown to most people before the war began.

Vietnam is, rather, the point of impact in the clash between two international ideologies, two civilizations that characterize the twentieth century, namely, Freedom and Communism.

This is an international war that is part of the overall plan for world domination by the Communists, and it is evident that Red China, Russia and other Communist countries are financing, supporting, and prolonging this war.

It is an international crisis because its effects — even at the present stage of the war — are international in scope. War or peace for the world, life or death for mankind, freedom or slavery for all are involved.

Free Viet Nam has suffered under this «guerrilla experiment» for 11 years. It has lost hundreds of thousands of its beloved sons in opposing — for the benefit of all nations — this new Communist aggression.

We shall continue to defend the cause of freedom for all peoples. It is a difficult undertaking, but we believe that «God helps them who help themselves.»

We welcome to our land the valiant troops



Marine riflemen cargo from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (HMM)-261 chopper during Operation Double Eagle II early this year, 40 miles south of Chu Lai.

This is an experimental war for new Communist tactics which they resort to because their plan for world domination has been obstructed by the threat of nuclear force. Success of their experiment would make them champion-of-the-century on the field of battle. The new Communist strategy is large-scale, reinforced, and highly-developed guerrilla warfare against modern weapons. The Communists are convinced they will succeed.

of friendly countries such as New Zealand, Korea, Australia and the United States. Vietnam will always have friends by its side ready to share the heavy burden imposed on all free men by the Communists.

This spirit of solidarity among free peoples is strong enough to defeat the coalition of evil forces. International Communists know how to organize and to coordinate their plans and actions in their attempt to destroy our freedom. Their

scheme is doomed to failure, because the Free World also knows how to unite to defeat them.

To our American friends, in particular, we wish to draw their attention to a few special points :

The war in Vietnam is in reality a confrontation between the United States and Red China. It is a direct challenge to Red China by the leading country of the Free World. The Viet Cong are only tools in the hands of the Reds.

The Americans must accept the fact that they are leaders of the Free World. Willing-or-not, this is a position they cannot reject. Some nations of the Free World are strong; others are weak, and tension in various parts of the world — in Viet Nam in particular — can result in their loss or in their deliverance. This is a responsibility the Americans cannot evade. It has become a sacred duty which, we believe, they are fulfilling with devotion.

Millions of people and scores of nations on the five continents are watching Americans at their task in Vietnam. They all nourish the hope of siding with you for a life of freedom and prosperity. Let them not be deceived. Fulfill their trust in you by delivering us from the devil.

To all the other nations of the Free World, particularly the developed and powerful nations, we make a solemn appeal to their pride as free peoples to demonstrate that freedom is a force that will not yield to violence and slavery. We hope to see more flags in Viet Nam symbolizing national honor and solidarity.



East-West Clash ?

THE VIETNAMESE are a peace-loving people. They have often been the victims of aggression, and they have resisted. They are not, themselves, aggressors.

These people have a thousand-year-old civilization encompassing world renowned philosophies and deep-rooted and respected traditions. Vietnamese civilization is opposed to Communist doctrine.

Letter to the Editor

THE PRICE OF A MINISTER

To the Editor,

Dear Sir :

I read in the *Tia Sang* Vietnamese daily of March 23 something like this :

One of the four points of the *Vien Hoa Dao*'s communiqué of March 12 urged the formation of a civilian government.

"We abstain from commenting whether such a Government is appropriate or not for the time being. What we are wondering about is neither the *Vien Hoa Dao* nor any political party has proposed a concrete approach to the problem."

The *Tieng Viet* daily of the same day said :

"Father Hoang Quynh (Chairman of the Catholic Greater Union Bloc) reportedly said that in view of the war conditions, a truly representative government could be obtained even without elections.

"The various denominations could nominate a government.

"... If this idea is to put into practice, we are afraid that we shall get into the path of the Indonesian Government, i.e. a too large government without a stable foundation."

I submit to your readers' consideration a solution to both problems :

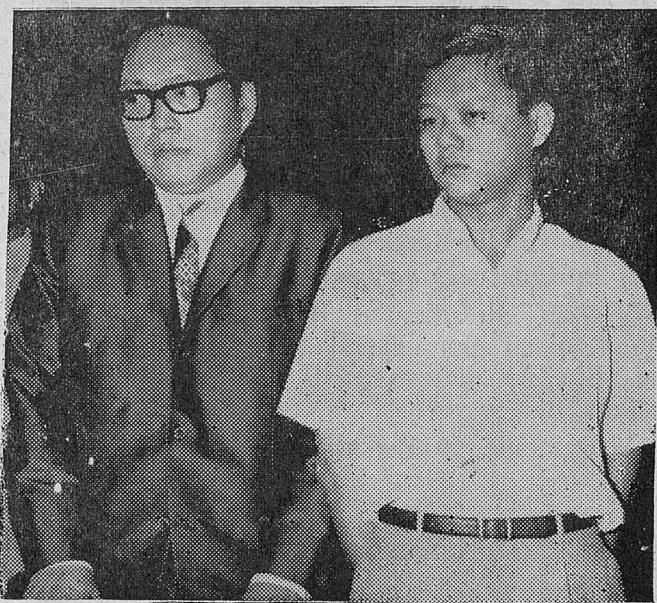
The criterion, the only one I find reasonable for the selection or appointment of Ministers for a civilian cabinet is : each ten thousand men any group can afford, from now on, to contribute to the strengthening of the Armed Forces, will give that group the right of designating one minister.

Example : X political party says it has 40,000 men ready to serve in the Army, it is entitled to four Minister's seats.

By "group," we mean any religion, party, front, bloc, etc..

The Armed Forces are in need of soldiers to fight the enemy. And those who contribute more to the fight have more right. That will only be justice for every one, every group, every religion.

TA VINH (L) and his accomplice



DANG CAO SACH

The solution is surely a "concrete approach to the problem." It will also avoid a too crowded government.

The Armed Forces will have enough men to fight the Viet Cong.

Injustice, jealousy, dispute of influence, ... will cease.



The civilian government will do its job, according to the true aspiration of the people and the Generals will return to their genuine military duties.

True political stability will be established.

However, the only trouble might be that it will be impossible to admit 1/10,000 or 1/1,000 or 1/2 of a Minister in the Cabinet because there may be groups which cannot meet the "ministrable" rate.

Mr. Editor, my English is too poor, I am afraid of being misunderstood. Please excuse me.

Sincerely yours,

MUOI NGAN

The Full Meaning of 2 Death Sentences

By TRONG NHAN

Ta Vinh, manager of the Sui Hing import-export firm in Saigon died for having been a corrupted businessman.

Dang Cao Sach was to be shot for having been a corrupted official (1).

The deaths of these two men, per se, is surely not the whole meaning of the Vietnamese Government's verdicts. The objective, we believe, is the total eradication of a century-old social plague which has turned into a tradition in this society: speculation and corruption.

The root of the graft and corruption is to be found in a large scale economic sabotage plan conceived by a powerful enemy of Vietnam.

The plan consists of coordinated actions involving influential financial organizations in Vietnam such as banks, international monetary societies abroad, particularly Hong Kong, the solidly established commercial hierarchy in Cholon and a legion of contributors in specific public services.

The whole organization functions like a Ministry similar to the government's Economy and Finance Department.

It has been crystal clear that the Vietnam market depends on «decrees» promulgated by that immaterial Ministry.

It is an every day fact that prices scaled up or plummeted down, goods become scarce, then suddenly abundant in a matter of hours. The «Ministry»'s instructions have been literally adopted.

The solution to the present economic crisis lies there.

As long as the «main economic sabotaging force» cannot be destroyed, no long lasting economic stability can be expected.

To destroy that «main force», the economic B-52s must enter into action so as not to leave the enemy any sanctuary.

However, the whole problem remains, in spite of the fact that the enemy really exists, who is the supreme commander of that economic guerilla main force, where lies the «main force of the economic enemy.»

(1) As of April 9, Sach has not faced the firing squad yet. His appeal for clemency was however rejected March 22, by the Amnesty Council. PM Ky personally favored Sach's appeal. But the last decision is to be made by the Chief of State, Lt. Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu, Chairman of the National Leadership Committee.

Ta Vinh was just a «platoon leader» of a division strength of economic saboteurs. We are afraid that his men are planning his revenge.

Unless the whole ring be definitely broken, the economic guerillas will come out from their «tunnels» to launch possibly a decisive attack. Actually, they expect to gain an economic Dien Bien Phu.



Dang Cao Sach who was convicted with embezzlement of public funds will face the execution squad if the Chief of State so decides. His death does not mean the elimination of corruption in the public service.

The roots of this evil are so deep through a century-old colonialist domination and over twenty years of war and revolutions that the plague cannot be uprooted by the execution of one man.

An efficient solution requires patient and sustained efforts.

Functionaries should return to the respectable old concept requiring them to be, first of all, true «civil servants». They serve the country and serve the people.

To help our civil servants correct their perspectives, they should have good examples of sacrifice and dedication by outstanding men to follow. It also means that they will have not to be disturbed by scandals of their superiors.

And as the cost of living and the economic disturbance of the present time are really a major trouble for all our civil servants, and constitute a serious threat to their honesty, they must be fairly treated so that they may be free from temptation.

Vietnam is advancing towards a "New Society", the road is still long, but the first steps are really encouraging.

LET US CALL A SPADE A SPADE

The Kennedys are "pardonable"
by PHU SI

Almost every day, the National Liberation Front (NLF) radio crows that the NLF forces kill hundreds of Americans a week, or annihilate battalions of national troops a day.

The truth, or rather falsity, these claims are for our purposes immaterial. More relevant are the leaflets in both Vietnamese and English which call upon the Vietnamese and American troops to lay down their weapons or else. These bear the seal of the "National Liberation Front for South Vietnam."

In some villages, the morning begins with obituaries found on peasants murdered the previous night. They are signed by the "National Liberation Front."

In the past, claims have been lodged by the NLF for international recognition and the right to represent the people of South Vietnam. Hanoi, in particular, wholeheartedly supports these claims. Numerous other Communist countries also back this organization with moral support and material aid.

However, one question still remains to be answered: Is the "Front" Communist or not? Must we consider it our enemy? No definite answer has been given so far. However the "Front" has a definite enemy: South Vietnam and her Allies, with the Americans at top of list.



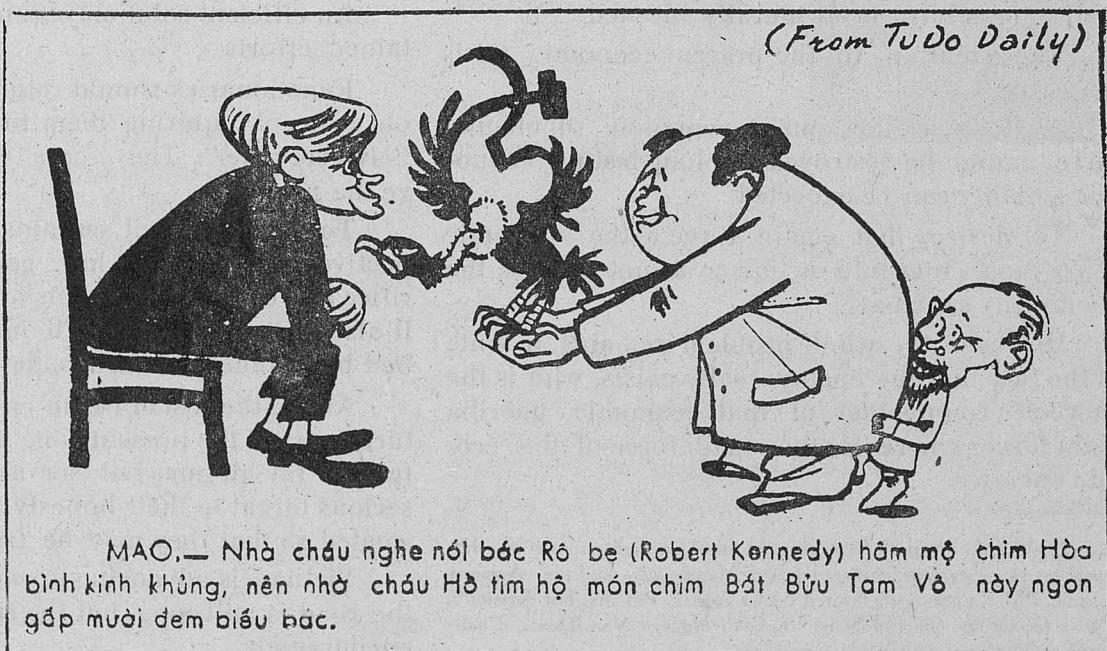
NLF And The Viet Cong

At the present stage of the war, certain points concerning the NLF have become so obvious that they need not to be proved; the NLF is well known to have been set up, directed and supplied by the Viet Cong. Our problem is to find out who are the NLFs and who are the Viet Cong. This is extremely important because up to the present we consider the Viet Cong our enemy while the NLFs enjoy the status of a distinct entity apart from the Viet Cong.

In the beginning, "Viet Minh" stood for hardcore members of a quasi-nationalist party called Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh (Vietnam Indepen-

Ho and Mao offer RFK a "Peace-bird"

(Cartoon from the Vietnamese TU DO (freedom) daily).



Charley's ! —

dence League). This name was used for some time by political saboteurs and terrorists in South Vietnam after the partition of the country in 1954.

In December 19, 1960, the creation of the NLF was officially announced and the Communists in South Vietnam have been going by this name ever since.

But South Vietnam's Government and her Allies refuse to recognize them because they are actually Communist agents. They were subsequently christened Viet Cong (Vietnamese Communists).

There are now two prevailing attitudes against the NLF: some politicians and strategists do not want to call the NLF a Communist Front; others, especially anti-Communist fighters wonder why we should hesitate to call a spade a spade.

Red Or Not Red

The people who hesitate to call the NLF a Communist Front reason as follows:

— The majority of the members of this Front are not Communist. They joined the "Front" because they were victims of Communist deception, or because they really believe they are serving the country not Communism, or were forced to join it.

— From a strategic viewpoint, it is wiser not to go whole hog in calling the Front Communist so as not to credit misguided but sincere patriots to the Communist ledger.

Following "psywar names" are then being attributed to the NLF :

- The political arm of the Viet Cong ;
- The «so-called» National Liberation Front of South Vietnam ;
- The Hooligans' NLF (Mat Tran Con Do Giai Phong Mien Nam) ;
- The «Tool-of-Hanoi» Front.

NLF: A Communist Front

The people who say the «Front» is Communist advance the following reasons :

— The NLF, as a creation of Communist North Vietnam both directed and supplied by the Viet Cong, deserves to be called Communist.

— Since the NLF has only Communist countries for friends, then they are all «birds of a feather...».

— In spite of the fact that many people are forced to join the NLF, the Communist nature of the Front is indubitable.

— The very fact that the majority of the Front's followers are not Communist requires that we must tell them the truth. As long as they are not duly informed, they are not to be condemned.

— The six years that we have refrained from identifying the NLF as a Communist Front have not helped to weaken it even a bit. On the contrary, the war gets harder and harder.

— The most important aspect of this war is the fact that we are pursuing the Viet Cong while at the rear and in the field the enemy is the NLF.

Semantic Problem

The Communists are experts in the art of selecting and exploiting their organizations' names. The NLF for SVN is a concrete example. Other examples include names such as : The Fatherland Front (Mat Tran To Quoc) established by the Viet Minh in 1955 to incite the people to demand normalization of relations between North and South Vietnam and to prepare the general elections for unification of Vietnam ;— The People's Revolutionary party (Dang Nhan Dan Cach Mang), a miniature-portrait of the Communist Lao Dong party in North Vietnam, created by the Viet Cong in 1962 to become the soul of the NLF.

Besides the fact that these names are designed for mass appeal, they put the Nationalists in a difficult situation to counter-attack. In fact, it is not easy to explain to the people that they should stand against their «Fatherland» or their «own party» (the People's party). The same problem arises with the NLF when some people fear that it is not advantageous to use the appellation of Communist Front for the NLF.

We Should Decide

Are we decided to fight the Communist enemy ?

If yes we should decidedly and objectively recognize that the NLF is 100% a Communist

Front, the unmistakable promoter of the war here and the only undeniable enemy of the South Vietnam's people and all the forces of Free Nations here as well.

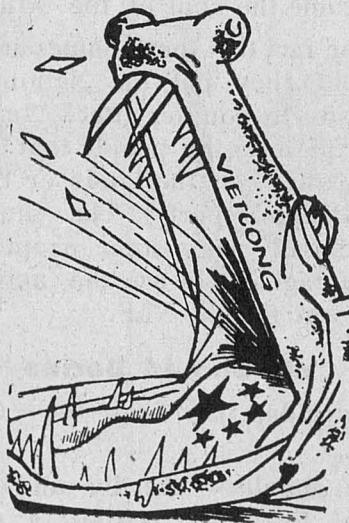
When we go to war, we must have our target. While we still hesitate to fix our target by making the distinction between nationalist and Communist NLF the target of our fight is still unclear. Let us say then, openly, we have business with the Communist NLF.

For friendly American troops in this country in particular, we suppose they know that the NLF's main target are the Americans themselves, since the NLF has managed to render them responsible, — in the eyes of some of the Vietnamese people, — of a war of aggression.

The Kennedys Are « Pardonable »

As long as the Vietnamese Government and the United States authorities still refuse to proclaim their official stand vis-à-vis the enemy they have fought for a decade, — the National Liberation Front whose men kill thousands of our troops a year, — the Kennedys are « pardonable» for their suggestions on the role of the NLF in a future «coalition» government !

The deplorable thing is that the suggestions come from dignitaries rumored to eventually be placed at the head of the Greatest Nation of the world and the leading nation of the international Free Society.



An Analysis By a Medical Doctor

By Dr Nguyen Phu

An eventual recognition of the VC National Liberation Front will result in the following complications : (1)

1/ A shameful surrender to Communist aggression ;

2/ A violation of the Geneva agreement which provides for regrouping of Communist elements in the North and of free men in the South. The 17th parallel is identical to the Korean 38th parallel, or the borders of E.W Germany.

3/ An encouragement to Communist expansion by violence ;

4/ A betrayal committed by all of us of the cause for which our gallant dead gave their lives.

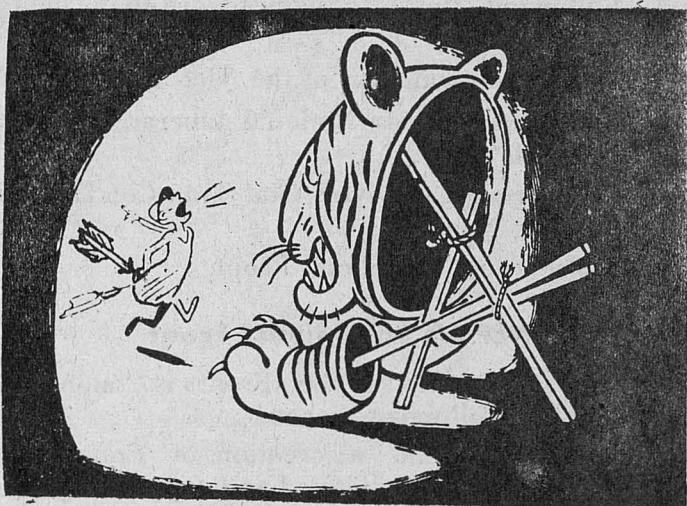
5/ Defeatism which will erode the morale of anti-Communist combatants in Vietnam and in the world ;

6/ A strengthening of the prestige of Hanoi and Peking to the prejudice of the Free World reputation.

7/ A confirmation of Mao Tse Tung's appraisal of the Free World strength : that of a "Paper Tiger"!

“The only medicine to a cancer now is the total suppression of the cancer,” Dr. Phu reaffirms.

(1) In the eyes of Dr. Phu, the V.C. virus is identical to the NLF one.



Nat'l Union Means Coalition of the Armed Forces and the People

EDITOR'S NOTE. — One of our collaborators had an interview with Mr. NGUYEN GIA HIEN, Leader of the Greater Union Forces (GUF).

Following are his remarks on political topics which have stirred up the life of the country at the rear, during the last three weeks.

Since the GUF is only one of many Catholic lay political organizations in Vietnam, Mr. Hien's view does not necessarily reflect the official stand of the Catholic Church.

The GUF had played an active role in "coups" of the past few years.



Point I: The National Union issue :

During the past two and half years, there were plenty of discussions about the key problem of Nation Union. Achievements in this field did not duly answer the expectation of the people.

The Greater Union Forces (Luc Luong Dai Doan Ket) realize that, in view of the present situation of the Country, the national interests should prevail over individual and factional interests. The promoters of division, the extremist groups who used to stir up popular agitation to build personal influence and protect individual interests should be eliminated from positions or organs which affect the country's destiny.

Point II : The democratic promotion issue :

Because of the difficulties presently encountered by the Nation, a strict adherence to principles and theory of democracy is unrealistic.

Only a close union between the Armed Forces and the people may afford an efficient solution to the establishment of democratic institutions.

The Greater Union Forces reaffirm that the building of a democratic foundation for the country is the common responsibility of both the Armed Forces and the people.

Point III : The Social Revolution Issue :

Along with the democratic promotion, the task of building a new society is of utmost urgency.

1st US Visitor...

(From page 10)

The author describes how he was received, what the tax procedures were, how much various goods cost, what the clothes looked like, and, in general, the way of life of the Vietnamese people.

According to his book, White left Salem, Massachusetts, on Saturday, January 2, 1819 and called at several ports, including Batavia in the East Indies, and at the islands of Poulo Obi and Poulo Condore. About Poulo Condore he was less than enthusiastic, saying that it was a wretched place infested with venomous snakes, whose climate was very unhealthful and whose few inhabitants lived in thatched huts scattered across the island.

(Continued on page 24)

To build a basis for a new society, it is necessary to undertake a complete reform of the existing laws which legally hamper revolutionary reforms. New laws will help eradicate injustice and efficiently protect the undeniable and natural rights of the people of a democratic nation.

To implement a social reform program, there must be a sound and efficient administrative machinery. Revolutionary measures are needed to gain rapid and timely results.

The Government's New Society programs should be urgently implemented so as to gain the people's support and confidence, to win over the Communist enemy and to quell all demagogic attempts.



The Greater Union Forces

The GUF is a legal political organization operating overtly and publicly. It originated from the Catholic Greater Union Bloc. Rev. Father Hoang Quynh is Chairman of the Bloc.

Its members are specializing in political activities, under the guidance of the Catholic Sociology theory.

The GUF welcome all anti-Communist applicants for membership, with no religious discrimination.

The GUF is a nation wide organization operating in all the provinces of Vietnam.

The 1st U.S. Visitor To VN

On June 7, 1819, White left Poulo Condore Island and set sail for Vung-Tau (Cap St. Jacques) on the coast of Vietnam. The following day, the Franklin anchored near the seashore of Vung-Tau, and White had his first contact with Vietnamese officialdom. The Vietnamese regional administrative officer speaking Portuguese, requested the master of the ship to submit to him a list of the crew members as well as an inventory of all the arms and the goods being transported on the ship. Later, flagbedecked Vietnamese man-of-war came along-side the American vessel, and the captain learned that he must wait for permission from the Governor before proceeding up the Dong Nai River. White remarked that the Vietnamese officials were dressed in traditional court costumes and wore their fingernails very long. He also noted that they conducted themselves with great dignity. The gift which White presented to the commanding officer of the Vietnamese warship consisted of a handkerchief, a shirt, and a pair of shoes.

With a Vietnamese official as an escort, White visited village of Cân Gio near Vung Tàu, making note of the fact that the village lacked sanitary facilities and that its inhabitants were very poor. After having lunch with the commanding officer of the Vietnamese man-of-war, White invited him aboard the American vessel to see what, to the officer, were such curious goods as binoculars, guns, red clothing material, and shoes.

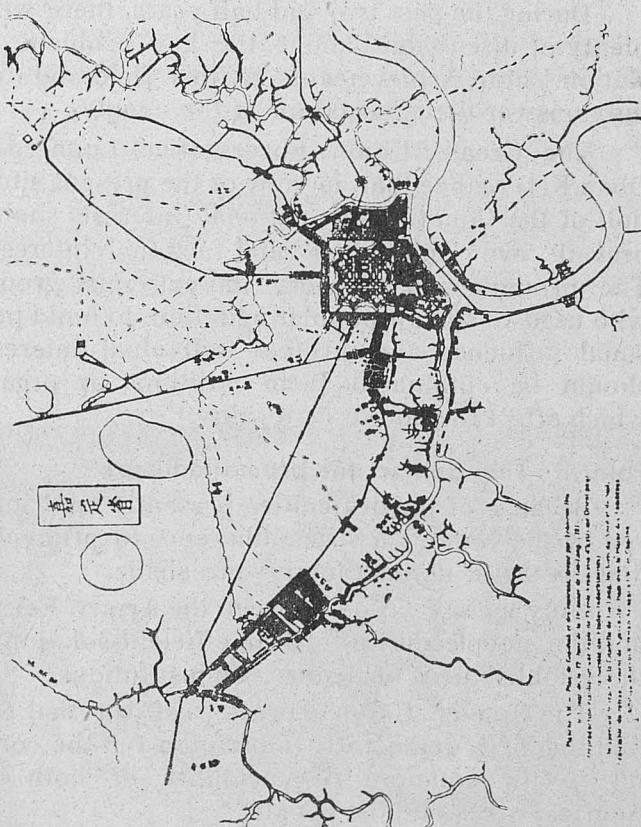
In the course of the visit, the New Englander had the opportunity of observing the Vietnamese way of rowing, saying in Chapter Five that he really admired the skillful way in which the Vietnamese managed their boats. Their oars, he points out, were longer, more flexible, and better proportioned than American oars. The Vietnamese oarsmen rowed very gracefully at rhythmic songs whose meaning White learned later.

After an extended period of waiting, White learned that the Emperor was in residence in Huê and that the local officials lacked authority to grant him permission to proceed up the Dong Nai River to Saigon. For this reason, he left Cân Gio for Đà

Nang on June 13, 1819. On June 17, he anchored his ship at Chàm Island and made a side trip to Hôi-an and Ngu Hành Son.

When his ship anchored at Đà Nẵng, it was boarded by three official Vietnamese inspectors. Communicating with them in written Latin, White learned a little about the history of Vietnam. As for the bay, he says it was the most beautiful natural harbor in the world, where ships could be docked without danger from high winds. He goes on to say that the bay was protected by two strong forts built with the assistance of European engineers.

From Da Nang, White set sail for the Philippine Islands where he encountered another American ship from Boston, the "Marmion" commanded by Oliver Blanchard. Unfortunately, Blanchard had been unable



Map of Saigon (Province of Gia Dinh) drawn in 1819 and as described by John White during his visits in 1819.

to carry out any business transactions in Vietnam because he had not brought Portuguese money with him. On September 9, 1819, White was back at Vung Tau, awaiting permission to proceed up stream to Saigon. While awaiting he went hunting in the Sat Forest and described it as an extensive swampy area covered with black mud, where scattered trees resembled gigantic pieces of coral.

After a short time, White was granted permission to continue on to Saigon. In Chapter Twelve of his book, he tells us that, while the ship was proceeding up the Dong Nai River, it was boarded by a maritime commissioner who made thirteen copies of the list of crew members and of the arms being carried on board. The commissioner asked White to sign four copies to be submitted to the Emperor in Hue and kept the other nine copies to send to various administrative offices.

During the trip to Saigon, White had opportunity to observe at his leisure the passing Vietnamese countryside. Far away along the distant horizon stretched the hills of Ba Ria. Along the river bank he caught glimpses of all kinds of wild birds and monkeys. He mentions many crocodiles in the river and swarms of mosquitoes around the ship.

He reached the city of Saigon on October 7 and recorded his first impressions, saying that the houses of the city were cleaner than those in the village of Can Gio, and that each one of them had a small garden planted with areca trees and coconut trees. From time to time, he could see herds of water buffaloes feeding on the green grass and a forest of ships' masts in the distance.

The river, he goes on to say, was about a quarter of a mile wide. The interpreter pointed out to him the gate to the Citadel on which stood a tall flagpole. On one side of the river he could see the moss and reed-covered walls of the Citadel. On the other side of the river were anchored some Thai ships. Many sampans rowed by women were gliding smoothly over the water, and White was much taken by the graceful mode of dress of the rowers.

No sooner had the visiting ship docked than several more Vietnamese officials came aboard. Speaking fluent Spanish, they politely invited White to visit the city of Saigon. Here he observed that the houses were somewhat similar to American houses out in the country. Because they were built in swamps, the houses were connected to one another by small foot bridges. Drinking water was rain water

stored in earthen jars. Everywhere the air was permeated with the smell of the Vietnamese fishsauce called « nuoc mam ».

Remarking that many of the children were thin, White proceeds to describe Vietnamese eating habits. The average meal consisted of rice; boiled, or fried chicken or duck; rice gruel, and sweet cakes. The Vietnamese oranges and the coconut cakes were delicious. The people ate their meals with chopsticks and used porcupine quills as skewers. They shared a bowl of sauce among them. Rich families drank Chinese tea while ordinary folk drank tea from Hue or else drank rice spirits.

The domestic animals that White noted were dogs, ducks, chickens, and pigs, all of which were allowed to roam about freely. The appearance of White and his companions always caused endless curiosity and talk among the women who were very eager to find out the prices of American goods. Upon returning to the ship from his first excursion in the city, White again admired the graceful way in which the Vietnamese rowed their boat.

On October 9, 1819, White paid a formal visit to the Acting Governor of South Vietnam. He took along gifts including four lamps with opaque globes, four carved decanters, perfumes, liquors, and a beautifully fashioned box for betel leaves. He was accompanied by three of his crew members: Putnam; Bessel, who was well-versed in Portuguese; and Joachim, a pilot of Portuguese nationality. To get to the gate of the Citadel, the visitors had to follow a wide, straight road lined on both sides by wooden-walled and tile-roofed houses belonging to the well-to-do.

To enter the Citadel, it was first necessary for the visitors to cross a moat. The fortress itself was a huge structure with walls 20 feet high. Inside were the official residences of the Governor and of highranking military officers, and also barracks which could house some 50,000 troops. The royal rest palace, the Saigon residence of the Emperor, was built on an area covering eight acres, all surrounded by a high wall. The palace building, situated on a lawn of fine grass, housed the royal seal and valuable government documents.

Not far from the royal residence the visitors found the home of the Acting Governor, also set within a large garden. Right in the center of the house was a large, elaborately carved Vietnamese wooden bed where the Acting Governor received his foreign guests. The official was a very polite person of advanced age who, after the introductions,

First US Visitor

invited his guests to sit on the edge of the bed and expressed satisfaction when he saw the gifts which White had brought. The conversation began with inquiries about personal health, and continued with a discussion of the geography of the United States and the purpose of the Americans' visit to Vietnam. The Acting Governor promised to extend to the delegation all the courtesies and help possible to carry out business transactions. After the audience, the men were invited to visit the Citadel and the city.

Near the southern gate of the fortress was a warehouse where were stored some 250 artillery pieces of all calibers, cast in bronze with the assistance of European technicians. All the weapons stood on wooden supports, and White could see that many dated back to the 17th century. The gates on the four sides of the Citadel were made of thick, wooden planks and were secured by strong iron bars. Each gate also had a watch tower.

Outside that western gate was a Chinese-style cemetery for highranking officials and their families. The steles on the tombs were engraved with the names of the deceased. To the northeast of the fortress were six warehouses 120 feet long and 80 feet wide, whose roofs were covered with enameled tile. They were used to store arms, ammunition, military equipment, and food supplies. The soldiers lived separately with their families in small, low-walled barracks. White could see a herd of elephants grazing in the distance.

Chapter Fifteen of White's Voyage to the China Sea is perhaps the most important, for it describes in detail the city of Saigon.

The populations of Saigon, it tells us, was about 180,000 people including 10,000 Chinese residents. The roads in the city were laid out in the form of a chess board, and the majority were level and wide. To the west of the city were two Chinese pagodas and a large number of Vietnamese temples. In the center of the city were two Chinese pagodas and a large number of Vietnamese temples. In the center of the city was a Catholic church under the guidance of two Italian missionaries who were assisted by many Vietnamese disciples and parishioners. To White's knowledge, there were about 70,000 Catholics in the city. To the north of the city was a large cemetery surrounded by ancient trees.

Not far from the river bank, White continues, in the central part of Saigon, was a row of beautiful houses. These were used as warehouses to store

grain belonging to the royal family; export of the grain was strictly forbidden. Ships leaving Saigon were permitted to carry only enough grain to last for the duration of the voyage.

On the bank of the Thi Nghe Canal was a naval shipyard, and White comments that Vietnam could be proud of having set up an establishment which was by no means inferior to those of many more powerful nations in the world. About 150 warships had been built in the shipyard. These ships were from 40 to 100 feet long and were armed with artillery pieces capable of firing shells as heavy as six pounds a piece. Many of the ships were beautifully carved and decorated and were hand-somely painted in red and gold. The Vietnamese people, White concludes, undoubtedly must have been very skillful in naval construction.

The old city of Saigon, he adds, was located to the west of the present one. Many traces of a special architectural style still remained.

When White and his companions arrived, the Acting Governor had just inaugurated the three canals of Vinh Te, Bao-dinh, and An-thong. They were 12 feet deep and 80 feet wide and required six weeks to finish. Twenty-six thousand workers had to take turns digging night and day, and seven thousand of them lost their lives through disease and exhaustion.

Saigon held a strategic position of great importance and was well defended by a well-trained army organized in accordance with European methods. Deep moats surrounded the Citadel, and the different hamlets crossed by numerous canals were connected by bridges made of planks or bamboo.

In the last part of Chapter Fifteen, White mentions the goods produced by Vietnam, its climate, and its wild and domestic animals. Also discussed is the monetary system. The basic Vietnamese monetary unit was the sapek. This round coin, cast in brass, bronze, or zinc, had a square hole in the center. Sixty sapeks made a «tien» and ten «tien» made a «quan». Since the people did not have banking facilities, they developed the habit of burying their money in the ground. As a result, their money was often corroded. Moreover, because of its weight it was difficult to carry. The people also used silver and gold ingots as their money. On each piece of silver was engraved the name of the reigning Emperor. As to gold, its value was double that of silver.

White's comments on the political situation are

Why This War?

(Continued from page 8)

Communists of North Viet Nam. The Front was created to destroy the Republic of Viet Nam, and to execute their plan, the Communists concentrate on organization, personnel, and leadership.

But the Front alone was not enough. After the NLF had been operating for about a year, the Communists came up with a political trick that would strengthen their participation in the Front, yet sound as though their voice was only one of many in the chorus. They announced the formation of the people's Revolutionary Party. Being a miniature portrait of the Communist Lao Dong Party in North Viet Nam, this party became the very soul of the National Liberation Front.

interesting Dong Nai was under the administration of a governor who was also the Commanding General of all the armed forces. The Vice-Governor had charge of all judicial matters. Each administrative, military, or economic branch of government was headed by a ward-chief selected from among the best-qualified inhabitants. The ward-chief enjoyed judicial power and was responsible for the security and order of his own ward.

In the last chapter of his book, White also mentions Saigon's modes of transportation. Transportation was chiefly by hammocks on poles, by carts pulled by oxen or elephants, or by palanquins. Before concluding his voyage to Cochin-China, White gives an account of a naval demonstration staged early one morning by a fleet of about 50 men-of-war on the Thi Nghe Canal. Leading the fleet was the ship of the Acting-Governor, which was about 65 feet long and had 18 oars. The roof and the sides of the ship were beautifully decorated and painted in bright red and gold colors. Following the Governor's ship, came the other armed and flag-decked ships which were also carved and painted in red and gold.

On January 30, 1820, after 20 months away from home, John White finally left Saigon and took with him many handsome souvenirs of his sojourn in Vietnam.

Thus ended the visit of the first American to Vietnam a visit leading to the establishment of official relations 12 years later.



(In next issue : The First American Diplomatic Mission to Vietnam)

Military Buildup

One of the main jobs of the NLF was to rebuild the Communist army (Viet Cong forces) in South Viet Nam. Some arms and ammunition had remained hidden in South Viet Nam when the Viet Minh withdrew to the north in compliance with the Geneva Agreements. These were uncovered to arm the troops organized by the NLF.

Communist sources were tapped for additional war material, and trails were opened to deliver it across the frontiers into South Viet Nam. The Communists also sent technicians and equipment from the north to their NLF in the south so shops could be set up to make weapons.

Communist military units that are now fighting in South Viet Nam include :

- 1) re-grouped outfits that had remained in the south after the armistice of 1954 ;
- 2) new recruits from the south on full or part-time duty ;
- 3) units of «returnees» who had formerly lived in the south ; and,
- 4) units of the regular army of North Viet Nam—or PAVN for «People's Army of Viet Nam, PAVN forces continue to be infiltrated into the Republic of Viet Nam through Laos, Cambodia, and by seaways.

Viet Cong bases in the forests and mountains are former anti-French combat zones which the VC restored to take advantage of the people's traditional favor for «resistance».

In recent years North Viet Nam's military support to the National Liberation Front has increased considerably, both in manpower and in arms, becoming a threat to the existence of Free Viet Nam.

November 1963

With the Viet Cong buildup menacing all South Viet Nam, it was evident by the early 1960's that stronger measures must be taken if victory was to be gained over the enemy. Respect for the Geneva Agreements and the desire to contain the war dictated that the Viet Cong would have to be defeated in South Viet Nam on the soil they had invaded.

The Vietnamese—civilian and military—determined that fundamental changes in the government were needed to prosecute the war. As mentioned earlier, the Diem Government, which had been in power for eight years, was overthrown by a military coup November 1, 1963, and President Diem was killed.

Post-Revolution

Turning the revolution in South Viet Nam to their account, the Viet Cong increased their pressure by more frequent attacks against military posts and administrative offices, by destruction of villages and hamlets and, in general, by sowing disorder through terrorism and sabotage in city and countryside.

The Viet Cong lust for complete conquest of Free Viet Nam became more savage, and now it was evident they had visions of a new era for Communist expansion in South East Asia.

They were stopped!

Political Crisis

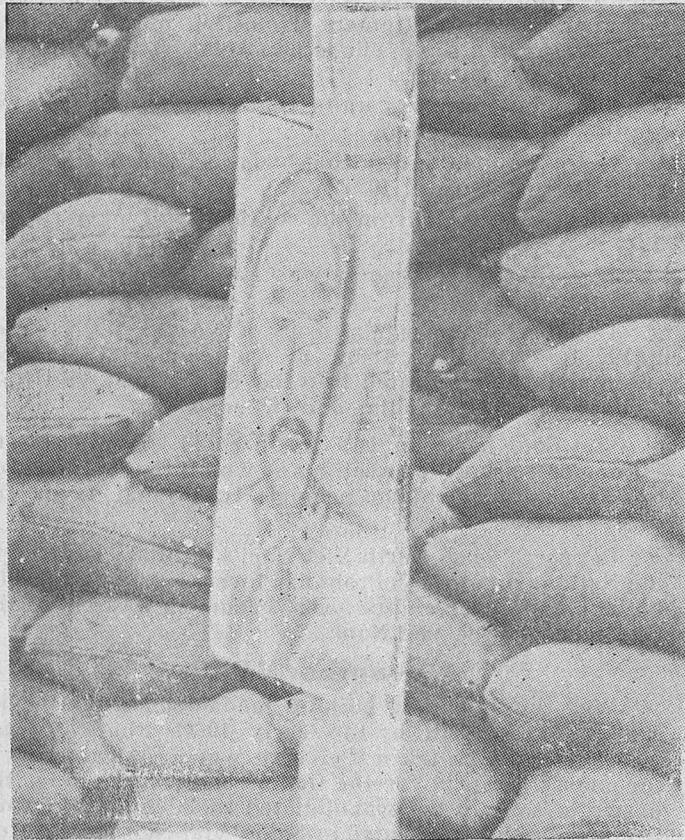
MARCH 31 : A Buddhist celebration of Hung Vuong Day—the anniversary of the Founder of the Vietnamese Nation—turned into an antigovernment and anti-American demonstration in downtown Saigon,

The demonstrators staged march after the ceremony at the Central Market place. No untoward incidents were reported.

Cartoons of the Nation's Leaders were pinned on the stakes reserved for criminals at the execution site, near the market.

Left photo = PM Nguyen Cao Ky

Right photo = Deputy Premier Nguyen Huu Co.



OTHER VN EVENTS OF MARCH

MARCH 1 : LODGE : « As long as Hanoi MISREADS U.S. strengths for weaknesses, there are not going to be any negotiations. »

MARCH 2 : US officials said there may be 20,000 Communist CHINESE in the NORTH VIETNAM area, but as construction workers rather than as soldiers.

The figure was previously mentioned by Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

The same sources said some 80 defectors a day are coming from the NLF-VC ranks.

MARCH 3 : U.S. STRENGTH IN VN will be increased to 235,000 men and could be boosted to over 350,000, U.S. Defense Secretary said.

20,000 troops have been ordered to VN, on top of the 215,000 now there, he added.

MARCH 4 : U.S. Air Force F-4c Phantoms and F-105s chased FIVE MIG 17s to Hanoi during one of the biggest American bombing raids over North Viet Nam so far.

INT'L NEWS

It was the first time MIGs have made their appearance since the strikes resumed after Tet.

A SAM site 34 miles west of Hanoi was wiped out. It was the closest target to Hanoi struck by USAF.

MARCH 6: VN-US troops slammed a force of 5,000 men directly at four NVN regular battalions 8 miles northwest of Quang Ngai, 330 miles north of Saigon

495 NVN were KILLED.

MARCH 7: A CHINESE multi-MILLIONNAIRE was sentenced to death by the Saigon Special Court on charges of hoarding, blackmarketeering, illegal transfer of funds and bribing Govt. officials.

MARCH 8: NVN SON LA petroleum STORAGE in the northwest mountains of NVN, east-southeast of Dien Bien Phu was hit by US planes, causing mushrooming secondary explosions.

A SAM SITE 22 miles west of Thanh Hoa was knocked out.

The raiders lost four aircrafts to thick enemy flak.

MARCH 9: NVN SONLA petrol STORAGE hit anew. Ammo storage facility 10 mile west of Son La and others ammunition dumps were also bombed.

MARCH 10: The A SHAU special forces camp, 2 miles from Thua Thien-Laos border was evacuated after having resisted for two days against attack from 2,000 to 2,500 Communist NVN regulars.

The Camp was manned by four militia companies spiced by about 20 American Advisors.

It was located 325 miles northeast of Saigon.

US State Dept. reported an estimated 20,000 acres of SVN crops had been destroyed with herbicides to deny food to the VC.

MARCH 14: Former Dalat treasurer Dang Cao Sach, accused of public funds embezzlement of over VN\$ 7.5 million was sentenced to DEATH by the Special Court. Sach lodged an appeal for mercy the same day.

MARCH 18: Retired USAF Major Gen. Lansdale, Senior Advisor to US Ambassador Cabot Lodge was conferred the MINISTERIAL RANK by President L.B. Johnson.

MARCH 21: VN and US signed AGREEMENT to import from the US \$523 million worth of foodstuff and other agricultural products.

MARCH 31: Economy and Finance Minister Au Truong Thanh disclosed threats on his life before a press conference attended by about 200 VN and foreign pressmen.

«One of the letters I have received threatens my assassination some time this April,» he said.

Minister Thanh however dwelt at length on the government's efforts to check «inflationary trend».

MARCH 1: SUKARNO: «Whoever opposes me would be crushed. Indonesian revolution will soon return to its original LEFTIST TRACK.»

BILL MOYERS (the White House's spokesman): «The United States will respect the results of a FREE ELECTION in South VN. However, the formation of a temporary government which precedes the election will be a question to be decided only by concerned parties during negotiations.

MARCH 2: US CONGRESS voted one-sided approval for a 4.8 billion dollar WAR SPENDING bill to reinforce the American arsenal in South Viet Nam. Senate: 92 to 5; House of Representatives: 392 to 4.

MARCH 6: The bodies of all 124 persons aboard a British Overseas Airways jet airliners that crashed on MOUNT FUJI, Japan, March 5 were recovered.

90 were Americans.

MARCH 7: Pope Paul VI named 14 cardinals and Bishops to his special BIRTH CONTROL study commission and put Italian Cardinal Alfredo Attaviani into the Commission's presidency.

MARCH 8: Students stormed Jakarta Foreign Ministry and Education Ministry.

MARCH 9: Ambassador Harlan Cleveland, the US Permanent representative on the NATO Council, told his NATO partners that a change in STATUS OF AMERICAN TROOPS in France concerns the entire alliance.

De Gaulle demanded on March 7 that Foreign troops in France— must submit to French authority in 1969.

MARCH 10: US State Dept. said Communist China was conducting a broad foreign POLICY REVIEW following a series of setbacks abroad.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee conducted wide-ranging examination of US policy toward Red China.

MARCH 12: Indonesian President Sukarno was reportedly held prisoner as Anti-Communist Army Chief Lt. Gen. SUHARTO TOOK over political POWER in Indonesia.

MARCH 15: Los Angeles, California — Six hundred negroes rioted for six hours, leaving at least two dead and 26 injured in South Los Angeles area, which was the scene of last August's bloody RACIAL DISORDERS.

Two US astronauts, Neil Armstrong and David Scott rocketted into space on Gemini 8 spacecraft for a "rendezvous" and a "STROLL IN SPACE".

MARCH 17: Gemini 8 spacecraft got OUT OF CONTROL. Astronauts sailed toward Okinawa, landed safely.

MARCH 18: Indon President Sukarno ordered 1st Deputy Premier Subandrio and 14 other pro-Communist members of his Cabinet taken into PROTECTIVE CUSTODY.

MARCH 19: Pope Paul VI eased restrictions on MIXED MARRIAGES between Catholics and others.

MARCH 23: Peking rejected Soviet invitation to 23rd Communist Party Congress held in Moscow beginning March 22.

VN Democracy

The whole group of notables constituted the communal assembly, and the greatest ambition for the inhabitants of the commune was to hold a high position at the commune hall, to be member of the Council of Notables and to participate in the public festivities. The Commune was administered by this council which was composed of senior notables responsible for the supervision of the public affairs and the junior notables responsible for carrying them out.

The first notable of the village was the Chairman of the Commune Council. He was generally an honorable old scholar, in charge of the ritual ceremonies. He was the referee, the Justice of Peace and had charge of the private budget of the commune. This budget showing the distribution of expenditures and privileges among all the inhabitants of the commune was carefully kept away from the central authorities. Taxes levied by the central administration were divided among all the inhabitants. The properties of the commune which consisted of the inalienable common land were also divided among all. In addition to general expenditures due to the central administration there were expenses entailed by works for community, individual contributions to the village ceremonies, the share deducted from agricultural produce for the executive agent of the commune. There were also lots of common lands granted to families having members in the army and the share reserved for old people who could no longer work and for needy families. One can then say that unemployment and begging did not exist in old Vietnam since each village had to provide for all its inhabitants. All the members of the commune were placed under the supervision of the Council of Notables which was not only responsible for the good management of the public affairs, but also exercised a kind of general tutelage over the young people, the widows and the crippled, and by doing so preserved order and morality behind the bamboo curtain. Relations with the central administration were carried on by the Village Chief (Ly-Truong) who was, in fact, only a minor notable in the commune. He was the official agent between the central administration and the autonomous community. He was elected by the Council of Notables and his election was submitted to the approval of the mandarin. He was charged with transmitting all the requests from the commune to the central authorities and transmitting orders from the central authorities to the commune. He was held responsible if these orders were not carried out. He was in charge of the police and had to inform the higher authorities of the offenses perpetrated in his village. He was also responsible for collecting and paying the taxes owed by

the village community.

Several commune joined to form a canton. Each canton was headed by a Canton Chief elected by the notables of the communes and approved by the provincial representative of the central power. The canton chief, representing the population had, like the village chief, the charge of defending the interests of the canton before the central administration and of ensuring that the administrative orders were carried out. He was also the natural referee in those affairs of common law which the family chiefs or village chiefs could not solve. He was a referee who judged according to the local customs to which as the saying goes, the royal decrees must yield

The political freedom of the people did not go beyond the canton in the old Vietnamese society.

The village or commune was thus the real political, economic and social cell of the society. This was also a religious cell. As each family had its altar devoted to the cult of ancestors, each village had its Dinh or temple for the worship of a tutelar god which was the very impersonation of Earth as shown in the Chinese name of «Village» (composed of god and earth).

This cult constituted the official religion of the villagers. A proverb says:

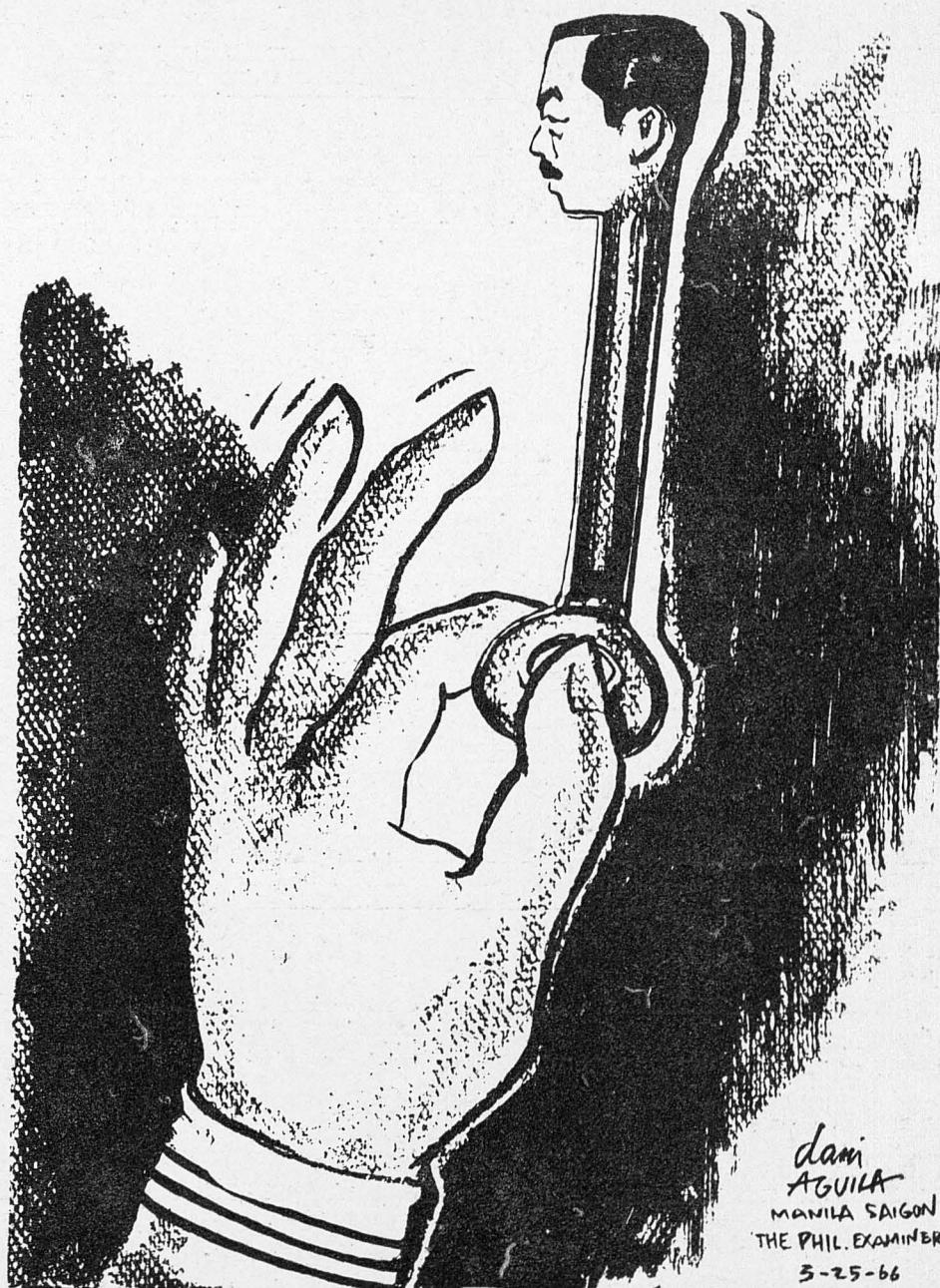
«Each village had its own tutelar god as each river has its own». This cult of personified natural forces created among the inhabitants of the same village a powerful solidarity which was yet strengthened by the cult of ancestors in the family. In all times, the Vietnamese peasants have been attached to their native land by a magic power.

A Western observer has noted rightly that «the commune presents a particularly interesting mechanism and one can understand that such a complex and democratic organization, having been in existence since time immemorial and in which a notable can never act alone, must not be changed, otherwise the country might fall into confusion. The instrument is old but it is good; it suits the people».

At the present time when throughout the world, the individualistic democracy born of free industrial competition is regressing, it is interesting to study this democratic communal organization based essentially on the peasant community, which has drawn its vitality from a spiritualist socialism.



The right k(e)y at last!



(Exclusively for THE FREE
OBSERVER)

CON THUYỀN KHÔNG BỀN

(LONE BOAT In The Moonlight)

ĐẶNG-THẾ-PHONG

Born in 1918, Dang The Phong was the second son of a civil servant of the Registry Service in Nam-Dinh province, North Vietnam.

He became an orphan at a very young age, when he terminated his 6th year of education.

No detail in his biography indicated that he had received some musical formation until his death at the age of 24.

CON THUYỀN KHÔNG BỀN was presented for the first time to the public by Phong himself in Hanoi two years before he died of tuberculosis, in indigence.

The tune of the seven musical works he left us anticipated his premature death.

SLOW