

VIETNAM INFO

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Translation by Miles Murphy for the Int'l Committee. Info no. 22, 11 July, 1974

One hundred and eighteen more young persons, women and children to Poulo Condor.

On June 2, 1974, 119 Vietnamese (the greater part of which were young people who did not wish to join the army) fled to Hong Kong by boat and were arrested there by the Governor of that country. Learning of the decision of the Governor of Hong Kong, in accord with London, to return these persons to the Saigon government, Amnesty International of France and the Vietnam Society took steps to have these persons obtain the status of political refugees, for these organizations felt that their lives would be in danger if they were sent back to Saigon. Following these steps, the Saigon Consulate at Hong Kong issued a communique assuring security and clemency for these persons if they were returned to its Government. But only one of them could remain in Hong Kong, for he had parents in that city. The 118 others were returned to Saigon on June 17, where they were interrogated, then sent on June 25th to Poulo Condor Island. Out of these 118 persons there were 92 young people, 16 women and 10 children under age 14. (Dien Tin, Chinh Luan, Dai Dan Toc, June '74)

Twenty prisoners liquidated at Pleiku (High plateau of South Vietnam)

Saigon, June 17. The Saigon papers (Dien Tin, Chinh Luan, etc.) reported the tragic case of the death of 20 military prisoners at Pleiku. According to the inquest, M. Nguyen Triem, overseer of a group of deserters who had been imprisoned and sentenced to hard labor, had assassinated these prisoners during the past months to obtain their livers and eat them. This discovery was made possible through the revelations of one of the prisoners who had been able to escape assassination. It was discovered that every day this overseer accompanied these prisoners into the forest to cut wood; it was in this forest of Ngo Son that he had killed two persons. At Than Han, by Ham Rong Hill, he had killed two others; and he managed to kill two of them in the prison itself. For all these deaths he made a report as if these prisoners had escaped. According to the explanation of the local administration, M. Nguyen Triem is a sick person, but at the same time it indicates that it is not a question of the act of a single person but, rather, of a network. (From Chinh Luan, Dien Tin, June 18, 1974)

Editor's note: The problem presents itself really in a very serious fashion, for recently political prisoners have been transferred from various prisons to Pleiku with a changing of their category of prisoner classification. In particular, student prisoners have been required to join the army; and if they refuse, they are considered as deserters. This was the case, for example, on May 12, with five students: Buu Chi, Nguyen Cam, Le van Nghia, Nguyen van Hoe, and Le Van Tho, who were taken from the Chi Hoa prison to Enrollment Center no. 3. One cannot, moreover, separate this news from that of June 3, 1974 concerning the bombardment of Tan Hiep prison (a prison for women) which caused the death of a great number of prisoners. We ask ourselves if this does not amount to a general policy of liquidation.

Every month there are 2 or 3 military prisoners who die in Go Vap prison.

Saigon, June 22. Senator Cao Van Tuong, after having visited Go Vap military prison, stated that during the year 1973, each month there were at least two or three prisoners dead from sickness. According to the senator, in this prison are incarcerated 3,000 military men, with but a single doctor, one assistant officer and three orderlies. One of the three orderlies moreover was himself fallen sick because of the heavy work load. The capacity for medical care is satisfactory for only 100 persons a day at the most, and the number of sick is at the minimum of 200 persons. At times this number even reaches 2015, as for example in the month of April, 1973. There exists only one bed for medical examination; there is no waiting room for emergency cases, and they use army trucks to transport ailing prisoners. Sickness occurs mainly from insufficiency of food: each prisoner receives only 90 piastres for 500 grams of rice, 9 piastres for other food, and 6 piastres for wood per day.

As for living conditions, there are 400 to 500 persons jammed into a space 14.5 metres long by 14 metres wide. After this report, many senators called for the quickest possible release of half the prisoners in this military prison. They added that conditions in this prison in comparison with other internment centers was still the best. (From Chinh Luan, June 23-24, July 3, 1974)

Corruption in the reeducation centers

In an interview with a journalist at the National Assembly, Deputy Nguyen Ngoc Lien stated that in the coming week he was going to reveal the corrupt conditions in the reeducation centers (that is to say, the prisons). He has already, he stated, all the necessary documents to show how the directors of these prisons have exploited the system of corruption that is found at the highest level, namely the Ministry of Re-education Centers. He has also revealed the occurrence of open rape of female prisoners at Thu Duc by the directors of the Center. It is in the same Center that there is one of the officials who has said that he fears no one, because he has charge of the maintenance of the son, at Thu Duc prison, of one of the top men in the Department of Education at the school of the Brothers of Christian Schools of Mossart (which are very expensive.) (From Chinh Luan, June 23-24, 1974)

The death of six militiamen.

Saigon, June 28. A trial has just taken place at Saigon concerning the death of six militiamen at the end of 1973. To punish these militiamen, the assistant of the security commission of the district confined the following six persons: Nguyen Thanh Binh, Nguyen Huu Loi, Nguyen Huu Tan Hoang Van Nit, Vong A Nhia, and Vong A Nhi B, in a tank which had previously been filled with gasoline. Then he had forgotten them, and the next day the six militiamen were dead.

A non-commissioned officer tortured to death.

On the first of July a colonel tortured to death a non-com Nguyen Nhanh, suspecting him of having stolen a sum of money. The wife of the latter has made known that her husband had been beaten on the chest and tortured in his genital parts. After having tortured him to death, the colonel had given the order to shoot his victim in order to make people believe it was suicide. (From Dien Tin, July 2, 1974)

Editor's note: These are only two cases among others in the internment centers in various cities and provinces.

An appeal of the Committee for the Reform of the Detention System in South Vietnam on behalf of the immediate liberation of the prisoners and especially of particular cases.

The case of the student Huynh Tan Mam: Former president of the General Association of Students of Saigon, he was arrested on January 5, 1972 for having fought against the dictatorship and demanded the withdrawal of the American troops. On Feb. 22, 1974, following the defeat of its attempt to expel Mam by way of exchange of prisoners with the PRG at Loc Ninh, the Saigon administration brought him to Saigon to put him in a place unknown. For four months his mother, aged 65, has had no further news and does not even know if he is alive or dead.

The case of the Pham Van Lang family: Following the arrest of one of his sons, M. Pham Trong Dao, on Feb. 27, 1972 for political reasons, M. Pham Van Lang was arrested, also the next day, Feb. 28, along with his entire family consisting of: M. Pham Van Lang, the father, 74; Mme. Dao Thi Ngoc Thu, the mother, 68; M. Pham Trong Cau, their son, 39; M. Ho Thanh Tinh, their adopted son, 45; Mme. Nguyen Thi Ngoc Anh, wife of the latter. On Feb. 28, 1974 Mme. Dao Thi Ngoc Thu was freed, but on March 2, 1974 her husband as well as his adopted son and his wife were to be turned over to the PRG, but they refused. They were all returned to the assembly center despite the promise to free them in Saigon. In particular M. Lang is imprisoned at Tan Hiep prison and M. Dao at General Police Headquarters.

The case of Mrs. Cao Thi Que Huong: The wife of M. Nguyen Ngoc Phuong, who died in prison on Jan. 5, 1973, was arrested on March 17, 1972. She was one of the founders of the Committee for the Reform of the Detention System in South Vietnam, and was later in charge of internal affairs for the Committee. After having refused to be turned over to the PRG she is presently detained at an assembly center.

The case of M. Doan Khac Xuyen, Director of the J.O.C: M. Doan Khac Xuyen was sentenced on April 29, 1974 by the military tribunal to five years solitary confinement. A student aged 24, he was arrested two years ago, more precisely, on the night of April 30, 1972, at the same time as four other directors of the J.O.C. (Young Christian Workers) at the office of that organization, 370 Le van Duyet, Saigon. Detained at Tan Hiep, they were deported on Dec. 26, 1972 to the dungeon of Poulo Condor, without any trial having intervened in the meantime with respect to their case. On May 5, 1973 the four comrades of Xuyen were transferred to Saigon and freed on the spot, while he had to wait until June 28, 1973 to be brought to the mainland, not with a view to being released, but to be hauled before the military tribunal of the 3rd Region to answer to the charge of "not having an identity card". Doan Khac Xuyen stated to the tribunal that before being arrested he had all his papers in order, but that the police had confiscated all of them. In the face of obvious proof, the tribunal, in its meeting of August 8, 1973, acquitted him of the aforesaid charge. Despit this acquittal, Xuyen was still detained, and then transferred to a mobilization center on Oct. 22, 1973 to be enrolled in the armed forces. Xuyen has refused to put on the army uniform.

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WE NEED YOUR HELP IN URGING ANY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS WHO DESIRE TO, TO WRITE TO THE U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION IN SUPPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE'S DOSSIER DOCUMENTING TORTURE AND ILL TREATMENT OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

Write to:

Mr. Jakob Th. Möller
Human Rights Officer
Division of Human Rights
United Nations
New York, N.Y. 10017

Our dossier is dubbed with reference number: SO 215/1 VINA REP. We submitted 13 complete dossiers each composed of 37 identical documents. We felt that their content clearly demonstrated "a consistent pattern of gross and reliably attested violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms."

LET US NOT FORGET ARTICLE II of the Paris Agreement:

"Immediately after the cease-fire, the two South Vietnamese parties will:

- Achieve national reconciliation and concord, end hatred and enmity, prohibit all acts of reprisal and discrimination against individuals or organizations that have collaborated with one side or the other;
- Ensure the democratic liberties of the people: personal freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of meeting, freedom of organization, freedom of political activities, freedom of belief, freedom of movement, freedom of residence, freedom of work, right to property ownership, and right to free enterprise."

SUNDAY, AUGUST 18, 1974

Saigon Police Fight Subversion But Also Curb Political Dissent

By DAVID K. SHEPLER
Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Aug. 17—On the floor of a Saigon hospital ward a young seamstress named Dang Thi Hien lay handcuffed to an olive-drab stretcher. Her legs, covered with a blanket, were paralyzed—a result, she said of beatings and torture during police interrogation.

In a small office a student activist, Nguyen Xuan Ham, drew deeply on a cigarette while he described being forced to watch three friends tortured as policemen tried vainly to make him admit that he was a Communist.

A high-school philosophy teacher, Tran Tuan Nham, who was jailed after his unsuccessful run as an anti-Government candidate for the National Assembly, hunched over his drawing of the layout of cells in the Saigon municipal police headquarters to show where he saw the head of the Private Bank Workers Union, Phan Van Hi, meet death—not by suicide, as the Government reported, but after days of beatings.

Beyond the well-known war of tanks and planes and infantry there is another war in South Vietnam—a silent, hidden war that runs its course out of the public view. It is waged in interrogation rooms, in prisons, in courtrooms. It is fought in tiny print shops and large universities, in churches and pagodas, in the cramped offices of opposition politicians and the shabby headquarters of dissident union leaders.

Far From Public View

Some portray the struggle as a monumental clash between free ideas and governmental suppression; others see it as the Saigon Government's rightful battle for survival against a potent campaign of Communist subversion.

In fact it is both, for its major roots are in the civil war that has consumed South Vietnam for two decades, taking some two million Vietnamese

This article is the first of a series on Vietnam.

lives, touching virtually every family, seeping into every crvice of society.

The Government, to defend itself against Communist attempts to seduce and convert the civilian population, and to combat infiltration, sabotage and assassination by the Vietcong, has assembled—with American financial and advisory help—an extensive police apparatus and a military judicial system that are waging this second, simultaneous war.

But those caught in the web of arrest, torture and imprisonment include not only Communists who pose as dissidents but non-Communist dissidents as well; not only sophisticated Vietcong officials but apolitical peasants suspected of Communist sympathies; not just Communist labor organizers but tough, aggressive union leaders; not only Vietcong propagandists but poets and writers who have simply opposed United States policy and called for peace.

In recent months a picture of the Government's police and judicial systems has emerged through interviews with former prisoners and their families, student activists, labor officials, teachers, journalists, authors, opposition politicians, Roman Catholic priests, Buddhist monks, lawyers and police officials.

Such inquiries by foreign correspondents are possible in Government-held areas, where outsiders have relative freedom. The Vietcong, in contrast, have permitted only strictly guided tours by newsmen, so little is known of the actual workings of their security and judicial systems. The sketchy outlines provided in captured documents and the interrogation of defectors indicate that recalcitrant civilians in Vietcong areas are subjected to arrest, trial, "re-education" and even execution.

As a result of the police activity on both sides, no neutralist sentiment has been allowed to gain momentum. The Government machinery designed to fight the Communists has actually eaten away the middle ground between the two warring camps.

No Place to Turn

Those politically active South Vietnamese who dislike both sides find themselves with no

place to go. Some who were anti-Government dissidents have turned reluctantly to the Communists. Others hate and fear the Communists so much that they have grudgingly accepted President Nguyen Van Thieu although they do not like him either.

Yet the Government's system is not a massive, ever-present police operation comparable to that of the Soviet Union, nor does it suppress dissent so thoroughly that the country can present a public image of unity, as does North Vietnam.

It creates, instead, a mosaic of free expression and fear, of political opposition and political conformity, of gentle interference and harsh punishment. Within this mosaic the heavily censored South Vietnamese press often disavows a streak of irreverence. And a few vitriolic politicians can berate President Thieu and have their views reported—not domestically, indeed, but by the foreign press.

On the other hand, dissidents who are free to speak out often contend that they are mere ornaments, that whenever they begin to accrue political power the police arrest the lesser figures around them, break up their meetings and leave them isolated.

By the same token the police rarely make mass arrests of student dissidents, some students report, but prefer to infiltrate quietly and then choose carefully those leaders whose imprisonment will sap an opposition movement of its vigor.

Distinctions Often Ignored

The distinctions between Communists and non-Communists are not always apparent to the police, some of whose principal officers insist that all dissidents are really Communists. In any given case the military judicial system—whose judgments rely chiefly on police dossiers—does little to establish the truth, which may be known only to the accused.

Those expressing antiwar sentiments have long been targets of police scrutiny, both because such views are regarded as Communist views and for fear that they will spread among a war-weary population. Consequently, many people put themselves in considerable danger by opposing United States involvement in the war.

Mr. Nham, the teacher, was arrested shortly after his unsuccessful 1971 campaign for a National Assembly seat, run on the theme "Fight the Americans and save the country,"—a slogan also used by North Vietnam. He was released in March after nearly two years in prison.

"At the beginning of the campaign, my election pamphlets were confiscated right at the print shop," he said in an interview four days after his release. "And on the first day of the campaign, in the morning, I began putting up my posters. By six o'clock that night the police were tearing them down."

Every day, he recalled, five or six of his campaign workers were arrested, held for a few hours and released. He said that after the election—he finished eighth in a field of 87 candidates running for six seats—about 20 of his workers were put in jail, where some remain.

Anti-U.S. Articles Cited

A journalist who asked not to be identified related that he had been arrested, beaten and tortured with electrical shock by policemen who cited several of his anti-American articles as evidence that he was a Communist.

He had translated American antiwar writing and had written a newspaper series about the My Lai massacre, the effects of defoliants and the use of antipersonnel bombs against North Vietnam, all based on books and articles published in the United States. He was released several months ago after about a year and a half.

A well-known author, Nguyen Buc Dung, who uses the pen name Vu Hanh, was arrested in 1967 and held for three years after he had written newspaper and magazine articles arguing that Vietnam's national culture must be preserved against Americanization. He advocated the establishment of a political movement with that aim.

During interrogation, he said, policemen beat him, forced soapy water into his mouth and tortured him by applying electrodes to his body.

In 1969, when his 18-year-old son, Nguyen Anh Tuan, protested the imprisonment, he was arrested and is still in prison. In January 1973, Mr. Dung's 15-year-old daughter, Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao, was arrested and held for six months for allegedly possessing antiwar music. The police said she was a Communist.

Now Mr. Dung's small house, tucked away in a compact garden off a back alley in Saigon, is stripped of his books and writings, all seized by the police. He has written two novels since his release, both so heavily censored that he does not think it worth trying again.

On Jan. 1, 1974, the police surrounded a Saigon cafe and, it is reported, arrested three young people connected with the clandestine publication of a small book of short stories entitled "Pink Hearts."

The stories are intensely antiwar, portraying the Government as the prime cause of a conflict that separates lovers and shatters families. One of those said to have been arrested, Tran The Hung, a student at Van Hanh University in Saigon, wrote of a peasant named Sao Do, who fought the French and was now opposed to both sides in this war.

Sao Do reflects happily on the forthcoming marriage of his daughter, but worries that his two sons might kill each other.

Suddenly Government planes attack with "thousands of fragments of bombs and bullets surrounding and swooping down on Sao Do's hiding place, where his neighbors also try to save some fragment of life amid the net of death."

"After the careless terrorization," the story goes on, "the planes flew away, leaving behind a scene of destruction, torn houses, rows of bamboo with their heads bowed low to the ground, smoke rising up from burning houses. The smoke rose and disappeared like the incomplete dream of Sao Do."

"I Don't Like This Flag"

Another author reportedly arrested was Hoang Thoi Chau, who wrote a bitter story about a Saigon taxi driver's happiness upon hearing of the cease-fire. He expected his three sons to return from the army, but when he entered his house he found that only one son had come home, in a coffin draped with the South Vietnamese flag.

"Why don't you bring home something different from this flag?" the man asks his dead son. "I don't like this flag."

Many former prisoners, although by no means all, describe being subjected to torture, usually for one of two purposes: to force them to provide intelligence information or to force confessions, to which the military judicial system attaches great value.

A number who have been imprisoned in the Saigon municipal police headquarters, including a student leader, Ha Dink Nguyen, report seeing a slogan on the walls and on signs on desks: "If he is not guilty, beat him until he renounces. If he does not renounce, beat him to death."

Mr. Nham, the teacher and opposition candidate, said he was never tortured, but in the first week in March, when he was in a cell at the Saigon municipal police headquarters, he recalled, he saw many people from the countryside, mostly women, who had been beaten so badly that they could no longer walk and had to be carried from cell to interrogation room.

Links to the Other Sides

"I had a chance to talk with some of them," he reported, "and it seems they were people who had husbands or relatives on the other side, and so they had been brought here. Other people were suspected of trading with the other side."

He recognized among the prisoners a former student, Thuy Dung, a frail woman in her early twenties who leaned weakly against the wall of the corridor as she walked to and from interrogation. Through a student who was serving as a sweeper in the cellblock, she conveyed to Mr. Nham her concern that she was suffering from an injury caused when an eel was put in her underpants.

When Mr. Nham was first arrested, he went on, students in his cell had painfully swollen fingers because policemen had inserted pins under their fingernails, then run rulers back and forth across the ends of the pins during questioning.

One of those in the cell, a law student named Trinh Dinh Ban, had been beaten so badly that he could not sit upright, Mr. Nham related, adding, "He screamed all the time because he was in pain all over his body."

Other people have described similar situations. An American physician who works in a provincial hospital reported that prisoners were often brought into the wards with bruises that they attributed to police beatings. The doctor, who asked not to be identified, told of a woman who was near death, having been severely beaten on the stomach: "She had internal injuries, bleeding, she couldn't eat. I thought she was going to die, but she survived."

Just Routine Questioning

Dr. Tom Hoskins, an American who works in Quang Ngai, on the central coast, reported that one of his clinic's regular patients, a 45-year-old woman, came in suffering from bruises. "She had been picked up for routine questioning," he said, "and was severely beaten around the arms, chest, legs."

The patterns of arrest envelop certain aggressive labor unions as well—those that threaten to translate serious economic concerns into sharp political issues.

In April, 1973, a number of prominent union officers were arrested and accused of being Communist agents, among them Mr. Hi, head of the bank union; Dang Tam Si, secretary general of the bank union; Nguyen Thua Nghiep, president of the Petroleum and Chemical Factory Workers Union, and Hoang Xuan Dong, secretary general of the Railway Workers Union.

Mr. Dong was among 27 union members arrested in April, 1973, after an illegal two-hour strike by clerical and repair workers seeking a wage increase. During interrogation, according to a source close to the case, he was blindfolded and his wrists were handcuffed behind his back and water was forced into his nose and mouth until he could not breathe. The police asked: "Who gave the order for this strike? Do you have contacts with Mr. Nghiep or Mr. Hi?"

He Died in Prison

Mr. Hi, arrested at about the same time, was accused of being a Communist agent for 25 years. Five days after his arrest he died in prison; the Government said he had hanged himself.

Mr. Nham, the teacher, whose cell was across the corridor, has a different version.

"I could see him carried out for interrogation and carried back," Mr. Nham recalled. "The person who brought rice to the cells said he was being beaten really severely and he didn't know whether he would be able to bear it much longer."

On the night of April 22, Mr. Nham continued, he heard a noise from Mr. Hi's cell.

"A guard came over and opened his door and pulled him out head first so his legs were still in the cell and his body outside," Mr. Nham said. "He had no clothes on. One arm was across his chest. His arm was swollen and it was black like a piece of putrid meat. On his chest was a little bit of blood, his side along his ribs was just beaten into hamburger." Mr. Hi was dead.

Last March, Mr. Nham said, he shared a cell with a union man named Trang.

Torture of Students Described

"He had been there seven or eight months," Mr. Nham continued. "He was being strung up by his arms daily and beaten on his legs, his back, his chest. When I left there he was unable to walk because of the beatings on his legs, and his knees were so swollen."

"He was arrested for having known a Liberation Front official who had responsibility for having lent him his pickup truck to go around in."

According to Mr. Nguyen, the student leader and a former student chairman at the Saigon university, torture was a common aspect of the wave of ar-

rests in which he and about 250 student leaders were caught early in 1972. They had assembled a "peace movement" to oppose the American presence in South Vietnam and President Thieu's one-man election in 1971. One activity was burning American vehicles.

Mr. Nguyen described himself as one of three students tortured in front of Mr. Ham, the activist leader, who was chairman of an association of Catholic students at the University.

Mr. Ham said the others were Huynh Tan Mam, head of the South Vietnam Student Union, who is still imprisoned, and Phan Ngvet Quon, who has which he insists he is not. The police began by torturing him alone.

"Sometimes they tied me to the chair," Mr. Ham recalled. "Sometimes they blindfolded me. During the first week I was beaten every day." He also reported being shocked by means of an old hand-cranked telephone generator connected to his nipples with clips.

This failing to elicit a confession, the police brought in his friends one at a time, he said, adding:

"It terrorized me. I was very angry that they beat a girl in front of me. They tied her ankles to a chair, tied a rope around her stomach and blindfolded her. They had a long rubber baton and they beat her knee caps. Then they thrust their hands in under her ribs and pulled them out. They had her lie down and forced soapy water into her mouth."

"They attached one wire to an earlobe and one to her breast or to her genital area and then they would crank. When the crank was turned and produced a burst of electricity, she would strain at the chair and slump back."

The policemen took turns, Mr. Ham recalled. Some were in uniform, and he could see that they were high-ranking officers—majors and lieutenant colonels—while others were in civilian clothes or bare-chested.

'Ordinary Job, No Emotion'

"It was like an ordinary job with no emotion," Mr. Ham commented. "They had many Coca-Cola bottles and cigarettes. They would beat a little, drink a little Coca-Cola, smoke a cigarette, speak to each other in quiet voices—no emotion, very professional. Most were not angry or hateful but were just doing it very coolly."

There were times, he said, when he considered "saying anything to relieve the suffering," but he thought that they would have asked him for details he could not provide, "so it just would have prolonged the torture."

Miss Quon never begged him to confess, he said, "but she did shout at them, asking them why they were so savage."

Scars Are Often Buried

It is hard to see the scars of torture. Sometimes they are in the eyes, but not always. Often they are hidden far beneath the steady gaze and self-control learned, perhaps, in the interrogation rooms. For some, curiously, it is not the thought of the torture itself but the recollection of that dreadful time of waiting to be summoned that stirs the old taste of fear.

Nguyen Viet Tuan can still taste it, and he was never tortured. The president of a group called the Young Catholic Workers, he was arrested for helping workers striking at a Saigon factory. He was treated gently, he said, but his cell was full of those tortured.

The tension is still real—the extreme fear of the long, silent "After 10 P.M.," he said, "we would wait for a sound, a bell. Then the guard gets up, climbs upstairs—then the sound of the key. The interrogators in the daytime were not severe, but the interrogators at night were said."

(End of Shippler article)

Naturally



Allegations on Saigon Denied by U.S. Envoy

WASHINGTON, Aug. 17—Graham A. Martin, the United States Ambassador to Saigon, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on July 25 that the embassy had carefully examined allegations about political prisoners in South Vietnam and "we found no one in prison" who could be regarded as a political prisoner.

He defined a "political prisoner" as a person jailed solely for his political beliefs. He said the term did not include anyone who would be liable for conviction under the laws of the United States.

In addition, Mr. Martin said, the embassy believes that the total number of prisoners of all kinds does not exceed 31,000.

New York Times
Sun. Aug. 18, 1974

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, AUGUST 18, 1974

Tortured Women Bewildered by Plight

Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam—Arrests by the South Vietnamese Government are not always calculated, often having a random aspect, touching not only those who know they are taking risks but also those who apparently do not.

A 25-year-old seamstress named Dang Thi Hien just seemed bewildered by her plight when she was interviewed recently while handcuffed to a stretcher in a Saigon hospital. As she spoke other patients in the crowded ward gathered to listen.

Last October, she recalled, a woman she had never met approached her as she was talking with a flower girl in a Saigon marketplace. The woman spoke a few words, then walked away.

"Confess!"

Suddenly four plainclothes policemen grabbed Miss Hien by the arms and placed her under arrest. She said she was taken to a police interrogation center in Khien Cuong, 22 miles from Saigon.

"They took me to a room," she said. "They told me to take off my pants and my blouse and I wouldn't do it, so they did it for me."

"There were five to seven people in the room. They beat me. They used a big stick and they put electrodes on the ends of my index fingers. When I started to fall they wouldn't let me fall and pulled me up by the hair. They beat me on the chest, the back. They took off my shoes and beat my stomach. It hurt very, very much."

"They wouldn't let me cry

out," she continued. "They put their hands over my mouth and said to me, 'Confess!'"

"They put a handkerchief over my nose and mouth and poured water and soap and put it through the handkerchief into my two nostrils and my mouth — three or four buckets. I was very tired by that time. Every time I drank these things, my stomach would swell up and they would kick me in the stomach. As soon as my stomach would go down again, they would give me more water and make it swell up again."

"They picked me up by the ribs with their hands, pulling the ribs out. Then they tied my legs apart after I fell because of the electric shock. They pulled my legs apart and kicked my vulva, and I lost blood there after that for 10 days. I could not stand any more."

She sank into unconsciousness, she recalled, and when she awoke she discovered that a live three-foot-long cat had been put in her underpants.

A Cautionary Glance

"That night they took me to the hospital and gave me medicine to put me to sleep," she said. "I didn't know anything for a whole night. The next morning after I was awakened they took me back to the room and beat me again with sticks and kicked me on the back and chest. When I was lying on the floor they just came by and kicked. I could no longer walk. The second day I couldn't feel anything."

She told the story in a quiet steady voice. Only when her mother entered the

ward and knelt by her did her eyes fill with tears.

"I am sick and sad," Miss Hien said. "Because I was arrested I think that the war still must be going on."

As for her political views, Miss Hien said only: "Before, I didn't know, I did not have any experience with the Government. Now?"

Her mother shot her a glance of warning and whispered a few words. "I don't want to say," Miss Hien added.

The interview was suddenly ended by a plainclothes police captain who had joined the crowd. He was exceedingly polite as he invited the correspondent to a nearby station house, asked what information the prisoner had given and, apparently satisfied that she had said little of importance, ended the session with a request that nothing be written that would get him in trouble with his superiors.

A few days later Miss Hien was removed from the hospital, although some of the staff said that she was in serious need of physical therapy. After spending time in two prisons, she was released in mid-June.

An American working for a private welfare agency who investigated her case was told by the police that she had been charged with "communication with the Communists." She was said to have introduced a girl to an older woman who was suspected of association with the Vietcong.

Miss Hien denied involvement. In her case, as in many others, it was simply her word against that of the police. The police tortured her, she believed, "partly for fun and partly to find out."

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The International Committee to Free South
Vietnamese Political Prisoners from Detention
Torture and Death 122 W. Franklin Ave.
Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55404 612-871-1517

See reverse side of this sheet to find out what you can do to help prevent potential deportations of seven Vietnamese students who received their Bachelor's degrees in U.S. in '72.

WOULD WE HAVE ROUNDED UP 7 JEWS LIVING IN THE U.S. TO SEND TO HITLER IN 1943?

IN 1974 the U.S. government has rounded up 7 Vietnamese students living in the U.S. for possible deportation to the Saigon Police State
(See the New York Times articles, Aug. 18)

Deportation hearings for the seven students began in Los Angeles on August 15. They were all students in this country with AID scholarships which terminated in 1972. They have received their B.S. or B.A. degrees and have asked for political asylum in the U.S. because of the political repression and persecution which awaits them if they are, in fact, deported to South Vietnam. Their visas have either been terminated or not renewed as the U.S. government has stated that "there is no repression in South Vietnam".

There is plenty of precedent for granting them political asylum. We have accepted thousands of refugees from many countries where they claimed to be escaping repression—witness the many thousands of Cuban refugees we accepted with open arms. These Vietnamese students happen to believe that peace could come to Vietnam if the Paris Agreements were implemented. That is no crime...to stand behind the signatures that Henry Kissinger and the Thieu regime affixed to the Paris Accords on behalf of the United States and Saigon. That is an example of law-abiding behavior—a type of behavior that the U.S. Administration and the Congress has not seen fit to exhibit.

THE GOVERNMENT IS THE LAW BREAKER! These seven students (selected at random) are a reminder to our government of its duties and responsibilities under the Paris Agreements.

Under Immigration Article 243H, the Attorney General of the United States may withhold deportation if a person faces persecution in his home country.

You, our readers, are fully aware of how political prisoners are treated in South Vietnam and can imagine the persecution that these students would face if they were deported. PLEASE WORK DILIGENTLY TO SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE WITH THE SEVEN GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALS LISTED BELOW:

Mr. Henry Kissinger
Secretary of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Mr. William Saxbe
Attorney General
Constitution and 10th N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Mr. Leonard F. Chapman
Director, Immigration &
Naturalization Service
119 D. St. N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20536

Mr. Joseph Surek
District Director, Imm.
and Natur. Service
300 N. Los Angeles St.
Los Angeles, Cal. 90012

Your Congressman
House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Your Senators
Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The students are: Nguyễn Hữu Ân and Vũ Ngọc Côn graduates of Northrup Institute of technology; Bùi Văn Đạo, Nguyễn Hoàng, and Nguyễn Đăng Yên Trúc with Engineering degrees from California State Universities. The previous five are all male. The two women students: Cao Thị Mỹ Lộc and Đoàn Thị Nam-Hân have degrees in Psychology and Journalism respectively.

DONATIONS FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE SEVEN STUDENTS ARE URGENTLY NEEDED. CHECKS CAN BE MAKE PAYABLE TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE AND EARMARKED FOR THE "VIETNAMESE 7 DEFENSE FUND". Also, please send carbon copies of all letters you write in their behalf to the above governmental officials to their Defense Attorney, Mr. Frank S. Pestana, 619 S. Bonnie Brae St., Los Angeles, Cal. 90057.