

Dear Mr Williams,

This is some of what I saw in VN today. It's for you to do anything you think useful with it. I wrote this in hurry, because it was only a kind of material. In the next letter, I'll send an article about "Com. Management", going to the deepest cause of it, and it'll

be written more carefully - I wish only that
these will be published in anyway to let English
reader know better about the situation in VN.
If it is any good, please let me know so I can
continue -

Thank you

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Seven years ago, when the Communist North Vietnam took over South Vietnam, there were several South Vietnamese who raised a hope towards the new regime. The Communist leaders may then, once, had promised a new society which will be established on equality, liberty and morality; social evils which were described as apparent offsprings of the capitalism will be eliminated - -

Seven years passed - The country now is going down an irreversible slope into an economic abyss. No one even among the most dedicated Communists could deny this deterioration. During the last few years, prices have been rising in an incredible speed. From Jan to July 1982, most agricultural products rises over 150% and will probably much higher by the end of this year. Every measure seems inefficient to control deficit and inflation. This economic situation beside failures of leadership and management created a series of social effects. Social evils, which have once been thought nonexistent in a Socialist regime, are growing fast and wide -

Bribery spreads widely at every level. The corruption degree is in several times higher and more serious, comparing to the Thieu's regime. Anything connected to any authority, must be introduced by some kind of "gift" if the applicants favour an easy and quick solution. Prices for such "mutual understanding" varies widely. The highest is almost the same as in Thieu's regime 8 years ago, but the lowest is far more below. A single filter cigarette is a very common gift for the simplest cases. Goods already taxed at original places will certainly be subjected to additional duty at several check points along the way transporting to dealers, even within Saigon city. Each police

man may impose a tax rate as he wants. People ~~now~~ would pay him half a price with no receipt as given of course in cash. A cycle transporting Vermorel from west to east of Saigon may be taxed four or five times, especially in early morning time when police men ~~and~~ usually need something for breakfast. Therefore, such transportation in morning before 9 AM is always avoided. Agricultural products brought to Saigon from the provinces are controlled tightly. Above certain amount, these products will be confiscated. These confiscated goods are not usually reported to higher authorities and people know where they go to. Below that amount, ~~they~~ the dealers have to pay very high taxes as many times as control points posts existed if they failed to conceal them. Trading therefore, became a tricky games, and ~~it~~ the patrolling jobs become the best occupations in the Police Branch to bring out at high prices.

There were efforts from the Central Committee to check corruption, ~~However~~, all such efforts have been failed, and corruption is growing steadily. There are only a handful of officials, mostly high ranking, who are clean, staying away from bribery. To them, with special privileges given by the Central Committee, ~~they~~ ^{they} would ~~prefer~~ ^{prefer} keeping their seats clean to stay longer than risking them in corruption.

The new ruling class can be seen in Hanoi and Saigon, is living a very luxury life. They consist of high ranking officials from province level and about the rank of lieutenant colonel living in well-equipped quarters with sedans, servants, guardians, they are leading ~~in~~ ^a luxurious life, probably much richer than the Thieu's corrupt ~~generals~~ ^{generals} before 1975.

The most luxurious hotel-restaurants in Saigon are now still operating under state control. One of them is the 1st First Hotel, few hundred yards from the Tan Son Nhut Airbase main gate. They often welcome Communist rich officials who come to have best dinners, to drink best liquors and to enjoy stay movies beside "profils de luxe".

People in VN now believe no more in the fiction of the "Communist revolutionists" since these depraved practices are taking place openly every hour at every corner of the country.

Meanwhile, along several streets and squares in Saigon and other major cities, thousands of homeless people are now living. Most of them came back from the "New Economic Areas" hurriedly built in 1976, 1977 to avoid starving. Beggars are increasing in numbers, many of them was from North Vietnam rushing to Saigon recently. People from poor provinces in past-thrills were permitted officially to leave their home villages to go anywhere to earn their living. Since 1971, they were swarming other North VN provinces around Hanoi. Recently, they made steamships on Huu-Vat river train to Saigon.

Public health is another critical field. There are much shortage in medicine. Patients in every hospital have to pay for their food. Medicine are free but very limited. A great amount of the best medicine are used instead, some like the beautiful French or English names. Expensive medicine are used for high ranking official and sometimes for emergency cases, and are not allowed to non-emergency cases, especially when the patient is over 60 years old, such medicine as breathing oxygen is denied. When required, the patient's family has to procure them in black market if any available.

The best hospitals are also reserved for high ranking officials, among them are the former V.D. and Chung Chong. Victims seriously injured from accidents when en route to these reserved hospitals for emergency first aid (as the nearest possible), have always been definitely refused, disregarding how bad the case was.

Goitre is prevalent everywhere. Lacking of hospital treatment, people have to depend only on galenic drugs, the advertising of which can be seen all over the place. V.D. and other intestinal diseases are in no way under control.

There were efforts at a certain degree to improve medical care. However, they are really limited in some "necessary areas". Preventive medical care was done once in several years when needed. Distribution of iodine salt to prevent goitre for instance, was only heard from newspapers. Even in Saigon where transportation is not a problem, such things was never in the hand of people.

Some 3/4 of South Vietnamese doctors have already fled away to the free countries. Although lack of doctors, physicians graduated from Hanoi Medicine School are not trustworthy to patients. ~~But~~ Patients had rather pay for bribery to be operated by a South Vietnamese surgeon than to risk their lives in the hands of the "Socialist" charlatans. Typical case is well known in the Children Hospital where the North Vietnamese doctor ~~for~~ as forgetting his "may-be-victim" patients after his high death rate.

The best support given by the Govt to the Public Health is to treat the doctors smoothly. They are allowed, the first time in Communism history, to work privately at spare time. Besides, they will be released after a few days of investigation if arrested in their way fleeing abroad by boat, while the others must be at least a few years in jail.

At last, it must be mentioned that abortion is now free. Abortion request is all the time accepted with anti-
 ritual reasons; only a signature of the woman, plus one of her husband if she declared being married is
 needed. Even so, birth control program, known as "3-delay" campaign, have almost failed right
 since the noisy beginning in the 60's.

Social evils such as robbery, prostitution, narcotic addiction, juvenile delinquency are ^{escalating} ~~growing~~ ~~rising~~.
 Thieves and robbers are mostly in major cities, including Hanoi, and in the towns. Even increased in
 number, Saigon was overcome by Hanoi and other North Vietnam cities of robbery and ~~the~~ pickpockets.
 In Saigon, watches are often seen worn in right hand to prevent from being scratched in left side
 when people are riding bicycles on street even at daytime.

Prostitution is of course uncontrollable. In Saigon, street walkers are seen at many dark
 streets where their predecessors were accepting their customers 50 years ago. Hanoi and other major cities
 in North Vietnam, have a number of prostitutes not much less.

Narcotic addiction is still a problem when say it can be prevented although more expensive.
 Some 14 years ago, The Communist Financial Branch had earned millions of dollars from
 narcotic trading into South Vietnam. Now, it is time for them to pay. In North Vietnam however,
 opium is preferred. Opium trading and smoking is in no way eliminated.

The new generation of hoodlums in Vietnam today are being at their time. Famous ring
 leaders are some children of Communist Party officials. These "little murderers" are also
 leading the Hanoi's fashion, one of them is the camouflage uniform of the former South-

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Vietnamese Marines with fatigue hat and jungle boots - Attacking hoodlums with guns and hand grenades are often heard of around Hanoi downtown and vicinity, while the murder rate in Saigon is growing far more than the years before 1975.

The police measures seem ineffective, although prison camps are always full of criminals. Beside hundred thousands of political prisoners, some other hundred thousands of criminal prisoners are dragging their dog's life in the so-called re-education camps.

Anyhow, the police security forces still provide have fulfilled their political security responsibility. Due to the unlimited power given to them, police forces exert the tight control over people's political life. Underground activities concerning politics are very difficult. Any suspect can be arrested with any reason. This system although created an animosity among people, it has proved its effects.

The Communism fiction is coming to an end in Vietnam. But in April 1982, a train wreck occurred in Long Khau, killed and injured at least 500 persons when a local train of 12 passenger-cars ran off the rail at full speed. No foreign news was heard of this greatest catastrophe on railways. No official report concerning investigation was made, and no compensation was mentioned to the victims' families. To that Socialism, that was the great question of the Vietnamese people. ~~A foreign camera could never see into the real situation of Vietnam today.~~

Visitors to Saigon might see the city activities not much less noisy than before 1975. Coffee shops everywhere with stereo music, mostly, Western music. People no more prefer the shrieking Siamese "red music" from Hanoi. Goods of all kinds are sold along broad streets, in the centers of Saigon. Most of these were sent from US in packages from the relatives. Without this private foreign aid, Saigon could not have been so ~~as~~ well. People said Saigon is living on the heart of the ~~reluctant~~ Thieu's regime and the green dollars from the Vietnamese & immigrants.

Russians and other Eastern Europeans are often seen in Saigon. They have some ^{received} hotels and restaurants (Rex's top floor is one) where they enjoy foods and dancing. But Saigon market seems to attract them better. Many Russians were hanging around, buying US-made brand-new appliances (TV, cassette, cameras, radios, watches -). To South Vietnamese, they look hell-bills especially when people have had ~~the~~ experiences of lucrative dealing with Americans several years ago. Russians were even stoned sometimes by people in Grim Bank, too.

Except ones who have good occupations in the Communist system, most of Vietnamese today believe more in the socialism as a good solution for any poor country - The Communist program used to be very effective in the war now failed to promote people's cooperation - Many people become stiffneck - Collective works such as the cooperative organization planned to establish in the Mekong delta failed several times - Laws and ~~organizing~~ regulations of forbidding free trade, ~~for~~ food control; ... are not well followed -

It can be said that most Vietnamese are expecting a great change. Any other regime will give them open better opportunities. They showed a passive, even opposing, attitude towards the Party. That includes the North Vietnamese and the low ranking cadres. Young men are doing their best to enjoy, spending all their money into restaurants, pub houses and, coffee shops and clothes. Love music imposed in South Vietnam before 1975 are always preferred especially in Hanoi although campaign of "New Culture" have been introduced to clear all of these away. Saving is withought of Economic, political and military situation, especially internal conflicts in the Party are creating noticeable effects over every partison.

Never in the cultural history of Vietnam had so much political jokes as today. Beautiful jokes aiming at the Party, its leaders and the Communism were spread all over the country especially among young students. One of the best jokes telling that "La Duon's sayings are all true but one we will build successfully our socialism"; Nguyen van Thien's are all false except one "Don't believe what the Communists are saying; see what they are doing".

Many Vietnamese, thinking of the regime, said "All the rulers look alike in spite of what title they are bearing".

The people's emotion can hardly be ~~seen~~^{felt} by any foreign reporter. A camera could seldom reveal the dark side of a picture, unless the reporter is a Vietnamese who is living in Vietnam, in these very days of the history.

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