

RE-EDUCATION or REVENGE

Group Project

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A TRIUMPH WITHIN A TRAGEDY

Ten years after the Communist victory over South Vietnam in 1975, many brutal and repressive methods have been used to silence all political oppositions. Among these methods is the process so called "re-education". What is "re-education"? Most people might perceive its meaning in a literally way, but what it really represents is something very cruel and injustice in which the Vietnamese Communists are doing to their own countrymen. It is so cruel and injustice that we, the helpless people of this disastrous country, cannot dare to stand watching our country and our people being destroyed day by day these monstrous leaders. We want the whole world to see and to realize of the enormous, inhuman, and malignant crime that the Communists are performing, and we also want the world to help these unfortunate people in whichever way that it can because this is one of the most dreadful tragedies that ever happens to mankind. However, within this tragedy, there is a small triumph for the Vietnamese people presently in the U.S. and in Vietnam. This triumph is brought about by those who are willing enough to risk everything in their lives to obtain freedom for their country and their fellow friends who are still being kept in these frightening re-education camps.

We went about doing our project by, first, reading

the regulations and thinking of the topic. Second, after having choose the topic, we started to write letters to the Families of Political Prisoners Communities to ask for informations. Third, we made phone calls and went to many Vietnamese Communities to search for former prisoners to interview. Fourth, we went to libraries to search for pictures and documents. Fifth, we went to interview many prisoners, authors, and journalists. Sixth, when all the informations on the board. At last, we wrote the bibliography and the description pages. Thus, these are the steps in which we went through in accomplishing our project.

After we won first place in our school (Jersey Village Senior High), we gathered all the comments from different judges. Then, we started to do our project all over again. First, we took off all the pictures, letters, and articles from the board. Second, we found more pictures for the triumph-part from books, magazines, and newspapers as the judges recommended. Third, we developed our pictures all over again. Fourth, we reformed our model of the camp. Fifth, we made the flag in order to put more impact on our subject. Sixth, we re-decorated the barbed wire by putting red paint on it. Seventh, we re-write the body paragraph and description paragraph by adding more informations. Eighth, we changed the format of our bibliography pages. Ninth, we found as many primary sources as we could. Tenth, we put pictures and documents up on the board again. Finally, we re-typed all the written informations.

RE-EDUCATION OR REVENGE?

From the time South Vietnam fell into the hands of the Communists in 1975 until now, the people have been living under the bloody and totalitarian regime with thousands of vengeful, sarcastic, and cruel policies. The Vietnamese Communists locked up people in many camps so called "re-education" camps for having served the old regime. But what is "re-education" under the Vietnamese Communism?

The Vietnamese Communists claimed that "re-education" is a mean of helping their wartime opponents to adjust to the new socialist life. However, in reality, it is rather a form of revenge which has been exercised indiscriminately against whole classes of people, with scarcely a pretense of legality and with total disregard for human rights. What the regime has done is brainwashing its own people with many brutal methods such as torturing, starvating, terrorizing, and executing in hoping to turn their attitudes toward the new government which inflicts upon them. They forced prisoners to perform physical labor such as digging canals, building dams, repairing railroads, removing mines from minefields, and clearing jungles for crop cultivation. These prisoners are always being systematically overworked and deliberately underfed. Most of them are so hungry that they even dig manioc or other

edible roots to replace for food. Thus, this process of starvation in addition with no medical supplies have ultimately caused their health to be deteriorated. As time went by, prisoners also experienced of what is called terrorization. Prisoners who did not show enthusiasm for their work or who made unfavorable remarks about the Communist revolution are ordered to report to the camp headquarters at midnight, such prisoners never came back again. These midnight arrests have an effect on the prison population that is absolutely terrifying, some of them are even haunted by the thought of being taken away and finished off like their friends. Not only that, but prisoners are also punished by being shackled in many small, dark punishment cells or in connex containers exposed to the sun with only a little hole for air. In addition to being shackled, put on short rations prisoners are forced to write self-criticism reports which serve as proofs of accusation. As a result, many prisoners have died from torturing, executing, malnutritioning, and many other diseases due to the lack of medical supplies. However, there are prisoners who have enough strength to go through these atrocities survived, thus, they are being kept indefinitely without any charges being brought and with no hope for a proper trial. These prisoners will never have a chance to see their families nor will their families ever be informed of where they are or what has happened to them. With a few exceptions, some prisoners have been released, but still they could not find jobs,

their children even have a hard time in getting education, and they can be arrested and sent back to the camp at any-time.

Is it re-education or revenge? Is there any prison in this world which is as barbarious as these "re-education" camps? Can we, the people with an extremely humanitarian system, turn our face away and let these people being killed coldbloodedly little by little? Can we, the people with a fair system of judgment, devote some of our sympathy to help them see the light of life?