

### Turn Hatred Into Strength

Crossing the newly built Ham Long pontoon bridge, we headed for Dong Ha, capital of Quang Tri Province along Highway 1. Traffic on this highway has been restored as its demolished sections and damaged bridges have been repaired. Turning our eyes to the south bank of Bien Hai River, we saw the flags of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the RSV fluttering over the newly built hamlets, groups of peasants busy working in the fields, green seedlings of newly sown late rice swaying in [the] breeze.

Nguyen Van Than, vice-president of the South Vietnam Patriotic and Democratic Journalists' Association, who met us at Ham Long bridge, told us that the south bank of the Bien Hai River used to be a densely populated land rich in rice and fishes. But it was subjected to frenzied destruction by the United States and the Saigon regime. It was not until the signing of the Paris agreement that people began to return to rebuild their homeland.

What we saw on our way was a scene of dynamic reconstruction in the liberated area. The people of Quang Tri, tempered in the flames of war, have turned hatred for the aggressors into mighty strength. With boundless enthusiasm, they are healing the wounds of war and rebuilding their beautiful homeland. 1,790 labour-exchange teams have been set up in the province to develop production. In the last three months and more, they have cultivated thousands of hectares of paddy-field and opened up thousands of hectares of wasteland. As a result, the land sown to early rice has been doubled compared with that of last year. The people in Gio Linh district filled up over ten thousand craters and planted over 3,300 "mau" (one "mau" equals 3,600 square metres) of paddy and other crops. As soon as peace was restored, thousands of youth set out to build water conservancy projects. To date, many water conservancy projects have been repaired or built in the province, creating favourable conditions for increased agricultural production. In the first half of April, about 20,000 people in the province took part in building water conservancy projects. Even old people vied with each other to work at the construction sites. Although they were advanced in age, they said, they were determined to contribute their share to the reconstruction of the motherland.

### Rebuild Home Towns on the Debris

We visited Dong Ha city which was rebuilt on the debris. Dong Ha was a city with over ten thousand inhabitants. Owing to repeated bombing by U.S. B-52s, it suffered from serious destruction.

After the restoration of peace, the people's revolutionary committee of Quang Tri Province immediately mobilized the people to rebuild Dong Ha. With the joy of victory, thousands of youth shock brigade members, People's Liberation Army men and people from various districts held a meeting and pledged themselves to rebuild the city and make it more beautiful than the pre-war days. Braving the sweltering heat, they removed the mines, filled up bomb craters and rebuilt the city on the debris. In the past four months, many houses have gone up on both sides of the streets in the city, including bookstores, shops and offices of various organizations of the provincial people's revolutionary committee. With the help of the government, the citizens in the city built their temporary houses, and the first power station in the liberated areas of Quang Tri Province was erected.

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We went to the downtown area which was bustling with activity. In newly opened stores, young women were selecting calicos to their liking. In newly opened bookstores, crowds of people were buying pictures of President Ho Chi Minh, President Nguyen Huu Tho and President Huynh Tan Phat and books and journals published in the liberated areas. A great variety of fresh fishes and shrimps, vegetables, fruits and other things were on sale in the market. The Dong Ha harbour presented a picture of seething activity. Lighters and steam ships were anchored at the dock. People were busy loading or unloading grains, daily necessities and various kinds of building materials.

#### Aspirations of the People

We went to Trieu Trach village, Trieu Phong district, where the fruit trees damaged by enemy bombing have been in full bloom or have borne fruits. Trieu Phong is a place where the areas under the control of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of North Vietnam and of the Saigon administration meet. Trieu Trach village is situated in the southernmost part of Trieu Phong district. Barbed wire entanglements run across the fields there. On two sides of the entanglements are two worlds. The south is dotted with encampments in a land of desolation; the north is a picture of peaceful construction everywhere.

Before liberation, the Nguyen Van Thieu clique carried out in this place a reactionary militaristic policy and conducted suppression and slaughter, pressganging and arms expansion. 14 or 15 year-old youngsters were drafted into the army and even young women and aged people were forced to join the local reactionary armed forces. Therefore, the people were overjoyed when they learned of the signing of the Paris agreement. They denounced the crimes committed by the U.S.-puppet clique in the south.

In the four months and more since the signing of Paris agreement, the armed forces and people in the Trieu Phong district have made consistent efforts for the implementation of the Paris agreement, for the safeguarding of peace and the realization of national concord. They have resolutely carried out the ceasefire order and implemented the policy of national concord of the provisional revolutionary government by expressing their deep sympathy for the families and children of the Saigon army and functionaries of the Saigon administration in the liberated areas, calling them "families suffering misery", giving financial aid to those who have difficulties, and cultivating land for those who are old and disabled. The liberation art troupe on many occasions went to the demarcation line to give excellent performances for the Saigon troops.

The local people told us that when they heard the news that the Paris agreement came into effect, many soldiers of the Saigon army on the other side of the barbed wire entanglements put down their arms and came out of their trenches, shouting: "We will have reunion with our dear ones!"

The barbed wire entanglements in the fields of Trieu Trach cannot separate the common aspirations of the South Vietnamese people for peace, national concord and reunification of their motherland.