

ISSUE NUMBER FOUR

Hanoi Nhan Van, November 5

**« It Is Necessary To Have A More Ordered Society »,
by Nguyen Huu Dang.**

(« Mistaken death sentences will be criticized! » is probably a correct approach, but isn't it rather timid? What we really need in the North is a code of law. End this lawlessness !)

In his report to the Twentieth session of the Soviet Communist Party, Mr. Khrushchev briefly dealt with a question which is truly very important.

It is the question of the particular attention paid by the central party to the strengthening of the legal code of socialism. He concluded: « The organizations of the Party, the government and the groups, must diligently assure the respect of Soviet law and expose and denounce anyone who violates the Soviet legal code and the rights of Soviet citizens, and must severely deal with the smallest illegal or dictatorial acts. »

Why does the USSR raise again this question of a legal code after 38 years of reconstruction of Socialism, after the establishment of two constitutions and several general amendments of laws, reorganizations of judiciary systems and court practices, and, right at the present, when it is beginning to erect Communism ?

It is because Stalin had abused his power for a very long time. He had tolerated the anti-revolutionary clique of Beria, he had used his political power to oppress the administration and seriously violated the legal code. Disregard of laws had become

the normal procedure of many cadres, party members and government members. Many honest and good citizens and party members—including members of the Party Central Committee—were unjustly imprisoned or executed, due to this situation. Therefore, the National Party Congress had to pay particular attention to the work of defending the legal code, which is the incarnation of the spirit of human culture, the spirit of democracy, and the spirit of discipline of a civilized country.

In our society people cannot easily understand this. This is because we are used to looking down upon bourgeois legal principles, so that among a large number of people this state of affair has become a contempt for the law in general. It is also because, during our long and hard resistance, we were used to solving all questions within our groups, at our convenience. We were accustomed to resorting to «rule of thumb» to move things along every time this work ran into a regulation. We are used to replacing law with «view point.»

The resistance has been victorious, and independence and democracy have been realized in half of our territory. We thus can easily fall into subjectivism and self-satisfaction, so that we believe we can keep our old habits. This is a great mistake, because though this state of affair suited the guerrilla war situation, it no longer has any reason to survive in peace time.

Peace has been re-established for two years. No matter how complicated and hard our struggle for unification may be, we cannot consider the North as being in the unusual situation of not having a legal code forever.

In the agrarian reform, illegal arrests, imprisonments, investigations (with barbarous torture), executions, requisitions of property, and the quarantining of landowners' houses (or houses of peasants wrongly classified as landowners), which left innocent children to die of starvation, are not exclusively due to the shortcomings of the leadership, but also due to the lack of a complete legal code. If the cadres had felt that they were closely observed by the god of justice, and if they had been always reminded of the sentence of the tribunal that «acts against the law will be punished,» they would have paid greater attention to their work and calamities might have been avoided for the masses.

The idea that «erroneous death sentences will be criticized» can be a correct one, but it is too slight.

Some people may say: «These annoying acts have occurred because people did not have a firm point of view.»

To have a firm point of view is very valuable, but this is not sufficient in itself. Even people who truly have a strong point of view can only recognize the needs of their work, and cannot assure the means to meet their needs, if they have no substantial legal code guiding them.

Some will say: «The creation of law will involve people in red tape, and lead to mechanism and formalism.»

This is untrue. Red tape, mechanism and formalism are only due to the lack of revolutionary theory, of revolutionary virtue, and revolutionary eagerness. How can we avoid these shortcomings by making fewer laws? No one can deny this fact: The simplification of the law will favor abuses and dictatorship.

Abuses and dictatorship can take place even when people have a complete legal code. However, this can exist only under the old regime, in which the laws are designed to oppress the people, or in which the people have, in principle, the right of protection under the law but in practice are ignorant of their rights, or are not allowed to enjoy them. In our regime, the people are aware of, and have the right to employ law, and cherish the law. So they will not let abuses and dictatorship prevail.

A complete legal code would be a guarantee for the democratic nature of our regime. It will be the main track for the train smoothly speeding our people toward socialism.

It is due to the lack of a legal code that our agrarian reform has bitterly failed, that our army does not yet have a rational military service status. It is due to the lack of a legal code that a police agent can ask for a marriage certificate from a couple sitting on the bank of the «Little Lake,» waiting for the moon rise, that a census operation cadre can watch at the door of a house, making its tenants so uneasy that they cannot eat or sleep; that a tax cadre can search a house any time he wants; the cases of kicking the tenants out of their houses, or of forcing house tenants to cede a part of their houses to

organizations, all can occur. It is due to the lack of a complete legal code that many organizations can open the letters of their members; and that an important state organization can check beforehand the article concerning it, so that people may think that this state organization has the right to enforce a censorship which the government has already cancelled. It is due to the lack of a complete legal code that shameless political slanders and threats can be made, and people prevented from buying and reading Nhan Van and that acts of violence against the paper Tram Hoa, and similar occurrences can take place.

We think the time has come when the people must positively defend the regime by denouncing illegal acts as provided by the laws.

Concerning the establishment of a complete legal code, we beg to propose:

One — promulgation of a constitution (either the 1946 constitution should be modified to comply with the present situation, or a new constitution be drawn up). Relying on this constitution, the National Assembly should pass laws replacing previous decisions and communiques.

Two — the National Assembly should meet every six months, because in peacetime there is no reason why the National Assembly should entrust all its work to its standing committee, which, so far, has been practically inactive.

Three — reorganization of the judiciary, and giving it real power.

We believe that all classes of people will agree with us on the above mentioned proposals, because the people want to live in a more ordered society, in which the right to do business and the enjoyment of democratic freedoms cannot be violated, and in which they can freely contribute to the reconstruction of the country.

«The Truth About the Offense of Poet Nguyen Binh and Paper Tram Hoa», Unsigned editorial.

(In which Mr. To, alias Vu, of the Central Press Office, bullies Mr. Binh, manager of the literary publication, «Tram Hoa» (One Hundred Flowers), after being out-played, threatens to punch him, but is thwarted by Mr. Binh's cries for help—all of which is a grave reflection on the malice and corruption in the Central Press Office, aggravated by the casual attitude toward the affair on the part of the authorities).

In order to implement the communique of the Tenth Session of the Central Executive Committee of the Lao Dong Party concerning the increase of censorship, to assure the democratic freedom of the people, and to punish promptly and correctly acts against the law, we propose that adequate measures be taken to punish Nguyen Van To, alias Thiet Vu, who committed acts of violence against the manager of the paper Tram Hoa.

The Central Press Office must be held fully responsible in this matter.

Exactly as poet Nguyen Binh, the manager of Tram Hoa said, this is a «regrettable act». This is not only a regrettable act, it has inflamed the indignation of many people, especially the circles of arts and letters and intellectuals of the capital.

Tram Hoa, in its issue number two, spoke of this matter, but it didn't tell the whole truth.

According to the official report of Mr. Nguyen Binh to two meetings presided over by a representative of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee, before the publication of the first issue of Tram Hoa, Nguyen Van To, a cadre of the press office, came and handed to Mr. Nguyen Binh two articles attacking Nhan Van, asking him to publish them in his paper. At the same time, Nguyen Van To vaguely referred to the name of his organization (Here we say he «vaguely» referred to the name of his organization, because, how could he use his own name, Nguyen Van To, when promising government newsprint) to promise to provide Tram Hoa with two extra rolls of

newsprint at a cheap price as a reward for the work. Nguyen Binh could then sell them at the market price (which is very high) to meet his own expenses.

Mr. Binh did not refuse this offer, but he did not publish the two articles in question, saying that they were of no value. When Tram Hoa asked for a supply of newsprint for its issue number two, the press office deducted two rolls of newsprint from its ration. After many unsuccessful complaints, Mr. Nguyen Binh had to make a report to the Party Central Committee representative, at a meeting on October 20.

On October 21, Nguyen Van To came to the Tram Hoa office to «investigate» on behalf of the press office, Mr. Binh's reports of October 20, and used rough words to insult Mr. Binh and even wanted to fight him. Mr. Binh had to flee outside, and he cried out loudly to his neighbour, and passersby gathered in front of the office.

After that, Mr. Binh asked his assistants to inform the Police, his colleagues in the Arts and Letters Association, and the press office, of this occurrence. The result was that negotiations took place between Mr. Nguyen Binh and Mr. Tran Minh Tuoc, director of the press office. Nguyen Van To had to publish a letter of apology in Tram Hoa number two, and had to make a self-criticism during a people's meeting in his district.

Here is another angle. Why did the letter of apology and the self-criticism of Nguyen Van To include statements contrary to those given by Mr. Binh in his official report during the meetings of October 20 and October 23? There must be something behind this: Either Mr. Binh's report was false, or the letter of apology and the self-criticism were purely for the sake of appearances.

As for us, we fully agree with Mr. Nguyen Binh when he spoke of the importance of this matter: «The acts and insulting words of Mr. To not only reflected on my own honor, but also the honor of Tram Hoa, the honor of the men of arts and letters, the honor of the press, and also violated rights under democratic freedom.»

In other words, we are going to ignore the letter of apology and the self-criticism, since these are strictly the business of Mr. Nguyen Binh and Tram Hoa, although, of course, no one

can help being indignant at well known slanders like « magnification, » « digging, » « the enemy hand, » and so forth.

It is known that the manager of Tram Hoa was insulted and was about to be knocked down because, during the meeting with the Party Central Committee representative he had spoken of hateful cases of « bribery » and « vengeance. » This fact has an indirect bearing on the importance of the talks in question.

It is known that these days the artists, writers and intellectuals are anxious about defending their dignity and their democratic freedom. Can this act of violence by a cadre of the press office against a writer, the manager of a paper, at this time, and near the Party Central Committee and government, be advantageous to our policy or regime ?

It is known that the Tenth Session of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee has just decided to « guarantee the people's democratic freedoms and correctly and promptly punish acts of violation. »

Thus, the administrative and judiciary organizations having responsibility and competence in this matter, must have a clear attitude, and take concrete measures to prove to the people throughout the country that the above mentioned decisions have been correctly carried out. Otherwise, acts of banditry may become a regular occurrence and the common security and order, right in this capital, and democratic freedoms may be affected.

The crime of Nguyen Van To cannot be requited by a simple letter of apology and a public self-criticism. This only makes artists and writers and intellectuals more indignant, and the educational slogan, « Warning Before Prevention » meaningless.

Those who pretend that this matter has been adequately settled are trying to play an insulting joke on the masses.

To conclude, we beg to present three propositions:

One — The Premier's office should investigate the role of the press office in this matter. We cannot believe that the press office had nothing to do with this, because, how else could the extra news-print ration, and the subsequent deduction from the ration, have occurred ?

Two — Mr. Xuan Thuy, chairman of the Association of Viet-

namese Journalists, and Mr. Nguyen Tuan, secretary general of the Vietnamese Arts and Letters Association, should no longer continue to keep silent on this matter. The arts and letters circles and the masses in particular are observing your attitude.

Three.—Comrades who are so prone to fear enemy counter-propaganda should raise their voices in demanding severe punishment of Nguyen Van To, in order to prevent the enemy from exploiting us. It is necessary to severely punish wrongdoers, to prove that our brilliant regime has never tolerated corrupt people, instead of trying to camouflage our mistakes.

Hanoi Nhan Van, November 5

Great Expectations

«Let Us Acclaim the Central Committee of the Party»

Talks were held on October 20 between representatives of the Lao Dong Party central committee and artists representing the various fields of writing, painting, music, drama and motion pictures. Our staff sent three representatives to this conference.

During recent months, the spirited, open struggle of our brother artists against the evil practices of the leading elements, and for a true broadening of democracy and freedom, has been misinterpreted by certain people, who have unfairly accused us of dissatisfaction, struggling for position, and even reaction. These talks constitute an appropriate answer to these people.

The talks prove that, in the struggle for freedom and democracy, and against the vicious practices current in society, we artists have been in the front rank and have thus not betrayed the trust of the party and the people. This proves that the true nature of the regime is democratic.

This is a stinging slap on the mouths of the American imperialist lackeys who have been taking advantage of some of our struggles for democracy and freedom in the North to spread the canard that our regime lacks basic freedoms. As we have all realized, the struggle against the vicious practices of

our society are aimed at broadening our democratic institutions and strengthening and developing the nature of our regime. This struggle is a long and arduous one, but, with the determination of the Party and of all of us, we will accomplish the desired purposes. We are determined to overcome all obstacles.

The talks have just begun, and are continuing, but we already have sufficient foundation for our struggle and for our beliefs.

Signed: Phan Khoi, editor, Nhan Van
Literary and Social Review.

Hanoi Nhan Van, November 5

«The Sincere Struggle for Democratic Freedoms»,
by Tran Duy

(« We believe in the theories of Marx and Lenin. We believe absolutely in Communism, the most wonderful ideal of mankind, the youngest, the freshest ideal in all history. Then, why are we so out-of-date, why are we still living so miserably under the crushing burdens of formulae, why are we still bowed beneath the past? Who suppresses the bourgeoning of life? The party? The cadres? Are the policies right or wrong? »—a defense of Nhan Van).

The Tenth Session of the Lao Dong Party central executive committee has recognized that in the North we have not yet realized full rights in a free and democratic society, and has discussed the changes and supplementary measures necessary for proposal to the government and the national assembly.

We acclaim this recognition and long for the enactment of the supplementary measures which will bring to the press, the literary circles and to life in the North a new breeze, a breeze of freedom and democracy.

The true nature of our regime is democracy. It is an essential guarantee of our interests. Violations of freedom and democracy are decidedly not appropriate to our regime.

Such violations exist, however, and have existed for a long time. Of course, these violations did not stem from the party and the government, but the party and the government must bear full responsibility for these omissions and restraints of freedom and democracy.

Our struggle for freedom and democracy is a struggle to become the ears and eyes of the government and the party, so that we may help the government and party bring about the changes necessary to defend and to build our regime.

The aims of our paper have been to struggle for these ideals. We had no other purpose than to be a vanguard in cooperating with the party and the people in the struggle for the common goal.

But, since the first issue of this paper, it has undergone so many trials, so many difficulties, that we are tempted to say that they (purposefully? — Ed.) have tried to destroy it.

These destructive acts, though separate and of ill defined purpose, have been perpetrated with such systematic correlation, so methodically, that we are forced to conclude that they are the result of some definite leadership.

These acts began before the announcement made by the Tenth Party Congress. These mistakes must be corrected. Today, we want to consider for the last time these unfair acts, so that an end may be put to them, with the hope that we will try to understand each other better in the struggle for broadening freedom and democracy.

Comrade Nguyen Du Trinh, representing the central committee at a press conference, declared: «The nature of our regime is absolutely good. The mistakes of the moment must be overcome.»

Comrade Trinh's declaration expressed the party's desire and determination to put an end to the mistake-breeding situations which have occurred; these mistakes have various aspects, among them serious mistakes concerning freedom and democracy.

The mistakes committed in connection with Nhan Van have not been misdeeds aimed merely at a paper, but are violations of democratic itself, which Nhan Van have been discussing and for whose realization we have been determinedly struggling.

The struggle for freedom and democracy is a long and

arduous one, for it is an all-out attack against the evil practices of society.

This struggle will be hampered, if not totally blocked, by the vicious and backward elements now in power. They will use every means, even the most wicked and obscure, to distort the facts and destroy the struggle. Struggles for freedom and democracy have never been a purely administrative process. They must have broad, popular characteristics. The masses must be the arbiter, and must have the right to control all acts of the government and the cadres. We must actively support and aid the Party Central Committee to accelerate the democratization proposed in its resolution. Therefore, today we will re-examine with our readers the events of the recent past, in order to acquaint ourselves with the situation and strengthen our determination before beginning the building of a new phase.

Nhan Van was born in extraordinary circumstances. What motives inspired us artists and intellectuals to publish Nhan Van? How was it born? And how was it received?

During the literary «theoretical study» classes were organized, but most of the participants considered them as pure formalities. Questions were duly raised for solution and clarification, and some mistakes in conduct and general policies were corrected, but with that done they fell back into their old ways and the leadership continued to follow the road of ten years ago. Thus, at the outset of the classes, the participants had a passive attitude, and no ideas were expressed. They were still «yes men.»

But, during the training period, during a discussion of the directives for the arts and letters branch, the atmosphere was completely altered. Simultaneously, the raising of such topics as social life, land reform, trade, population, and so forth, gave those of us attending a view of the general leadership and set vividly before us the task ahead, our struggle with the people to strengthen the regime and the fatherland.

Possessive, indifferent and pessimistic attitudes must go. They are crimes against history, and against the struggle of our people. In a society where FREEDOM has been inscribed in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's Declaration of Independence and its Constitution, we wonder why freedom is still viol-

ated in the ideological fields and even in the fields where man's very life is at stake.

We believe in the theories of Marx and Lenin. We believe absolutely in communism, the most wonderful ideal of mankind, the youngest, the freshest ideal in all history. Then, why are we so out-of-date, why are we still living so miserably under the crushing burdens of formulae, why are we still bowed beneath the past? Who suppresses the bourgeoning of life? The party? The cadres? Are the the policies right, or wrong?

Formal demands must be made, so that the party can see clearly and so that the masses can participate in their achievement. Consequently, we decided to publish this paper.

Nhan Van, since its appearance, has volunteered as one of the vanguard elements in actively cooperating with the people and the party in the struggle against mistakes and the misleading and vicious practices in operations and conduct within the overall leadership which violates principles of the party and the regime.

For the same reason, the name of the paper itself, Nhan Van, was chosen in a moment of enthusiasm for the party, for the individual man of the regime. For we found that there can be no nobler, nor fairer work than the struggle to achieve, at all costs, the ideal of «humanity» (Direct translation of the Vietnamese words Nhan Van, which, however, also connote the idea of beauty as well — Ed.) in all human life.

Being poor, and having no financial backing, we made individual contributions to launch this paper. It was with much difficulty that we were able to publish this paper. Yet, since the first issue, such epithets as «class reactionary», «middle class profiteers,» «the voice of the middle class,» and «bridge for the imperialists» have been heaped on our heads.

During publication, a prototype for destructive action was the Hoang Dao affair. Who is Hoang Dao? According to the way he introduces him to friends, he is a former police cadre, now a commercial agent and administrator of a large company, and has been charged with the mission of watching and attacking Nhan Van.

This Hoang Dao called on one of his friends, a man who

had planned to invest in Nhan Van. He threatened this man so forcibly that he shortly withdrew his backing. Then he (Hoang Dao) looked up the directors of several printing plants and villified our paper, sowing confusion among printing circles and interrupting work on Nhan Van.

The worker comrades of the X.T. printing shop were concerned about why Nhan Van was considered reactionary, and why, if this were true, the government did not suspend it instead of letting men disguised as trade union agents sabotage it.

We ask ourselves: On what powerful support does Hoang Dao rely to dare so brazenly to violate freedom of the press and thought in this way?

The first issue of Nhan Van appeared, and then, in succession, the second, third and fourth issues. From these issues, this became apparent: that Nhan Van has done nothing but point out shortcomings committed by cadres (Ed. note: Although the word « can bo, » meaning cadre is used here and in party and government publications, in this context it actually denotes officials, rather than the more commonly conceived party agents) because of a feudalist, narrowminded, partisan and mechanical spirit; it has never, absolutely never, attacked the social weaknesses which our organization has so far been unable to correct because of economic and financial factors.

Such is the motivation of Nhan Van. But what is the attitude of Nhan Dan, the voice of the party, toward our paper Nhan Van? The most striking evidence was the critical article which appeared in Nhan Dan on September 25. This article accused us of having deliberately maligned our regime. It attacked us in a vague, distorted manner, as we revealed in our answer, published in the second issue of Nhan Van.

In this article, we cast primary responsibility on our confrere Nguyen Chuong, and secondary responsibility on the editorial board of Nhan Dan. We did not bring the problem of responsibility up with the Lao Dong party, because, while we found Nguyen Chuong's action ill intentioned, the action of the the editorial board of Nhan Dan was occasioned by its carelessness.

But Nhan Dan, in its issue of October 13, published another article by Nguyen Chuong defending the justice of the previous

article. Then Nhan Dan published an article by Hoang Xuan Nghi which contained the same slanderous type of material disguised in a more literary form.

Thus it can be seen that what we have here is a deliberate, calculated stand, and not simply an ill intentioned individual, or a case of carelessness. The problem which is posed is not whether the article was just or not, but whether the leadership is good or bad. This is why we bring this matter before the party, even though it concerns the attitude of wavering elements within the party and not of the Central Committee of the party, much less the party itself.

The question resolves itself into one of the two following alternatives: Either we are considered as the enemy, and the solution is our annihilation; or are considered as the part of the masses, and therefore must be given direction.

We set a high value on the party, and could never believe that the party could be so mistaken as to consider us one with the enemy. This leaves us with only one possible answer, that the wavering elements in the party consider us as part of the masses and therefore seek to direct us. We ourselves sought out the party to ask for direction, and sought by every means to obtain this direction.

We take the liberty here to state briefly the main facts:

One — before the appearance of the first issue of Nhan Van, we wrote to Mr. To Huu, who is in charge of the Central Propaganda Committee, to ask him for guidance and aid. We again wrote and asked if we might see him; we met him and expressed our feeling that his aid on the spiritual plane was essential to us.

Two — the first issue of Nhan Van contained our proclamation that we place ourselves under the leadership of the Lao Dong Party and the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Three — after the publication of the first issue of Nhan Van, we sent letters to the Premier, the Secretary General of the Lao Dong Party, the Chairman of the Fatherland Front, the chairman of the Standing Committee of National Assembly, the Minister for Culture (of the government), the Minister for Propaganda (of the Party); the Chairman of the Hanoi Administrative Committee, the Secretary of the Hanoi Chapter of the Lao Dong Party, and

in the Standing Committee of the Arts and Letters Association, asking them for continuing advice and recommendations.

Four — in almost every article, from issue number one through issue number three, we have reiterated our confidence in the leadership of the Central Committee of the Party.

Despite all this, the organ of the Central Committee of the Party continues to attack us! How tenacious its attitude is! Nhan Dan has the right to disagree with various articles in our paper and has the right to comment on and criticize them. But it cannot use the influence of the party to condemn Nhan Van, or to ascribe to Nhan Van dangerous political tendencies which it prints in tens of thousands of copies distributed everywhere, giving the people of the provinces an incorrect, harmful attitude toward the Nhan Van group. This constitutes the use of administrative measures to annihilate one's enemy, not methods of literary criticism towards one's friends.

This is an abuse of the prerogatives and means of propaganda entrusted by the people and the party. These acts of Nhan Dan do not conform with the views of the party leadership.

The appearance of Nhan Van has been viewed by distracted, cruel eyes. It has been treated as an enemy by a number of leaders.

They have used the press to transform criticism of Nhan Van into a slanderous attack to spread an entirely false opinion among the people, especially in the provinces where Nhan Van has not yet circulated.

They have used lectures in schools in which they tried to give young students false ideas about Nhan Van and its contributors.

In some places, they have sent cadres to persuade subscribers not to read Nhan Van.

Organizations in charge of the distribution of supplies, such as the Central Press Bureau and the state-owned trade company, have limited the quantity of newsprint distributed to Nhan Van.

These tactics, though dangerous, are not nearly as dangerous as the following method: Certain persons have taken ad-

vantage of the difficulties prevailing in the unification of the country, in the anxious demands of our people for normalization of relations, in the situation of the cadres from the South. They have slanderously asserted that Nhan Van has caused the party difficulties in the reunification task, that Nhan Van has been responsible for the delay in normalization of relations... Some have used forged names to express opinions in a newspaper, claiming to be «voices of the south,» soliciting the sympathy of the masses, to win their sympathies and incite them to oppose Nhan Van.

If it happens incidentally that «the jaws have bitten the tongue,» it is not Nhan Van's fault, nor the fault of the cadres from the South, but of those who have exploited the just cause under cover of the revolution to indulge in dishonest, counter-revolutionary acts.

But these are things of the past. It is to be hoped that these past incidents will not occur again.

Dear friends, we can understand each other. Only a little sincerity and effort may draw us closer. «The simple citizen is responsible for the decline of his country», the proverb says. We shall not fear our conscience when we say, «We have done so because we love our country and our regime.» It is certain that you are not surprised that in our beautiful country many vicious practices restricting the progress of the people and harming the prestige of the party and the people's life still occur.

How attractive and strong our regime will be if all these vicious practices are swept away. We want to contribute our part in this work with the party and the people, we want to help the party and the people in the movement of broadening freedom, correcting mistakes, developing our beautiful North, and pushing strongly forward our struggle for reunification.

Our objective and yours, we are sure, are one. But methods and opinions may differ. We do not ask you to approve all our ideas. We only suggest that you be calm and straightforward in our common, frank discussions, and that you not use underhand means to attack us, thus causing an internecine fight among brothers of the same family.

Our country is meeting difficulties. The broadening of

democracy, the mobilization of all the potentialities and initiatives of the masses for the correction of mistakes and national reconstruction are extremely important. We should sincerely try to understand each other. We believe in the clear-sighted leadership and aid of the Central Committee of the party.

We believe in the strength of justice, the eager and constructive supervision of the masses. We have confidence in the efforts of all of us to understand one another.

History is making great strides of progress. All that hampers the movement of democratic freedoms, and the steps of advance of the people, will certainly be swept away.

Hanoi Nhan Van, November 5

« HUMOROUS STORIES ABOUT NHAN VAN »

Penny For Your Thoughts

In a house on K.T. street, my friend was avidly reading an issue of Nhan Van when he heard a knock at the door. It was «Comrade Population.»

«So, you too read Nhan Van?» he raised his voice behind a plume of smoke, and without waiting for a reply, proceeded: «After you have finished it, please give me your impressions of it, tomorrow!» and he turned and left.

My friend spent a good quarter of an hour thinking about what the comrade has said, then struck a match and burned the paper—«Safe!»

You Will Die Early

A customer entered a bookshop at Hoang Quang. «Do you sell Nhan Van?». «No sir,» was the reply. «Well, I have heard that it is very interesting. Why don't you order it?»

«In selling Nhan Van you run the serious risk of dying early!» answered the bookseller, slowly stroking his moustache.

Dont Reveal It Or I Will Be Dead !

I had not seen him for fifteen years, and we were both glad to meet again.

«You dare to write for Nhan Van ?» asked my friend suddenly.

I grew thoughtful at his question, and my friend continued, «I am sorry I could not read the first issue.»

«Oh, don't worry, I will send a copy down to you,» I replied.

My friend waved his hand and quickly said, «No no! If they learn that I read Nhan Van too, I will be dead. Even here you have to read this paper in secret.»

Don't Read It, It's A Reactionary Paper

The female cadre in charge of the street came to each house on her people's mobilization operation. One subject followed another. She talked endlessly. After searching briefly through the drawers of a table, she came up with an issue of Nhan Van and cried, «Beware! Don't read this paper, it's reactionary!»

«Oh, is that so? I thought that it was only in the South that you find reactionary papers,» replied the mistress indifferently.

«Well, perhaps not exactly reactionary, but it is published by a bunch of writers who are too dissatisfied and too discontented with themselves to produce interesting articles.»

The mistress tried not to laugh, and very politely and delicately showed the cadre out. The denouement is that the lady is the wife of Mr. T., a member of the Nhan Van staff. A strange story, is it not?

So — Hate Or Love?

But it is not so strange as the loss of Nhan Van copies sent through the central post office. Readers, especially our comrade soldiers stationed in remote areas, have repeatedly written to the newspaper office to complain about the loss. They usually write something like this: «Why have you not sent us

copies?» Or, «Letters and periodicals are like gifts to the minds of those who are far from our magnificent capital. Why is the central post office so careless?»

A friend of mine said: «Perhaps the staff of the central post office are so fond of Nhan Van that they have kept these issues to read themselves».

Another suggested: «Maybe they dislike Nhan Van and have destroyed these copies».

So—hate or love?

Hanoi Nhan Van, November 5

«We Buy Goods From The State-Owned Trade Company», by Thanh Chau.

(A report on shopping in Hanoi as a sure road to the hospital).

It was Sunday morning. Bicycles were ranged in disorder along the sidewalk in front of the store. At the intersection, Comrade Policeman was whirling his gauntlets directing traffic like a conscientious bandmaster.

Mrs. Menh hesitated, her eyes fixed on the crowd assembled in front of the store. She was a cadre just discharged from the hospital, still convalescent. She had two checks (actually purchase coupons issued in lieu of pay — Ed.) in her hand. She had asked me to go along to help choose things, because she considered me to be rather experienced at buying at the State Owned Trade Company.

To demonstrate my courage, I forced a «blood» passage through the crowd. I thought of her children waiting for new clothes at home. She worked her way in after me. Assailed by the smell of so many people, she turned a trifle pale, and lifted her head toward the ceiling. I felt like a fish in an aquarium there in the struggling crowd. I made a megaphone of my hands, and called out to her, «We'll either have to come back some other time, or else make a dash at the counters — note the

prices, present the checks, and hurry like mad before the store closes.» And I said to myself, «This is what an experienced man in this situation ought to say.»

We had to make a thorough inspection of the showcases, and note the prices. Life was not as simple as she had thought.

For instance, she wanted to buy five meters of cloth, but first she had to examine the checks to see how much they were worth. If the amount noted on the checks totaled 10,000 dong, then all would be perfect.

«If the price is higher than the checks, say 12,000 dong?» Mrs. Menh asked anxiously. «Then you have to pay 2000 dong more out of your pocket, of course,» I explained.

«And, if the price is lower?»

«Then we will have to find something else to buy, to make up the difference.»

Now that Mrs. Menh had been told all the principles of buying goods, I began to list the various items available, which I knew almost by heart after several days of experience, just as Menh was doing now.

«Chinese and domestic toothpaste, Czech sport shoes and patent leather shoes of all kinds and styles, flower printed cloth for (furniture?), checked Hungarian cloth in all colors, thermos bottles, gray cloth from East Germany, maroon cloth for workers, striped poplin, blue cloth...»

She interrupted, «All I want is a porcelain washbowl, a raincoat for my husband to wear when he works in the field, if possible, and a few meters of cloth.»

«In that case, you can go to the stores which display those items in abundance outside. There are many items attractive and serviceable, from the State Owned Trade Company which are sold in the shops outside, although the prices are slightly higher.»

Mrs. Menh was growing angry. I felt that she was arguing with me, and thought of me as a... (adjective?) hawker (pejorative term applied to State Owned Trade Service clerks—Ed.) She said, «You have a check (for the trade store—Ed.) and you want to buy in the ordinary shops outside?»

«You could put the check in the bank,» I suggested.

She beamed. «That's an idea. Lets put the checks in the bank, and then withdraw cash in a few days. That's very handy.»

«Except that you have to wait six months, not a few days.»

«If that's the way it is, I'm certainly not going to be so stupid as to put my checks in the bank!»

«Then get out your pencil and notebook and we can start.»

Mrs. Menh seemed to be remembering something. «I heard that there are other stores run by the trade service in this area.»

«Right! A store selling bicycles and other items similarly priced that we would never dream of. A wholesale store. And another shop selling both raincoats and porcelain washbowls, but it is probably reserved for (Special People?). As for department stores, I have had enough experience with them.»

Mrs. Menh's body seemed to shrink. The crowd hurried on and rolled and pitched her like foam on a wave. A scream was heard, «Help! Stop Thief! He has stolen my Parker Pen!»

Some soldiers chased the malefactor. I led Mrs. Menh toward the door. She was pale, breathing like a runner near the finish line. We plodded toward Bai Street.

Ranks of bicycles in front of the Bai Street Department Store. Human streams flowing in and out, as if it were an exhibition hall. Papers half-covered with writing; bits of cotton here and there on the ground. Men sitting on the steps eating rice balls, waiting their turn. A pregnant woman staggering out, leaning on the handlebar of a bicycle and vomiting. She had been struggling all morning, but had finally realized that she could buy nothing. Her face was as red as if she were drunk, and her dress was rumpled.

I was thinking of those perfume shops where we could walk in and freely, admiring and choosing goods at leisure. (Probably refers to French shops in the old days — Ed.) Shopping used to be a pleasure. Suddenly a cadre friend slapped me on the shoulder and said: «Lets get out of here. Husky as I am, some guy even tried to crawl over my head to get in the first row. How can you stay any longer in this mess?» He pointed to some Russian women hurrying out. «Look, even those ladies have given up.»

«Why don't they buy at the stores reserved for foreigners?»

«May be they are not up to their tastes, or perhaps they don't have all the goods they want.»

A woman sitting on the ground interjected: «I came from Bac Ninh province two days ago and I still haven't been able to buy the four meters of cloth I wanted. I'm a lot more unhappy than those ladies».

Mrs. Menh had not acquired the necessary «struggle» experiences. She went upstairs, she came downstairs, stopping here and there to consult the lucky women who had succeeded in obtaining their cloth. Notebook in one hand, pencil in the other, she jotted down items and prices, calculated, and said to me, «Look! Lets buy all we need here. I already have enough soap and towels at home, but I'll buy some more to use up the checks.»

But life was still not so simple, although I had warned her more than once. The system in this shop was a little different from the one on Trang Tien Street. For instance, if you want to buy something, you have to tell the clerk to write it down on a slip, which will be sent to the upper floor where you make your payment, and then the slip is returned to the clerk.

After more than an hour of being pushed and squeezed like sardines, she finally made up her mind and was just about to show her identity card when a bell rang. The store was closed.

A young man nearby wiped the sweat from his brow and said desperately, «Life is like a play! There are still a few meters of this cloth left, but we will have to hurry or there will be nothing left to buy.»

Though I had not understood him, he continued, winking at me, «Oh, it's because they only had a few meters to begin with, and it's strong and cheap, too. I think I'll ask some cadre to buy a few more meters for each of us when he buys it for himself.»

«There are a lot of people waiting outside for it, so they can resell it to the tailors for the little profit it will bring!»

Mrs. Menh walked off as if dreaming. My experience hadn't been of much use to her.

On the bed where Mrs. Menh was lying, there were some oranges, presents from friends who had visited her after learning

that she was ill. Despite her illness, she had to repeat for the hundredth time the story of her accident.

When she left the department store, she felt dizzy. Her heart was pounding, and she was on the verge of fainting. She could not eat any dinner. The bicycle which she had borrowed from a friend and forgotten to lock had been stolen. All she had left now were two checks, which she would have to sell, if possible, at a loss in order to buy another bicycle for her friend. After hearing her story, a friend from the South said, angrily, «I told you before, but you wouldn't believe me. You've heard, haven't you, of the «humor» column in «Van Nghe» magazine? (Printed in Nhan Van earlier) Well, it was I who wrote the story about the cadre who had been forced to buy a kidney fortifying drug, a drug he did not in the least need, just to spent the sum indicated on his checks.

A cadre just returned from the land reform operation interjected, «All of us have to put up with this. Ask anyone, customers and members of organizations, and they'll have some good stories for you.» He slapped his chest. «Once I smoked moldy Bulgarian cigarettes sold by the State Owned Trade Company at a special low price for cadres, while I was still in the advance school. I almost caught bronchitis, and had to give up my work because I smoked that tobacco.»

Another cadre added, pitifully, «I've often heard of them selling bad and decayed goods to cadres. We have all eaten the sour bread they sell cheap as breakfast food for employees of various agencies. They said the flour had been badly stored, so that rain dripped from the roof and saturated it. It was then sold to government contractors. A professor told me that he had drunk spoiled milk and had come down with an intestinal disease which lasted three months. Another complained that he had still to taste butter. Some butter he was going to buy had gone rancid, and he made soap out of it.»

Around the bed where Mrs. Minh lay, sick of the State Owned Trade Service Store, one story followed another, and the atmosphere became one of vengeful denunciation.

Someone mentioned the story of «Dai Tien Mon» cigarettes, which first sold for 900 dong, then for 1100, and now you have

to buy them from retailers at 3500 dong a pack.

«Mercier» bicycles had been seen, but there were so many buyers that they disappeared as if by magic. A man who had struggled without success to buy a few meters of cloth went to the Dong Xuan Market to buy it from retailers, who forced him to buy a meter of flower-print for every meter of the Chinese blue cloth he wanted to buy; why should this be?

As the discussion waxed, a girl typist raised her voice. «I think that not only the customers are victims of these stores. In justice, we should think of the others who are as miserable as we. My job is backbreaking, but when I compare it with the job of the clerk in the Nam Dinh black silk department, I can't help admiring her. All day long she has to measure, cut, calculate and register for thousands of people screaming and jostling around; she's the only one on this job, and she never finds a free moment all day ».

I remembered this heroine. I had seen her eating supper after closing time, her face pale and her whole body exhausted. Had she made an error in calculation which would be taken out of her pay? How could she enjoy a meal after a day of toil like that? I wanted to learn her name, telling myself that, «I would be very happy if some day she would be given a medal of recognition ».

Mrs. Menh asked for a glass of water. The same Southerner struck his forehead, pondered, and said abruptly, «I've got to write a story about this », and hurried on, as if afraid that someone would interrupt :

«I'll tell the story of a man trying to buy goods at the State Trade Service Store with a check. At first, he was very optimistic and enthusiastic, but after a struggle lasting two or three days, after the countless calculations had eroded his spirit, he realized at last that he could never buy the particular things he wanted. But that's not all; our friend felt ill with a fever which put him in bed for several days. Lying in bed, he gazed at the goods (apparently he had accepted substitutes Ed) which he had bought with his hard earned money, the goods that were of practically no use to him ».

I replied, «In my opinion, Mrs. Menh is more miserable

than the man in your story. He bought goods that he did not want, but Mrs. Menh struggled fruitlessly, and has lost the bicycle she borrowed.

Hanoi Thoi Moi, November 10

«Communique Explaining the Application of Disciplinary Measures Against the Newspaper "Nhan Van"».

Following the communique on the application of disciplinary measures against «Nhan Van,» as published in all dailies of November 9, 1956, the Central Press Bureau finds it necessary to give the following details:

In compliance with the regulations in force, each time a newspaper edition is published, it must send to the Central Press Bureau three copies simultaneously with its distribution.

«Nhan Van» issue number 4, dated November 5, 1956, was distributed without copies of this issue being sent to the bureau for filing purposes.

On November 8, the Central Press Bureau sent an official letter to Mr. Tran Duy, in charge of this paper, inviting him to come to our bureau to discuss this matter, so he could make appropriate corrections. But Mr. Tran Duy answered that he was busy, and could not come.

For the second time, the bureau, by official letter, invited Mr. Tran Duy to come. In this letter, it was clearly specified that he «had violated a point of the law.»

This time, Mr. Tran Duy also replied that he «could not come yet.»

For the third time, the Central Press Bureau ordered Mr. Tran Duy to come to hear the communique on the breaking of the deposit law by «Nhan Van,» and this time he came.

Concerning the breaking of the deposit law and the incorrect attitude toward an agency of the government by Mr. Tran Duy of «Nhan Van,» but considering that this infringement of the law was a first offense and thus did not merit the full penalty enforceable accorded to the powers invested in the Central Press

Bureau by the Premier's Office in respect to the application of disciplinary measures against the press, the Central Press Bureau has sent a direct warning to Mr. Tran Duy. At the headquarters of the Central Press Bureau, Mr. Tran Duy admitted that «he broke the law of the government,» acknowledged this warning, and proposed to the bureau that this communique be publicized in the press.

The Central Press Bureau, Nov. 10, 1956

ISSUE NUMBER FIVE

Hanoi Nhan Van, November 20

« How Are Democratic Freedoms Guaranteed By the Vietnamese Constitution of 1946, » by Nguyen Huu Dang

(The keystone of the juridical process is « democracy toward the people; dictatorship toward the enemy, » in spite of the fact that it is being claimed that democracy is bourgeois and antagonistic toward true communism. Baleful consequences result from denying democracy. The main cause of the Polish and Hungarian developments was lack of democracy. Does anyone think that they were due to a lack of dictatorship?)

Our constitution of 1946, after its ratification by the National Assembly, was not enforced because of the serious situation of the country. But, after the Geneva Accords, despite many difficulties in the economic situation and the struggle for unification, the situation of the North could be considered as stabilized.

Therefore, we can propose either the application of the constitution of 1946 with amendments, or the drafting of a new constitution.

Some say, « Let us wait until the reunification of the country to elect a new National Assembly and to draft a new constitution. South Vietnam already has a separate constitution; if the North also promulgates a separate constitution, the national unification work will be all the more difficult. »

I do not know how sincere those who say this are. I only know that the party, the government and all the people of the North have agreed that the struggle for unification will be long.

If, during this long period, a temporary constitution is not promulgated in the North, if there is no foundation for the bastion of a judicial system erected covering every national institution — then everything will remain in disorder.

Under such circumstances, how can the North be consolidated for peaceful conquest of the South?

The promulgation of the constitution is of primary importance. I shall not discuss in this article what a constitution should be, to be adapted to the situation in the North. I only want to assert one thing, that no matter what the content of the future constitution may be, the parts relative to guarantees of democratic freedoms of the 1946 constitution cannot be changed, because this is a «sine qua non» of a democratic regime.

The 1946 constitution provides for:

Articles 10 — All Vietnamese citizens have the right to freedom of expression and press; freedom of publication; freedom of organization and assembly; freedom of residence; free circulation inside and outside the country.

Article 11 — Arrest and imprisonment of a Vietnamese citizen are prohibited until a court has ruled on his case. Illegal search of homes and of the letters of Vietnamese citizens is prohibited.

Today, ... some say about the 1946 constitution, «The 1946 constitution is a blanket, strategic concession to the gang of the Vietnamese Nationalist Party (Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang) aided by the Chinese Nationalists, and to those who did not follow the revolution at the time. Even in the situation of our country in 1946, this constitution already seemed inadequate. It is all the more inadequate in the present situation, when the people's authority has made great progress. Since the forces of the workers and the farmers are now greatly developed, of course one should be more strict, instead of falling back to the level of bourgeois democracy of 1946.

Actually, there is no opinion that is more anti-democratic than the one stated above. It is all the more dangerous because it is disguised under the cloak of a «revolutionary standpoint,» loudly defending a thesis that it is all «for the workers and farmers' classes.» He who holds this opinion does not firmly stand for the

keystone of every question relative to judicial policies and systems, which is: Be democratic toward the people, but be dictatorial toward the enemy.

We see that, according to this conception, all the democratic freedoms granted to all the classes of the people (workers, farmers, as well as petty bourgeois and people's bourgeois) must be strengthened and developed even more, and widened to the point where they keep pace with the progress of the revolution.

... What is the real situation of the North as far as guarantees of democratic freedoms in the Vietnamese constitution of 1946... are concerned? We find that democratic freedoms have been too limited. We warmly praise the resolutions of the Tenth Session of the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party, which put much stress on the necessity of broadening these rights.

But, why does it happen that this has been merely proposed, and has not yet been realized, wholly or in part, whereas there is already a current of public opinion opposing it, seemingly demanding more dictatorship? This sudden change causes confusion and fear among the masses.

Dictatorship toward the enemy has always been inadequate. Yet, has there ever been a moment when we relaxed it to the point where we had to call for more toughness?

Dictatorship toward the people should be more carefully examined. If not, baleful consequences will result. The main cause of the Polish and Hungarian events was the lack of democracy. Does anybody think that they were due to lack of dictatorship?

No matter how far one may reason, one cannot reject the principle which Mr. Liu Shao Chi set forth in his report on the constitution at the first meeting of the first session of the Chinese National Assembly on September 15, 1954: «Our political regime is concentrated at its apex, but this concentration is based on a high level democracy».

It is useless to speak of a high level democracy—even in an average democracy we still have to make it stronger. If, instead, we want to practice more dictatorship, it will be very disadvantageous for us.

«The Lesson of Poland and Hungary».

(In which it is suggested that if one does not practice democracy, one cannot employ dictatorial methods with justice, for dictatorship is merely a method of enforcing democracy and freedom. A laudable communist regime will impose democracy upon the masses, at the same time that it inflicts dictatorship against the enemy of the masses. If one does not understand this, one may easily commit painful mistakes out of pure carelessness, and the masses may initiate a self-instigated struggle, which is what happened in Poland and Hungary.)

The situation in Poland and Hungary has been widely reported and commented on by the press. In this article, we only wish to expound a number of lessons, so we can think it over and discuss it together.

First lesson—It is necessary to resolutely and courageously correct mistakes promptly and fully, particularly by raising the standard of living of the people, and by increasing democratic freedoms.

Some might say that since in Poland and Hungary the people's democratic regimes had been in effect for over ten years, it is puzzling to have such regrettable things occur. Others go so far as to doubt the very nature of the democratic regime in a number of countries of our camp.

Well, what is the truth? It is that the nature of the democratic regime of these countries has always been in conformity with Marxism, but for a fairly long time the cult of Stalin and Stalin's mistakes affected many communist parties and workers in the world, and seriously prejudiced man's life and his right to freedom.

The policy of haste in advancing toward socialism, manifested in paying too much attention to the development of heavy industry—which forcibly demands a race for mechanized agricultural implements—and in paying little attention to the life of the workers and all the people's classes, has seriously affected the living conditions of the masses. Hence, the dissatisfaction

of the people has increased more each day.

The erroneous theory that the more one advances toward socialism, the more bitter the class struggle will be, has led to baleful consequences, such as abusive enlightenment, dictatorship toward both party members and the masses, and serious violations of the judicial system of socialism. Many innocent people were unjustly arrested. Limitations on democratic freedom and careless practice of dictatorial manners are very common, giving rise to a tense situation which «negates the attraction of the doctrine and the party» (Rakosi's self-criticism).

In a speech delivered on October 24, 1956, at a meeting held in Warsaw to welcome the new central executive committees and to acclaim the resolutions of the Eighth Session of the Central Committee, Comrade Gomulka revealed these mistakes, as follows: «Many vices, injustices, and deceptions have been accumulated during the past years. The ideology of socialism in respect to man's freedom and the citizen's rights have been in practice seriously violated. Acts have not kept pace with words.»

The life of the people was not improved adequately; democratic freedoms were seriously violated. These are the main shortcomings of the Polish and Hungarian Communist Parties during the past few years, and also the basic causes of the regrettable events of the past few months.

After the Twentieth Congress (of the Soviet Communist Party — Ed.), these mistakes were brought to light. Rakosi, leader of the Hungarian Communist Party, had to resign, Gomulka and a number of other party members in Poland were rehabilitated, correction of mistakes committed in the cities and the countryside has begun. But rate of speed in correcting mistakes is slow compared with the exigencies of the situation and the people's demands, thus quickening the indignation and struggle of the masses. The lack of courage and determination in the mistakes correction program has created fertile ground for provocative elements and enemy saboteurs.

Therefore, if one wants to prevent the self-instigated struggle of the masses, and to chop the dirty hands of the enemy, first one must be determined and courageous in correcting mistakes adequately and suitably, especially by raising the

standard of living of the people, and by actually widening democratic freedoms.

Second lesson — Democracy must proceed on a par with dictatorship, and if one does not really broaden democratic freedoms one cannot practice dictatorial methods justly.

Some say the Hungarian events were due to excessive broadening of democratic freedoms, with too much emphasis on democracy and too little stress on dictatorship. Everyone knows that one of the great shortcomings of the Hungarian leaders during the past days has been their failure to repress with determination all the counter-revolutionary elements. But the question is not a simple formula: too much stress on democracy; too little stress on dictatorship. Such simple reasoning can lead to wrong ideas. The question should be more carefully examined.

What was the real situation? As explained above, and also through the press, our readers have clearly understood that the situation during the past few years was as follows: Democracy was seriously curtailed and dictatorial methods were allowed to develop in a confused way.

The widening of democracy is of primary importance, so that the masses may participate in the correction of mistakes, and in the control and supervision of the state's organizations.

It is regrettable that the failure to adequately widen democracy has resulted in a confused situation caused by the self-instigated struggle of the masses. In this situation, the enemy very easily takes advantage of it to conceal his reactionary face. If one cannot expose the enemy, it is difficult to use all the people's forces in the repression of the counter-revolution. If one wants to apply dictatorial manners toward the enemy, one must isolate him. If one wants to isolate the enemy, it is impossible to widen democracy or satisfy the demands of the masses.

Therefore, the question is not so simple, that little stress was put on dictatorship. It is: If one does not widen the democratic movement of the masses, one may face many difficulties in practicing dictatorial methods toward one's enemy.

Now, we take the liberty to speak more clearly about the

question of democracy and dictatorship, because this is a very important one. Some say: On the one hand, one recommends the practice of democratic freedoms, and on the other hand one recommends dictatorial methods. It is really very difficult to understand! Is there democracy or not? Please say one thing, not many things at the same time.

Here is our answer: Democracy and dictatorship are two inseparable sides of one problem, and together stem from one of the fundamental principles of Marxism. The question is not whether to put off dictatorship or not, but how to understand it, and how to realize it.

For a long time, a number of persons have understood the problem of dictatorship in an inexact way. They do not understand that dictatorship is merely a method to guarantee democracy, and dictatorship means to adopt dictatorial manners toward the enemy so as not to let him wreak destruction. This is done to strengthen and to develop democracy, and not to limit the democratic freedoms of the people, to violate the state's laws. We recall that dictatorship here means dictatorship toward the enemy, absolutely not toward the people. The mistakes and shortcomings of the people can be corrected only through struggle and education, and this is an internal question.

If one does not understand this, one may easily fall into the painful mistakes of violating democratic freedoms and human life of the Stalin era.

Therefore, it may be very dangerous if, out of carelessness, we say only «increase dictatorship» especially for the situation of our country, although the situation of Hungary differs from our own on certain points. Through more than twenty years of revolutionary struggle, of which ten were years of resistance, the foundations of the Lao Dong Party of Vietnam can be said to be more stable than those of the Hungarian Workers Party.

One should not compare the enemy forces in North Vietnam with those in Hungary in a mechanical way. Because of so many years under foreign rule and the profound influence of feudalism, the comprehension of the Vietnamese people's masses of democratic freedoms is not as complete as that of the people of a country which had a capitalist modern industry like Hungary.

Therefore, to misjudge some errors of the masses, as well as to misjudge the enemy, may bring about most disastrous consequences. In drawing experience from the lesson of Poland and Hungary, one should also not forget the painful experience of our own land reform and organizational readjustment policy.

The problem which is posed now is how to use every possible means to guarantee democracy, to limit misuse of dictatorial methods, and to concentrate all the dictatorial methods against the enemy. The people's democratic law should be improved and drastically enforced.

Third lesson — The struggle for the consolidation and widening of democratic freedoms in conformity with the spirit of Marxism is a long, hard one, but it will certainly be victorious, and it will destroy all the social vices as well as all the sabotaging of the enemy.

After the denunciation of the reactionary Beria, and the mistakes of Stalin, Hungary and Poland started the movement of correction of mistakes. A movement against the cult of the individual, against the violation of the judicial system of socialism and in favor of the widening of democratic freedoms spread everywhere. But this movement met with the conservative reactions of «incompetent leaders who committed serious mistakes, and did not fulfill their mission» (Gomulka.)

The struggle against the collective leadership of Rakosi in Hungary was long and hard, so was that of Gomulka in Poland. During this struggle, the imperialist gang, full of joy, believed they would certainly destroy our people's democratic regime. Taking advantage of a number of mistakes committed by Polish leaders, they laid their miserable hands on the Poznan affair.

Taking advantage of a number of mistakes committed by the USSR in Poland, they tried to sow dissension between the USSR and Poland by making their contradictions deeper. Taking advantage of the serious mistakes of the collective leadership of Rakosi and a number of mistakes committed by the USSR in Hungary they tried to destroy the unshakable friendship of the socialist camp.

But they suffered a crushing defeat. The workers participating in the demonstrations in Poznan unmasked their provo-

cative and reactionary face. The union between Poland and the USSR on the basis of equality and independence, and the readjustment of shortcomings in ideology is now even more solid than before. The Hungarian reactionaries have been annihilated by the Hungarian people, thanks to the aid of the Soviet army. The warm mutual aid of brother countries to Hungary is a big slap in the face of Eisenhower and his clique.

The aforesaid omens provide an important lesson: The struggle for the democratization of socialism is a long-term, hard struggle against the backward, conservative ideas of the former leadership, and against the destructive maneuvers of the enemy, but this struggle will be certainly victorious, and will certainly build up a beautiful regime giving satisfaction to the material and spiritual demands of man.

After its fever, communism will grow stronger and socialism will develop even more. We have every reason to have confidence, and to be encouraged in pooling all our efforts to help the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party of Vietnam struggle against all the social vices, and against all the destructive maneuvers, to complete the mistakes correction and to transform the North into a really democratic, strong and stable region which can be used as the core of our struggle for national reunification.

Glorious pages of history are now being written!

Hanoi Nhan Van, November 20

« Documents for Learning or for Betting », Satire by But Chi

Recently I leafed through a set of documents used for teaching economic politics in a political class. I was thunderstruck by reading it. Lord! What strange documents! The ideas are obscure, the style is miserable, and all the examples are taken from Chinese tales!

The term « Ky Nang Lao Dong » (a concoction of Chinese and Vietnamese which probably means « Workers' Technical Skills ») copied from the book, « History of the Soviet Communist Party » is incomprehensible. When I compared it with the French

text, I found the term translated as «Habitudes de Travail», and the Vietnamese translation made everything clear, with the simple «Thoi Quen Lam Viec» (incomprehensible again — Ed.) Lord, how simple!

There is also this sentence: «For example, in our country, if we do not sweep away the semi-feudalist, semi-colonial regime...» At first reading, it would appear that «our country» refers to Vietnam, and no one would guess that it actually means China!

But, even this is not as astonishing as those paragraphs are, giving a real headache to anyone who tries to understand it. I take the liberty here to excerpt, word for word, a typical paragraph, giving every single diacritical and punctuation mark.

(A paragraph of pseudo Vietnamese follows, most of it transliterated Chinese — Ed.)

There it is! These are documents for study! Anyone who cannot understand it is no scholar! To say will please the committee in charge of the political study class, but will dishearten the whole nation of Vietnam.

Hanoi Nhan Van, November 20

«There Is No Reason for Disapproving the One-Hundred Flowers Policy».

(Is the One-Hundred Flowers doctrine only for the strong, like China, or may the weak, like Vietnam, share it. The problem is not whether the regime is strong or weak, but what kind of regime it is. Is it just that because a man writes he must be less free than a simple citizen? Must his world be in monotone?)

Let us look directly at reality. We should think it over for a while and see that life is multi-colored. Each man has his own qualities and defects, and there are as many dreams as there are men. Beside soft, gentle men, there are hard, violent ones. Some are like Buddhas, others like Truong Phi (an irascible personage from the literature of the Three Kingdoms

period in China—Ed), On the road to socialism, millions on millions of people walk together, bringing with them many hues of soul, hope, dreams and thought. The creative work of socialism is the collective achievement of the diversified masses.

Arts and letters reflect multi-colored reality. There is no reason why reality should have only one color! There is good and bad weather in life. There is no reason why, in arts and letters, there must be exclusively good weather, or exclusively bad weather. Is it possible that the varied ways of weeping and smiling must definitely become one, and that there should be only one way of weeping, and only one way of smiling? Should it be that millions on millions of hopes, dreams and thoughts have only one pattern? Man (including workers and cadres), besides his routine life, has the right to dream, to show joy and sadness, to be angry, to work and to make sacrifices. Is it reasonable in arts and letters that he must lose the many rights of man, merely to keep the right to work, and to make sacrifices according to a definite line?

Is it just that a writer, because he writes, must have his citizenship rights limited to the point where he is not as when he was only a simple citizen? Is it reasonable that the world of artists and writers should be different from the real world, that the outside world be multi-colored, while the world of artists and writers is a monotone?

No! It is really unreasonable. The world of artists and writers must be as multi-colored as life. Artistic creation cannot accept any formalism, even though this is made of gold and diamonds. Creation demands the development of many trends, many lines, many schools. The nature of arts and letters demands the «blooming of one-hundred flowers».

To lead, the artistic and literary leadership must comply with the nature of arts and letters. The leadership must be adaptable to the the nature of the one-hundred-flowers of arts and letters. It must be carried out in such a way that arts and letters become as prosperous and rich as the real world. It must have many different trends, groups and schools.

Leadership must be performed in such a way that artists feel the happiness of being leaders. Those who create something

for the arts and letters should have guarantees. They must not be oppressed by the majority, their opinions must be taken into account, even if they are shared by only a very small minority. They must not be subject to preconceptions, causing them to make mistakes. They must have freedom to justify their innocence. They must be helped in the popularization of their work, which must be submitted for criticism by the people. They must be assured that their works will not be «tortured» by the administrative regulations. Leadership should be a paradise of intelligence, and of artistic literature.

Only by this leadership can literary and artistic creation be developed, all talent exploited, making the arts and letters more prosperous. Only in such a way can arts become an indomitable force to fight the enemy, to destroy the old and to build up the new, in short, to become a very powerful arm of the regime. So far, the leadership has not done so. There have been diseases of the leadership — the most serious one, totalitarian subjectivism, has given rise to the conflict between the policies of «A Few Flowers Blossoming Separately» and the «One-Hundred Blossoming Flowers» theory in arts and letters.

Of course, the consequence of this is the restriction of talent and the reduction of the utility of arts and letters. Thus, a series of literary and artistic subjects has died, such as still life, landscape, love and other categories. A series of artistic forms has died, such as, for example, humor, polemics, dramatic poetry — to the point that one now comes to the popular misconception that a man «specialized in criticizing others» is not patriotic and not so useful as a man «specializing in praising others».

How poor the arts and letters are! The people have had enough of this «One-Flower Blossoming» policy. This is the absolute end for the leadership line of «One, or Some Flowers Blossoming separately.»

There is the problem: Should our country admit the «One-Hundred-Flowers Blossoming» policy or not?

Some say: The situation of China is different from ours. In China the regime is strong in every point of view. In arts and letters alone, China is already very strong, thanks to its success-

ful struggle against Ho Shih and Ho Fong (two writers), and therefore the «One-Hundred-Flowers Blossoming» policy can be applied. On the contrary, our country does not yet meet requirements on this point.

Such reasoning is no different from saying that the «One Hundred-Flowers-Blossoming» policy depends on a strong regime. I am afraid that this is not a fundamental principle of the «One-Hundred Flowers-Blossoming» policy. The policy cannot be applied only when the regime is strong, and never when it is weak.

If we are weak, what methods and policies shall we use to contain the «Blossoming of one Flower» policy, to forestall concentrating only on the «flowers» of subjectivism, which are nice-smelling. It is feared that this process will pave the way for limitations, prohibitions and other measures. That is to say, to avoid the future resurrection of the vices of subjectivism and dictatorship, which have been condemned.

One hears: There can be «One-Hundred-Flowers» only when the regime is strong, and no «One-Hundred-Flowers» if it is weak. This may mean that the «One Hundred Flowers» policy is bad, or dangerous. If the «One Hundred Flowers» is adopted when the regime is weak, then the «One Hundred Flowers» will cause more weakness. And, if a strong regime adopts «One Hundred Flowers,» it will be the weaker because of it, according to this reasoning.

It is really unreasonable. There is no reason why we should devise a policy to make ourselves weaker. It is obvious that the theory which holds that there can be «One Hundred Flowers» only when one is strong has become ridiculous. This theory reluctantly ascribes to the «One Hundred Flowers» a destructive significance. Maybe it is due to the fear that under it «Harmless flowers» are mixed with «harmful flowers». This may be correct, but at present there are neither «harmless» flowers, nor «harmful» ones. There are no flowers at all!

One sided formalism is very ideological. One blindly cries that life is beautiful, that everything is good. One blindfolds the party and the people. One deepens the ditch in which vice flourishes.

This process mystifies the people when it says: «The law of contradictions is now suspended». Whether this «flower» is harmful or not, the people have had enough of it.

If one does not apply the «One Hundred Flowers» policy, and one does not allow people speak frankly, then one continues to maintain the bad smelling «flower» of dictatorship... Consequently, one had better adopt the «One Hundred Flowers» policy. Of course there will be harmless flowers, as well as harmful ones, nice-smelling ones as well as bad smelling ones.

But these flowers will be competing with one another, destroying each other. The people will make their choice, and they have enough power to supervise. The harmless or harmful nature of «flowers» is not decided by either you or me, nor is it decided in one day, or one hour. Nor is it immutable. The decision depends on the people, and on history. It is necessary to be aware of the constructive work of the «One Hundred Flowers» policy toward the regime. One must realize that if there are really one hundred flowers in arts and letters, society is more completely reflected by it. The dreams, hopes and artistic and literary level of the masses will be more clearly seen. The spirit of sacrifice of the masses, and at the same time the remaining shortcomings, will be more obviously defined. The truth will be more and more perfectly revealed. The right of the party, the government and the people to know the truth will be more completely fulfilled. The flatterers, as well as all the robbers of the regime will be more justly punished. Every policy of the government will be more faithfully promulgated. For this reason, correction will be more adequate. It will quicken the consolidation of the North and the peaceful conquest of the South.

Should the «One Hundred Flowers» policy be maintained, or suppressed? The problem is not whether the regime is strong or weak, but, what kind of regime is involved?

In olden times, Emperor Chin Sze Hoang ordered the burning of books. Under the feudal regime, he who spoke of Confucius and Mencius was considered to be an enemy. Under a bourgeois regime, freedom is loudly trumpeted; but everybody knows that the American government fears communism, from Walt.

Disney's mouse to Charlie Chaplin's smile. These regimes fear freedom. They fear the «One Hundred Flowers» policy, because their dishonest nature fears truth, intelligence and reason.

...Should we fear that the enemy will take advantage of it? We should, but not to the point where we must prevent the «One Hundred Flowers Blossoming» policy, because this is just as if we feared the enemy to the point of harming ourselves.

...Really, there is no reason for us to disapprove the «One Hundred Flowers Blossoming» policy.

Hanoi Nhan Van, November 20

«The Disciplinary Measures Against Nhan Van by the Central Press Bureau Are Illegal».

(Refutation of the charges against the paper as set forth in the communique printed in the Hanoi Thoi Moi of November 10.)

Judicial documents on book deposits—excerpts from decree number 18 dated January 31, 1946:

Chapter Five : Sanctions. Article 13—If a printer, an editor or a publisher does not send his literary work to the Deposit Office, or does not send a sufficient quantity of his work, as specified in Articles 4, 8 and 10, the Deposit Office will send him a registered letter to this effect; and in case of failure to obtain satisfaction within one month, the office will have the right to buy up the required number of published material, the charges for which will be borne by the printer, editor or publisher in question.

After the purchase and acknowledgement of the material purchase, the Deposit Office will send invoices to the printer, editor or publisher for payment. If the latter refuses to pay, the Tribunal will take charge of the matter according to law.

New regulations on the deposit of literary material: At present, there is not any regulation requiring publishers and newspapers to send to the government organization charged with deposit responsibility any prescribed quantity of their literary production. (Exception: the 1956 regulations of the Ministry of

National Education, relative to the deposit of literary works at the Central Library). To correct this situation, the following has been decided:

One — each time a journalist or a publisher (including groups and individuals) publishes a newspaper or a book (including cartoons and pictures) he must send a number of copies to the following government services: (a) The Press Office (Ministry of Propaganda), three copies of each issue of the newspaper, two of each book; (b) The local cultural organization, one copy of each issue; (c) Regulations requiring deposits of books at the Central Library (in Hanoi — Ed.) remain unchanged.

Journalists and publishers do not have to send their newspapers or literary work to organizations other than the aforementioned. Any other service or organization requiring these printed documents must buy them.

Two — guidance and aid for the application of these regulations will be assumed by the Press Office (of the Ministry of Propaganda). In places situated far from the central government, the Press Office may request the Ministry of Propaganda to delegate the regional cultural propaganda services to perform this task. — April 15, 1955.

We have made an analysis of the legality of the disciplinary measures taken by the Central Press Bureau against Nhan Van in this article, and we have clearly proved, with facts and documents, that:

One — the communique from the Central Press Bureau saying that we have violated Decree Number 18, dated January 31, 1946, is contrary to the truth. We have complied exactly with this decree, sending to the Central Library eight copies of our issue number four, immediately after its publication.

Two — the supplementary regulations of the Propaganda Ministry, dated April 15, 1955, which we did not apply (regarding our delay in sending three copies of our issue Number Four to the Central Press Bureau) absolutely does not contain any clause providing punishment for a journalist or a publisher who commits a mistake; nor does it contain any clause allowing the Central Press Bureau to enforce disciplinary steps through a warning, a publication of the warning in the press, or any other form.

Three—the second paragraph of the supplementary regulation entrusts to the Central Press Bureau the responsibility of helping and guiding journalists, publishers and editors in the application of the deposit laws, but since the appearance of Nhan Van, so far the Central Press Bureau has not even once attempted fulfill this mission toward Nhan Van.

Four—in just one morning, the Central Press Bureau successively sent three urgent, official letters to summon Mr. Tran Duy—we announced that Tran Duy was busy, and to the Press Bureau accused him of being disrespectful to the authorities—which proves that the Central Press Bureau had no real reason to summon him in the first place.

Five—the Central Press Bureau wrote down on his report the following sentence, which is not just: «Mr. Tran Duy has acknowledged the above-mentioned warning, and has proposed the publication of this fact in all the Hanoi daily press, so as to extol the law of the government.» It did this only to gain an excuse for issuing a communique exaggerating the issue, and for an excuse to publish this in every Hanoi daily.

This is an act contrary to the agreement in question. The true facts are that Mr. Tran Duy only agreed (not «proposed») that he himself would write an article admitting the mistakes committed, (and not that the Central Press Bureau should issue a communique) and that this article would be published in Nhan Van alone, and not in all the dailies.

Moreover, we have also dealt with many problems of principle and judicial procedure, which the Central Press Bureau ignored, or had no respect for.

The Premier's office ordered Mr. Tran Duy, acting director of Nhan Van, to report on November 21, 1956, at 4:30 p.m., to discuss settlement of disciplinary measures taken by the Central Press Bureau against his paper.

The representative of the Premier's office, Mr. Tran Duy and the director of the Central Press Bureau came to the conclusion that this affair, due to its hastiness, was not reasonable. In a spirit of mutual concession, unity and cordiality, Mr. Tran Duy, in the name of all the collaborator comrades of Nhan Van, considered this affair a mistake of the Central Press Bureau, and since

the mistake had been adequately corrected by the Premier, he withdrew his protest.

At 9 p.m. on the same day, we received a document from the Premier's office about the matter. Although this page was about to be printed, we used every possible means to negotiate with our printing house and our printer comrades for withdrawing a four-column article and replacing it with this summary of the illegal application of disciplinary measure in question, so as to avoid a misunderstanding by the public at the expense of the Central Press Bureau. We only retained two main texts, to help our readers better understand the issue.

Below is the full text of the document from the Premier's office :

Announcement of the office of the Premier :

Regarding the application of disciplinary measures against Nhan Van by the Central Press Bureau, relative to the question of book deposit: « Upon acknowledgement of the letter from Mr. Tran Duy, acting director of the Nhan Van paper, to the Premier's office, concerning the application of disciplinary measures brought against it, Mr. Phan My, director of Cabinet of the Premier's Office, by order of the President of the Council of the Government, invited Mr. Tran Duy to call at the Premier's office for a conversation, which was also attended by Mr. Tran Minh Tuoc, director of the Central Press Bureau.

« After study of the documents, and exchange of views with Mr. Tran Duy and Mr. Tran Minh Tuoc, the cabinet of the Premier's office ascertained :

• One—in the execution of regulations on book deposit, Nhan Van committed mistakes.

Two—the guidance of the press by the Central Press Bureau, relative to criticism and warning for the proper execution of government regulations are correct. But, in this case, such a step is not necessary, since the mistake committed is not serious and the publication of this incident in the newspapers would be disadvantageous.

Mr. Tran Duy and Mr. Tran Minh Tuoc ascertained that the judgement of the cabinet of the Premier's office is correct.

Nhan Van editor's note (in small, italicized print — Ed.) †

We praise the efforts of mediating of the Premier's office, and we hope that they will be continued, so as to consolidate the good relations between the authorities and the people.

Nhan Van, November 20

Letter to the Editor

...One more problem is the freedom of the press. Our party and our government have decided very correctly many measures relative to the freedom of publication and the press.

In our opinion, all papers are put on the same basis of equality in their relationship with the authority. That the people have sympathy, or like to read this or that newspaper, depends on themselves alone. Just as the people, the cadres, and the party members are the most intimate friends of Nhan Dan, because this paper is an organ which popularizes the policy of the party and the government in a correct and satisfactory way.

One should not adopt a discriminatory attitude in the supply of newsprint to different newspapers. Nor should one urge a printing house, or a distribution organization not to work for this or that paper. These gestures are not advantageous, but only lead to an impasse in relations, worries and bad feelings. We understand that this is a mistake of some organs and individuals, and should absolutely not be the party line.

We hope that our friends in cultural circles, including those in the permanent committee of the Association of Arts and Literature, who are the most eager for literary and artist works, will sincerely try to understand us better...

(Signed) X.M. and L.N., cadres of Interzone IV.