

B106  
 FILE SUBJ.  
 DATE SUB-CAT.  
 MAY 69  
 HS Nham Hieu

## The Story of a Vietnamese Rebel

V N P. 1

By TOM WICKER

SAIGON, South Vietnam—Ho Nham Hieu is a thirty-year-old Vietnamese who has spent much of the last 15 years either agitating against various South Vietnamese governments or in jail for political action. Small and wiry, quick to smile, capable of halting English, Hieu has hard brown eyes and a stubborn determination to keep on struggling for the kind of Vietnam he believes in.

In 1955, as a teen-ager in Hue, he joined a "peace movement" advocating the holding of the all-Vietnamese elections scheduled for 1956 by the Geneva accords of 1954. For that, the Diem regime gave him six months in jail.

### Sentenced Again

By 1957, Hieu became involved with a "popular high school" in Hue, which he describes as having to do with "folk culture" but which the Diemists considered political. In 1959, that involvement brought him two jail sentences, one of three months, one of five months.

In 1963, Hieu was one of the leaders in Nhatrang of something called the United Front of Students and Pupils, agitating

against Ngo Dinh Diem. He was arrested again but before he could be jailed Diem was overthrown and all political prisoners were released.

The various governments that followed looked little, if any, better to Hieu. In 1964, as a student at Dalat University, he became the president of a Struggle Force of Students and Pupils against the short-lived regime of Tran Van Huong. He escaped arrest but the publication of the group was suspended by the Government after three issues.

### Dalat Uprising

In March, 1966, when Nguyen Cao Ky was in power in Saigon, Hieu was the "press and planning commissar" for the Dalat University Struggle and Hold Force of People, Students and Pupils for Democracy. This group took over the Dalat city administration and held it for about two months, running the city more or less adequately and setting up a self-defense force to fight off the police.

This is still considered one of the most successful popular uprisings of modern Vietnam, and was all the more remarkable because, although mainly Buddhist, a number of Catholic

students were among its leaders, and one of them, Ho Quang Nhut, was its president. Ky finally flew in troops from Saigon and ousted the Struggle and Hold Force in June, 1966.

### Hard Days in Jail

Hieu fled to Saigon, hid out, went back to Dalat, was arrested in October, 1966, and held without charges for three months. He seized this opportunity to lead a revolt against brutal prison conditions, for which he received some severe beatings and a year's sentence at a trial he was not allowed to attend.

He served forty days in Chihoa prison at Saigon before being transferred to Conson Island prison in February, 1967. There he led a protest against poor medical treatment, for which six months were added to his sentence. At Conson, known as the University of Ho Chi Minh for its effect on young Vietnamese prisoners, Hieu lived with 150 men in one small room, ate fish paste, shrimp paste and soy oil, and put in his days at hard labor, hauling and chopping wood.

He also spent a month in solitary, shackled to an iron bar in the "tiger cage," a cell

with a barred roof open to the equatorial sun.

Taken back to Chihoa in November, 1968, under the Thieu regime, Hieu was ordered to sign papers inducting him into the South Vietnamese army. He refused, was taken to Covap military prison, and although even the prosecutor recommended his freedom, was sentenced to another year by a military tribunal. But Hieu smuggled out a letter to students urging South Vietnamese self-determination and a coalition with the National Liberation Front. Copies were discovered, and he was beaten after a kangaroo trial in Covap.

### Fugitive Nationalist

Recently, Hieu was taken to Chihoa and again ordered to enter the army. He again refused. On May 8, he was paroled for two months, at the end of which time he must either return to Covap prison or enter the army. He aims to do neither but will become a fugitive.

Through it all, Hieu has remained an avowed nationalist, favoring Vietnamese independence and democracy. He is not a pacifist. "If as in the ancient days the Chinese invaded my country," he says, "I would fight them."

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Thursday, May 22, 1969