

# People and Events

## The Abortive Demonstrator

On the morning of August 20, 1960, the Vietnamese Police intercepted two motor-cycles in a main Saigon intersection. On board the vehicles they found furled banners of the outlawed Vietnamese Kuomintang Party (V. N. Quoc Dan Dang). The Police had just been tipped that opposition elements were about to stage a gigantic demonstration against the government of Ngo Dinh Diem.

The following evening agents of Diem's secret police knocked at the door of the house of one of the presumed leaders of the abortive demonstration. But Mr. Phan Khoang resisted arrest. The following morning Khoang went into hiding.

Khoang's flight, however, was short-lived. While attempting to visit his family a year later, Diem's secret police pounced upon him. Taken first to the Security Directorate compound on Vo Tanh street, he was subjected to intensive torture.

Things became even worse for prisoner Khoang following the February 20, 1962 bombing of the Independence Palace. His son, Lt. Phan Ngo was involved in that incident.

During the Buddhist crisis, Khoang was moved to a secret prison at the suburban quarter of Phu Lam until he was released on November 7, after the Revolution.

This was not the first time he was in jail, Khoang, now First Vice Chairman of the Council of Notables, reminisces. In 1954, the Reds locked him in, and only released him when he was invited to attend the Viet-Minh-sponsored cultural Congress in Hanoi. The veteran politician, father

of eight, who is also an author of two famous books on China and Viet Nam, says that the Military Revolutionary Council is unlike other military junta rulers because it shares the rule of the country with the civilian provisional government.



Mr. Phan Khoang

About the Council Notables, Khoang says that the MRC made a fairly good choice, since most of the members of the Council are capable and honest men. The only controversial choice, he says, was the naming of Tran Trung Dung partly due to the simple fact that he was a nephew in law of the late Ngo Dinh Diem.

Khoang is also a teacher of Vietnamese language and history. Among former pupils: the late Capt. Ho Tan Quyen, ill-fated Vietnamese Navy commander who died during the Revolution.

Khoang's philosophy of life: "Moral wealth cannot be compared to material prosperity."

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1164 Ho Tan Quyen