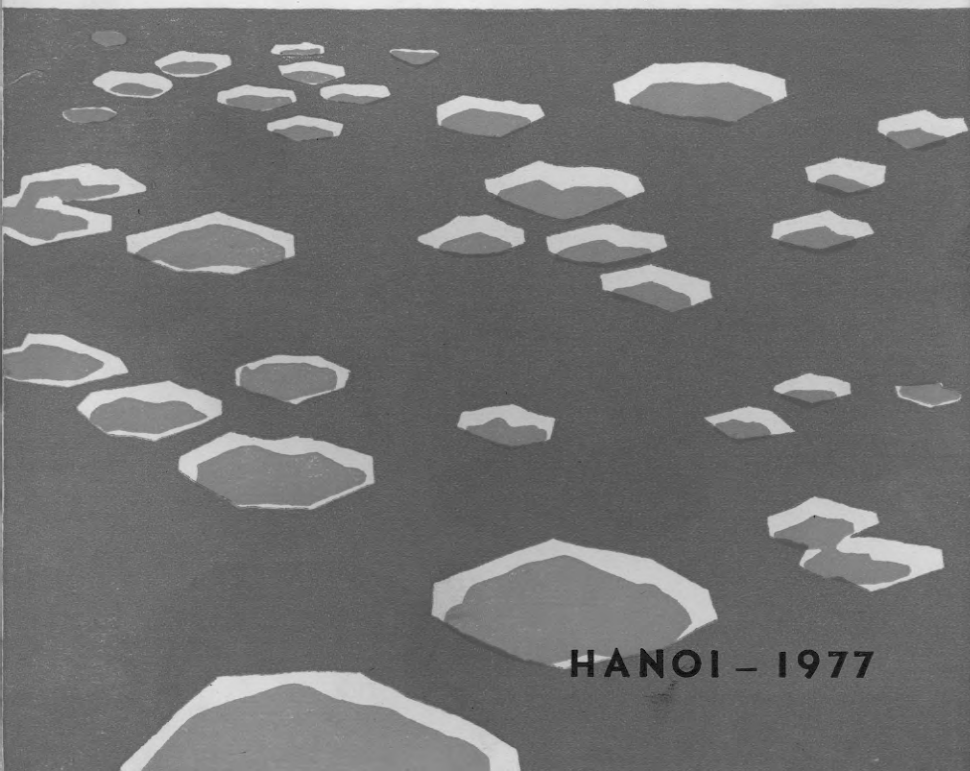


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1977

Viet Nam

DESTRUCTION WAR DAMAGE



HANOI - 1977

VIET NAM
Destruction
War Damage

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE
HANOI — 1977

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PART ONE

GENOCIDE — ETHNOCIDE — ECOCIDE

VIET NAM DESTRUCTION — WAR DAMAGE

1. What is the extent of the destruction and damage caused by the war in Viet Nam ?

It is impossible to draw up a correct and detailed balance-sheet of all the damage, at least for the moment, because of the complex nature of much of it and because the war lasted so long.

We must remember that Viet Nam was in a continual state of war from 1939 until 1975, and its territory was invaded by large numbers of foreign troops during these 35 years — French-Japanese troops, Tchang Kai-shek troops, US troops, Australian troops, New-Zealand troops, Thai troops, South Korean troops, and Philippino troops — that all kinds of weapons, short of nuclear weapons, have been used in Viet Nam, and that in a war with no delineated frontier no area was spared, and the most out-of-the-way hamlets were hit by an omnipresent and fierce US Air force. Apart from the damage and casualties caused by bombs, shells and toxic chemicals, there are the uncountable

consequences of a neo-colonialist intervention which baulked at nothing to provoke the social upheavals which have rudely and thoroughly shaken the social fabric of a whole people.

We can cite the example of some villages around Da Nang which witnessed the landing of US marines in March 1965. From 1954 to 1965 — not to mention the years of the resistance against the French — these villages were the victims of a series of massacres and of repeated mopping-up operations conducted by Diem troops and police. They were subsequently the targets of concerted attacks by US-puppet troops, of systematic bombardment by the US Air force and the artillery, of Phoenix operations from 1965 to 1975. It is impossible to estimate the number of victims, the amount of damage inflicted on the population, crops, schools and so on.

Take the example of Vinh, a town destroyed during the first war of resistance, subsequently levelled by American bombs between 1965 and 1968, and again reduced to rubble in 1972 soon after its reconstruction: how is one to sum up the ruins caused by those successive trials?

Pending a complete account of the destruction and damage caused by the war, we try to give the reader a picture, though innaccurate, to help him understand the problem. We hope to be able to provide detailed data later on.

2. While the figure of 150 billion US dollars has been officially admitted by the US administration,

the cost of the Indochina war, according to other American sources, amounts to at least 300 billion US dollars.

What these figures show is, on the one hand, the great determination of Washington men to quell the resistance of the Vietnamese people, and on the other, the extent of the sacrifices our people are ready to make to defend their independence and freedom. Washington's fierce determination can only be explained by the US global strategy since the 1960s which is aimed at stemming national-liberation movements, at preventing formerly colonised people from taking the path to socialist development: Viet Nam, as the vanguard of this world movement had to be crushed at any cost. Washington had to show to the world that the people's war, the guerilla and the whole revolutionary movement, for all the human qualities of the fighters and the organisational capacity of their leaders are powerless in face of the US advanced technology and wealth. Any attempt to resist Yankee imperialism must be deterred.

The people's revolutionary forces, the political and armed forces in South Viet Nam had to be crushed with weapons and repression; the remaining population had to be conditioned by terror, corruption and depravation and turned into mercenaries and agents. Everything that had been built in North Viet Nam in the name of socialism had to be destroyed. Those were the objectives.

With their vast technical and financial power the Americans went out of their way to attain their goal. A triple deluge flooded Viet Nam, North and

South, for years on end: the most sophisticated lethal weapons, large sums of US dollars to subvert a great part of the population, and large-scale use of means of ideological and cultural perversion and poisoning.

The US intelligence service was fully mobilized for the purpose. Besides US army research centres, many university laboratories and services were requisitioned to find out the best way of killing, destroying and corrupting.

These research centres made use of 260 university services, 40 per cent of all physicists; and there were as many as 22,000 enterprises employing 5.6 million workers working for the war.

A large number of laboratories were used entirely for the study of counter-insurgency problems:

- LWL : The Limited War Laboratory
- SGC : The Special Group for Counter
Insurgency
- ADTC : The Armament Development and
Test Center
- ARPA : The Advanced Research Projects
Agency
- CDC : The Combat Development Command
- USARIEM: The US Army Institute for Re-
search of Environmental Medicine
- ESL : The Earth Sciences Laboratory
- RNEE : The Research Network on Environ-
mental Extremes.

3. At the height of the war, 75 per cent of all US land forces, 60 per cent of the US air force and 40 per cent of the US naval force were involved in Indochina. Special mention must be made of the particular role of the special forces, the "Green Berets" trained for counter-guerilla activities, the British and French experts on colonial war, of whom the most typical is Robert Thompson, the "pacifier" of Malaya.

In 1969 the US expeditionary force comprised:

- 11 infantry divisions
- 73,000 air personnel
- 87,000 naval personnel

that is an effective of 543,000 men.

It was re-inforced by:

- 42,000 South Korean troops
- 8,000 Australian troops
- 2,000 Philipinos
- 300 New-Zealanders
- 11,000 Thai troops.

The puppet army had a total effective of

1,200,000 men

and the puppet police,

200,000 men.

4. The weapons used were more powerful and "sophisticated" than those used in previous wars. Special mention must be made of the following:

- B-52 strategic bombers capable of carrying 30 tons of bombs were used for saturation bombing which destroy everything in one area of 2400m by 800m.

— The large variety of bombs of all calibres ranging in size from 50 kg to 7 tons; and the CBU, SUU, BLU bombs...

— The anti-personnel devices, typical of which is the fragmentation bomb whose pellets can kill or injure a large number of people. (Elaborate studies were made to perfect these devices and ensure greater efficiency).

— The massive use of land and naval artillery against villages (the amount of shells being equivalent to that of bombs dropped by planes).

The total weight of bombs and shells reached 14,5 million tons, that is 7 times the weight of bombs dropped on all theatres of war during the Second World War, and 22 times that used during the Korean war.

— Indiscriminate bombings especially those carried out by B-52s were aimed at terrorizing the population while industrial targets and bridges were bombed by more accurate laser-guided bombs.

"Rebel" villages were occupied and razed by huge bulldozers (Rome ploughs).

5. For the first time in the history of mankind chemical warfare has been conducted on a large scale. Apart from napalm and phosphorous which cause terrible fires and burns, the chemicals used are mostly defoliants.

71,230,000 litres of chemical compounds of the three agents, Orange (2,4-D and 2,4,5-T), White (2,4D and Picloram) and Blue (cacodylic acid), have been used most.

By causing the leaves to fall and, consequently, the death of trees and plants, this massive defoliation has denuded vast expanses of land which are subsequently lashed by intense tropical rains. This intensive erosion destroys fertile soil for ever. And it will take us from 30 to 50 years to regenerate this soil.

The massive spraying of chemicals has also caused the death of birds, insects and fish. By destroying the fauna and flora on vast expanses of land the Americans have committed ecocide.

The people in those areas have all been affected by the toxic chemicals to some extent, and in many cases very seriously. What is more serious is the presence of a substance called dioxin in these defoliants, a poison, even in doses of micrograms (one millionth of one gram); the dioxin stays in the soil for quite a long time, and contaminates spring water, river water and sea water. As it is a carcinogen, those who are affected by it, either directly or indirectly, by drinking contaminated water or eating contaminated shrimps and fish, run the risk of serious genetic consequences like congenital malformations and cancer, and not necessarily immediately: some of the consequences may not become evident for some time. Chromosomal alterations have been found in children whose mothers have been victims of defoliants. The accident which occurred a short time ago in Milan (Italy) testified to the role of the extremely dangerous substance, dioxin.

6. US weapons continue to cause many casualties among the Vietnamese long after the war is over.

It is estimated that the amount of unexploded mines, bombs and shells might reach at least 150,000 tons; some give the figure 300,000. As those bombs and mines may explode at any time, there are peasants, walkers and children killed or injured every day when they accidentally trample on a mine or a shell. Every hectare of ground must be sifted, square metre by square metre, devices must be detected, then carefully defused. It is a painstaking and dangerous work. In Quang Tri province alone, the number of casualties exceeds one hundred in the year after liberation.

Experience after the two World wars shows that these devices might continue to inflict casualties for dozens of years to come. The American technicians have elaborately covered these devices with a layer of plastic to make detection by ordinary methods impossible. Many bombs dropped from a very high altitude dug their way from 10 to 15 metres underground, and it is very difficult to detect them.

7. Both the war and the repression by police and para-military forces, real white terror, makes up the second strategic aspect of neo-colonialist policy. The aim was to completely eliminate the political infrastructure, that is the cadres, fighters, and those who sympathized with the national revolutionary movement; to terrorize the population and force them not only to kowtow to, but also to join counter-revolutionary organizations and work for the machinery of repression. Pacification operations ranged from sheer assassinations of suspects to repeated round-ups in a village or a sector, to concerted

sweeps conducted by regular troops and units of special police. Opponents or suspects were either killed on the spot, individually or en masse, or taken away and put in prison where they are subject to the most cruel tortures. There was no let up in these operation from 1954 to 1975. Given the large scale and the duration of the operations, it is difficult to estimate the number of victims, killed or crippled.

The maintenance, training and equipment of policemen and the building of prisons was financed by Washington and controlled through the numerous US advisers who were present in all police and pacification services.

This aspect of the war should not be ignored, for Vietnamese families not only have many members killed or injured by American weapons, they also have many members who have spent long years in prison; and most of these have been made invalids.

8) Apart from destruction and death, American intervention has caused social upheavals on a scale unknown in any previous war. The revolutionary war in Asia is essentially waged by peasants, argues Professor Huntington; and he concludes: let us turn them into city-dwellers and urbanise them. The advice has been followed by Washington leaders. Day and night, planes, helicopters and long-range guns bombarded the villages and crops were doused with chemicals. Life was thus made impossible for millions of peasants who had to leave their villages for the cities or regroupment centres under US control. The US Senate refugee sub-committee

estimates that 10 million of rural population had to leave the countryside.

In 1960, the rural population accounted for 85 per cent of the whole population; in 1975, 35 per cent. The non-rural population has thus risen to 65 per cent (cities and regroupment centres), a fantastic figure for a country with only limited industrialization.

The US High Command tried to kill two birds with one stone in this way: it deprived the Vietnamese resistance a large part of its human and material resources, while it recruited the number of necessary mercenaries and policemen among the masses of peasants who were forced to flee to the cities. With the Thieu army becoming stronger, American troops could gradually withdraw.

The social and human consequences of this "urbanization" policy are manifold: the traditional society has been shaken to its foundations, men and specially children reduced to living in the streets of the cities, and locked in regroupment centres. Little by little they lost all notion of moral values (unless organized in revolutionary structures). Billions of dollars were spent on goods to encourage consumption, profiteering and violence among people completely out of their proper element. Prostitution, drugs, gangsterism, trafficking, speculation, corruption and pornography have turned the cities and areas occupied by American troops into true "brothels" to use the word of Senator Fullbright,

into a real hell. Vast buildings and luxurious villas grew up cheek by jowl with shanty-towns, which are infested from time to time with epidemics of plague, cholera and typhoid fever. Vast Augean stables remain to be cleaned out after the collapse of the neo-colonialist regime.

PART TWO

PRELIMINARY BALANCE SHEET

SOUTH VIET NAM

1. *Losses in human lives.* Excerpt from the report by the US Senate Committee on the Judiciary, January 27, 1974.

CIVILIAN VICTIMS (1965-1973)

Year	Estimated number of casualties	Estimated number of deaths
1963	100,000	25,000
1966	150,000	50,000
1967	175,000	60,000
1968	300,000	100,000
1969	200,000	80,000
1970	125,000	30,000
1971	100,000	25,000
1972	200,000	65,000
1973	85,000	15,000
1974	Figures still not available	
Total: 1,435,000		430,000
(not including those who died in prisons)		

Note that the above figures are well below the real number of victims, for many people were killed or injured in villages subjected to US-puppet bombings and in which the US quislings never set foot.

In a detailed analysis ⁽¹⁾ made as early as in 1970, an American research worker estimated civilian losses in South Viet Nam to be 1 million killed and two million injured during the period 1961 to 1970.

2. War cripples (1965-1973)

Source: USAID ⁽²⁾

Official statistics of the Saigon puppet government of victims hospitalized up to the end of 1973 show:

		(Estimates)
— Amputatees	83,000	166,000
— Paraplegics	8,000	16,000
— Blind	30,000	60,000
— Deaf	10,000	20,000
— Otherwise affected	50,000	100,000
Total	181,000	362,000

Note that:

— the above figures are based on official statistics and include only those sent to hospital; whereas the great majority of victims who lived in remote hamlets, could not afford to go to hospital, and even in the cities war invalids, who have received no treatment, are a familiar scene in the streets.

— the number of people crippled by war ordnance has increased since April 1975 due to the fact that about 300,000 tons of unexploded bombs, shells, and mines still lie buried in the fields and forests.

(1) E. Z. Hermann: *Atrocities in Viet Nam. Myths and realities*. Pilgrim Press. Boston 1970.

(2) United States Agency for International Development.

3. Population Displacements (1965-1973)

(Source : Report by US Senate Committee on the Judiciary, January 27, 1974)

a) Refugees registered by USAID :

<u>Year</u>	
1965	772,000
1966	906,000
1967	463,000
1968	494,000
1969	590,000
1970	410,000
1971	136,000
1972	1,320,000
1973	818,000
Total :	<u>5,909,000</u>

b) Vietnamese expelled from Cambodia.	210,000
c) Estimated temporary displacement during the 1968 Têt offensive and 1968 May offensive.	1,650,000
d) Persons displaced in PRG-controlled areas and non-registered refugees during 1972 offensive.	700,000
e) Estimates of the number of non-registered refugees since 1964, including the one million whose names are not found in the refugee-register.	2,000,000
Total :	<u>10,469,700</u>

4. Material losses

— 9,000 of 15,000 hamlets damaged, a large number completely destroyed.

— 10 million hectares of rice-fields and crops destroyed or burnt.

— About one and a half million oxen and buffaloes killed.

— Tens of thousands of dwelling houses burned, ransacked, dismantled or destroyed (villages were often repeatedly razed)

— Half of the 10 million hectares of forest submitted to saturation bombing by B.52 bombers.

— Nearly two-thirds of the 280,000 hectares of mangrove and cajeput forest, two-thirds of the 75,000 hectares of rubber plantations and 50,000 hectares of coconut-trees destroyed.

— Loss of nearly 45 million cubic metres of timber with great potential commercial value ⁽¹⁾

— 10 per cent of the land contaminated by toxic chemicals and rendered sterile or in the process of lateritization.

— Land rendered useless for cultivation: 20 million bomb craters, equivalent to 140,000 hectares ⁽²⁾

5. Social consequences

— More than 800,000 orphans.

— About 1,000,000 widows

— Nearly half a million invalids

— More than 3 million unemployed

— 4 million illiterates

— More than 500,000 prostitutes

(1) Report by Professor Matthew Messelson of Harvard University published in 1970.

(2) Report by American Professor E. W. Pfeiffer of University of Montana to the International Conference on medicine and the Indochina war, Paris, December, 1971.

- Half a million drug addicts
- Nearly one million consumptives
- Millions of undernourished people.
- Not to mention other far-reaching consequences with regard to social and family relations, and the disastrous effects US neo-colonialism has had on the minds of the people and their way of life during those decades.
- Hundreds of thousands of hooligans, juvenile delinquents and beggars.

NORTH VIET NAM

1. Populated areas damaged by American bombing raids (1964-1973)

Kinds of damaged populated area	Number	Remarks
Cities or towns	6	All the 6 most important cities have been bombed, 3 of them completely razed (for international reasons, Hanoi has been the least damaged, whereas its outskirts and the other cities must be completely rebuilt.)
Provincial capitals	29	29 provincial capitals have been bombed, 12 of them razed.
District capitals	96	96 of 116 district capitals have been bombed, 51 of them razed
Villages	4,000	About two-thirds of all villages in North Viet Nam damaged, 300 razed.

With a view to bombing North Viet Nam back into the Stone Age, the Americans poured more than 2.5 million tons of bombs on to the country, more than the weight of bombs dropped during the Second World War (2,057,244 tons), and four times as much as that of the Korean war (635,000 tons).

They destroyed 12 million square metres of brick houses and hundreds of thousands of straw-roofed houses, killed hundreds of thousands of civilians ⁽¹⁾, orphaned about 700,000 children and rendered tens of thousands of children deaf and dumb.

From 1954 to 1965, North Viet Nam succeeded in building up many industrial centres (Viet Tri, Thai Nguyen, Quang Ninh mining area, Vinh, Haiphong, Nam Dinh). All these were damaged between 1965 and 1968. Rebuilt from 1969 to 1972, they were again almost entirely demolished by American bombs, and everything had to be built up again from zero at the beginning of 1973.

2. Economic and socio-cultural damage:

US bombing raids have:

In agriculture — destroyed hundreds of thousands of hectares of rice-fields and gardens.

— killed about 40,000 oxen and buffaloes,

— damaged 68 of 70 State farms, more than 1,600 water conservancy works, 8 State forestry enterprises, 48 agronomic research stations, razed hundreds of fishermen's villages along the coast, demolished more than 1,000 important sectors in the dyke system.

In industry — followed the advice given by the US former Air Force Chief of Staff, General Curtis Le May, "to destroy every factory, every industrial base and not to stop as long as two bricks are stuck together".

(1) Report by the US Senate Committee on the Judiciary, January 27, 1974.

— destroyed about 400 industrial installations as well as hundreds of warehouses with hundreds of thousands of tons of material, equipment, goods (The Thai Nguyen Steel plant, in particular, was bombed 70 times by US planes, including B.52 bombers)

— damaged all electric power installations.

Communications and transport

— damaged all 6 railway lines, all the railway stations, store-houses, all the river and sea ports, all the railway and road bridges. The Ham Rong bridge (Thanh Hoa) in particular, was the target of 300 waves of air and naval attacks, in which 22,000 large-calibre bombs, 2,000 missiles, 4,000 rockets and hundreds of torpedoes were used ;

— destroyed hundreds of locomotives, more than 4,000 carriages, 4,500 motor vehicles of all kinds, 400 kilometres of railroad, thousands of kilometres of road, tens of thousands of motor-boats, launches and barges, etc...

On the socio-cultural field

— damaged 2,923 schools (both general education and higher education establishments) ;

— destroyed 465 pagodas and temples, 484 churches, 808 cultural monuments, including more than 100 places of historic interest.

— damaged 350 hospitals, destroyed 1,500 infirmaries and maternity hospitals (medical research centres such as the Bach Mai hospital, Viet Nam-Soviet Union Friendship hospital, Viet Nam-China Friendship hospital, Viet Nam-Czechoslovakia Friendship hospital, Viet Nam-Hungary Friendship

hospital, Viet Nam-Poland Friendship hospital, have been bombed. Bach Mai Hospital was attacked by B-52 bombers and the Quynh Lap Leprosy Research Centre with 2500 beds was completely destroyed.

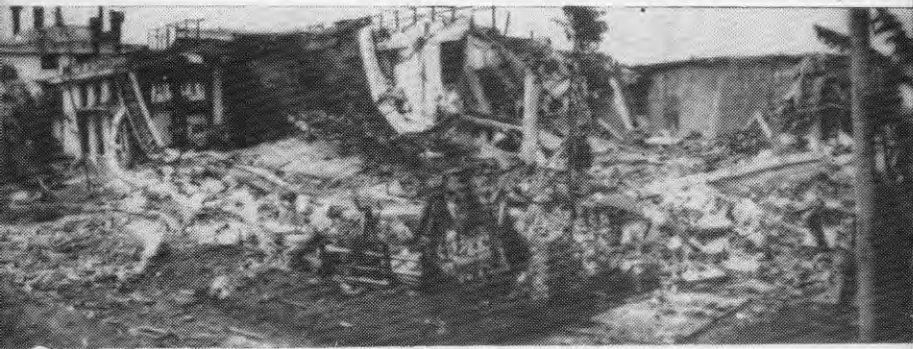
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There are at least 15 million people who have been directly affected by US intervention, if we include the dead, wounded, crippled and those whose homes, villages, and districts have been destroyed. All the towns and cities in the North and two-thirds of the villages all over the country have been destroyed or damaged. How can we evaluate the additional consequences of social upheavals, corruption, depravation, venereal disease and juvenile delinquency?

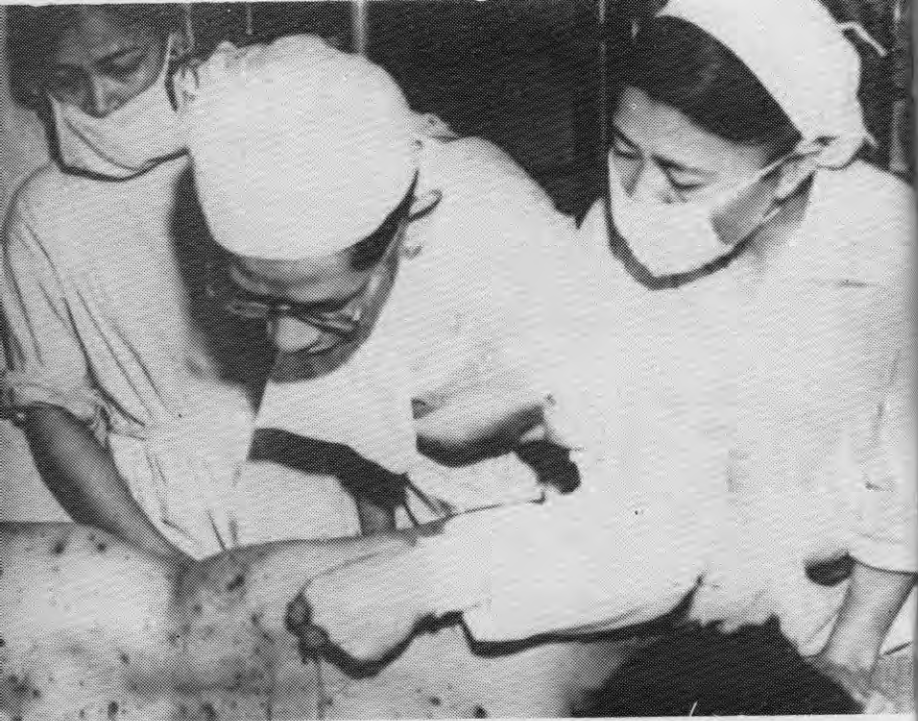
No country has ever suffered so much and for such a long time. It is certain that the tenacity, heroism, and creativeness of the Vietnamese people with the leadership of an experienced Marxist party and with the socialist regime, will eventually overcome all difficulties. Friends from all over the world are helping Viet Nam to heal the war wounds.

But one should never forget that full responsibility for all this rests squarely with the Washington leaders.

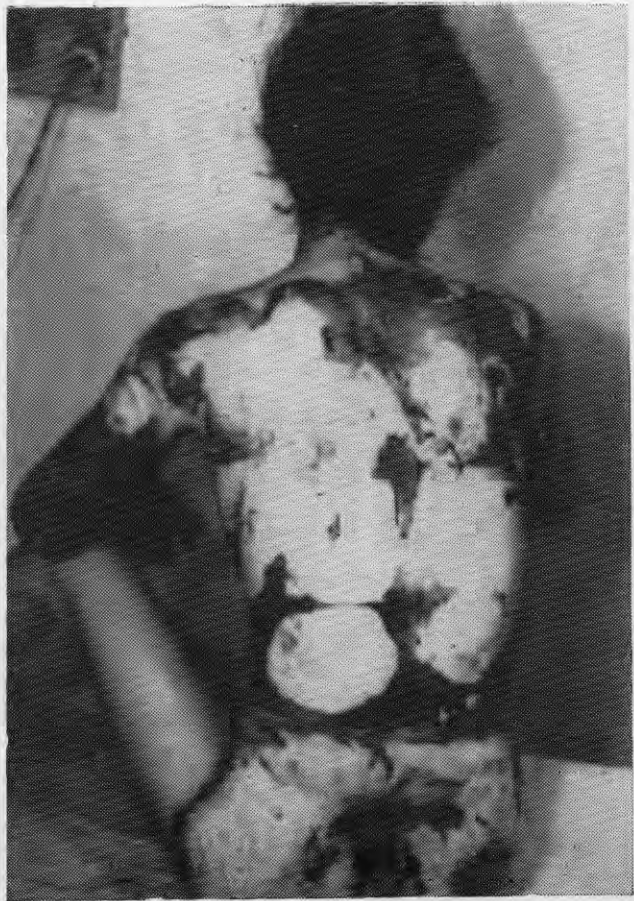
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Ha Noi electric light-bulb and thermos flask factory
(May, 1967)



Wounds caused by fragmentation bombs



Wounds caused by napalm
(one can imagine their life-long sequels)



Cua Ong Street, Hon Gai, Quang Ninh (July 1967)

Ha Noi Railway Station (December 1972)





Kham Thien Street, Ha Noi (December 1972)



Cam Ly Dam installations, Quang Binh (March 1971)



Dang Loc hamlet, Quang Binh (March, 1971)



Phat Diem Cathedral, Ninh Binh (April, 1966)



Tran Quoc Toan Temple, Quang Ninh (October, 1967)



Vinh Teachers' Training college (1967-1968)



Quynh Lap Leprosy clinic and research centre (March 1967)



Ha Tinh Hospital (January 1967)



On the road at Son My (My Lai) (March 1968)

Civilians being herded into concentration camps
by US soldiers





Sweep by US soldiers in areas affected by toxic chemicals



A defoliated rubber plantation

Samples of leaves growing on trees sprayed
with toxic chemicals three years previously

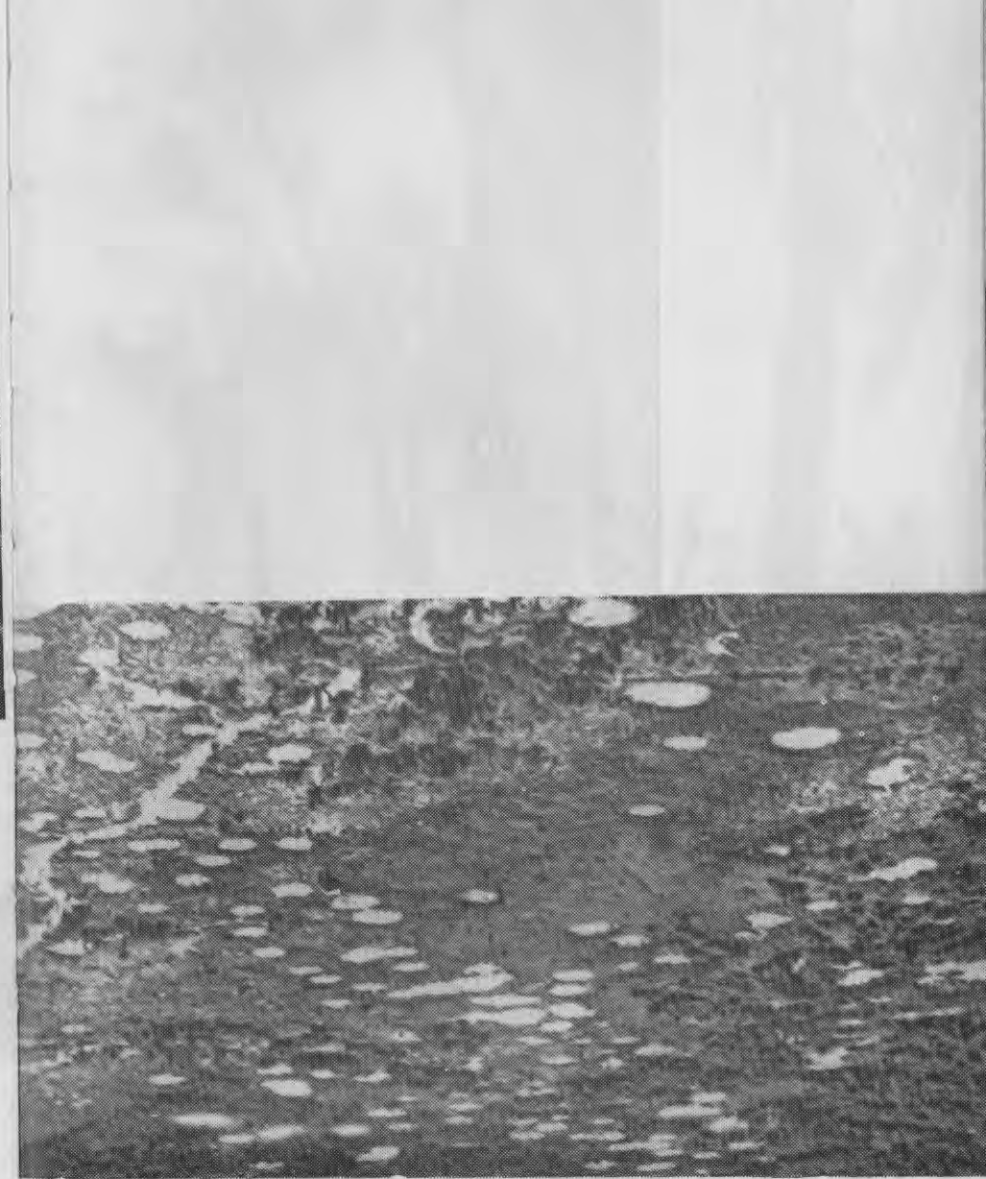




Ecological damage



Bomb-craters and defoliated areas in Rung Sat
and Rung Duoc (Gia Dinh)

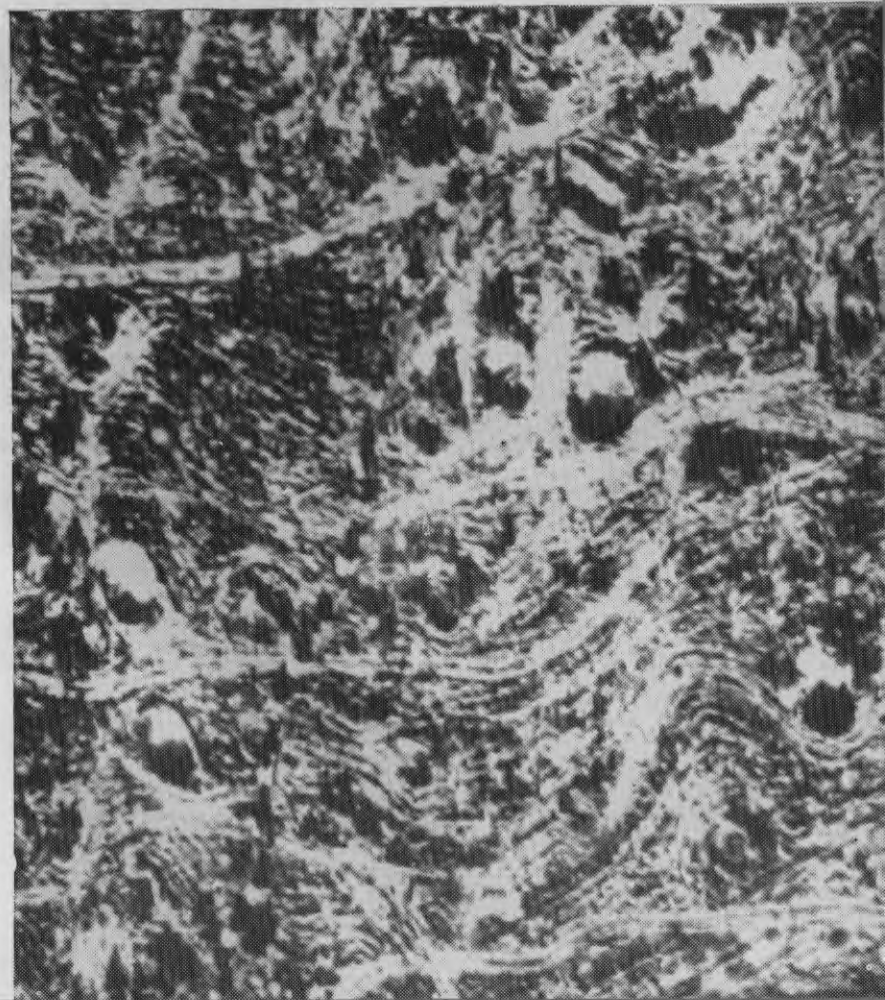


Devastated
countryside





Tay Ninh : hamlets razed by American bulldozers following bombing raids





A Saigon slum