

huong dam, a water reserve for the whole region. This enthusiasm and joy showed the unshakable confidence in the government headed by your venerable President Ho Chi Minh, which has led you to win peace and will lead you to economic victory, to better living conditions.

We have learnt much during this short visit and we will tell all French working people the truth about what we have seen, on all points, but especially about reconstruction, the work for peace.

EMILE PASQUIER

General Secretary of the National Federation
Lighting and Moving Forces (France)

1955

ENTHUSIASM AT WORK

Hon-gay miners dug hills of anthracite and rolled trains of half-demolished wagons with a real passion, because they know that exported coal is the main means of payment for the Vietnamese trade. About 12 kilometres outside Hanoi, we have seen hundreds of men, peasants, soldiers, townspeople coming here of their own will, to dig with their own hands irrigation canals to fight a threatening drought.

JOANNY BERLIOZ

New Democracy (France)

April 1958

TO CREATE A COUNTRY OF THEIR OWN

I have also been to north Viet Nam and I have seen how they have blown up old concrete posts of French imperialism to obtain raw materials for their new roads; thousands of kilometres of barbed-wire fences were removed by the assiduous hands of free and independent peasants, who tilled anew their lands abandoned because of the fortifications and the war waged for so long a time against them by the colonialists. I have witnessed the beginnings of an industry in the hands of a people hitherto kept in a state of a miserable colonial producer to the profit of foreign exploiters, in the hands of those people who rejoice at their newly won freedoms as they work side by side to create a country of their own.

REWI ALLEY

Writer

New Zealand — 1958

(Retranslated from French text)

THE INDOMITABLE SPIRIT WHICH WON THE GREAT BATTLE OF DIEN BIEN PHU

We are extremely pleased to see that within a short period of five years since liberation from foreign domination, great achievements have been made by the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. We notice that the indomitable spirit which won the great battle of Dien Bien Phu is now turning in the direction of rehabilitation. We also admire the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam for allowing freedom of worship.

U CHIT THOUNG

Cultural Minister

Union of Burma — 1959

A REALISTIC AND CONCRETE NATIONAL ECONOMIC PLAN

The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam has completed land reform and has solved the problem of food shortage. The past few years have seen a constant increase in rice production.

The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam has drawn up a realistic and concrete national economic plan. Helped by the Soviet Union, China and other socialist countries, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam is making big strides forward.

Although Viet Nam is divided geographically into two, economically she cannot be so. South Viet Nam abounds in rice, coffee, sugar-cane, rubber, while the North is rich in mineral resources.

SATYA GRAHA
Chief Editor, *Suluh Indonesia*
1958

A CITY WHICH BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE

One notices the contrast very vividly in the case of Saigon and Hanoi. Walking through the streets of Saigon, one sees that there are two cities. One city is rich with speculators and profiteers and the foreign communities. The other is that of the poor people, living in abject misery, homeless and diseased.

Here, walking around Hanoi, I have the feeling that this is a city which belongs to the people. The people are all over the city. They do not have to live in separate quarters and to get away from the bright broad streets and the pretty lakes which are the delight of Hanoi.

WILLIAM WARBEY, MP
Great Britain — 1957

WE WERE SURPRISED...

The Vietnamese in the North, led by their Fatherland Front and beloved President Ho Chi Minh are starting with essentials. We have found everywhere an extreme modesty about the developments planned; the actual achievements are greater than we had been led to expect. For a country whose people were given no higher education by the colonial power, we were surprised to see what is already being turned out by the machine tool factory in Hanoi, to see girls whose parents probably could not read or write, using testing equipment with a competence that few girls in the West get a chance to acquire.

A. M. YOUNG

Doctor of Science

Fellow of the Royal College of Science
Great Britain — 1958

SOMETHING NEW AND GREAT EVERY WEEK

Every week brings new and great things in the life of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. Industrial enterprises are commissioned, irrigation canals destroyed during the war are rebuilt. «No man's lands», these fertile fields transformed into deserts by the invaders, are tilled and sown to paddy seed. The young and independent country is consolidated and musters its forces.

V. OCIPOV

When the jungle becomes desert
Soviet Union — 1956

EXCELLENT RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

In North Viet Nam, we have met Buddhist believers. Their religious activities have been excellent. Pagodas and temples have been kept in good order. I am very glad to note that only in a few years' time the Vietnamese people have achieved many successes in various fields. You have pushed forward industry, raised the output of rice and cereals, and improved the people's living standard.

Venerable AMRITANAN
Leader of the Nepalese Buddhist Delegation
1959

FREED FROM A DARK AND BACKWARD LIFE

The Viet Nam Lao Dong Party and the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam Government pay constant attention to building a happy life for the people.

About 60 national minorities living in the mountainous regions of north Viet Nam have been freed from a dark and backward life and are advancing on the path towards Socialism.

M. NAIBAHO
Chief Editor, *Harian Rakjat*
Indonesia — 1958

TEN TIMES MORE SCHOOLS

Since the time when the Vietnamese people fought the colonialists for their freedom, constructive work has begun in the liberated zones. As a result of land

reform, 11 million poor peasants have drawn profit from land ; industry and trade have been brought into the orbit of the State sector. In the cultural field, one can say that a true revolution has occurred. It suffices to consider that in 1945, only two per cent of children learned, while more than 90 per cent go to school now. The number of schools is ten times greater, and to date more than 14 million people have learnt to read and write.

ZERI POPULLIT
Albanian Newspaper — 1955

TWO MORE THAN IN ADVANCED AMERICA !

Youngsters now growing up in north Viet Nam are leading very different lives from those led by their parents when they were children in a French colony. There is no really good aspect of colonialism to the people who live in a colonised country. But one of the most terrible things, to me, is the effect on the children from the moment they are born. They do not even know they are missing.

In Viet Nam, for instance, before independence, children were almost certain to get malaria. Epidemics of smallpox, cholera, typhus and poliomyelitis constantly swept through the country, carrying off children and adults alike in their thousands, as did influenza every winter. They were subject to the hundred and one diseases that flourish in the tropics—liver diseases, fungus and parasitic diseases of various kinds, trachoma and other eye complaints. There was no education for any but the select few, no time for play and laughter, and no energy for them even if there were time, because there was never enough food. In times of drought and flood,

hunger became starvation and almost certain death. To remove the thought that I may be exaggerating, I quote these figures painstakingly acquired by members of the Vietnamese Women's Union. During the terrible famine of 1945 — 46, when two million people in north Viet Nam died of starvation in the worst areas, seventy of every hundred babies born, died within that year.

At present, in Hanoi, the infant mortality rate is only 28 in the 1,000, two more than in advanced America!

LORRAINE SALMON
South-East Asia Correspondent
for Australian newspapers **Tribune**
and **Guardian** — 1960

ASTONISHING NOT LONG AGO — NOW BECOMING EVERYDAY ACTUAL OCCURRENCE

He who comes to Hanoi cannot go without noticing that everybody studies here. In every factory, office groups are formed, courses are set up at night for the grown-ups. School-rooms are also reserved for the same purpose. All children go to school. You will also see watchmen and workers at construction sites attending night classes. Huge posters are placarded everywhere calling upon every person to go to school.

In the 1959 school year the number of pupils increased twentyfold in elementary schools and sixteenfold in High Schools and Universities as compared with that under French domination in Indochina. This number does not include the pupils still studying in the Soviet Union, China and other socialist countries.

One thing which not long ago was astonishing is now becoming an everyday actual occurrence: an

ordinary man knows how to read, to write and has a right to study. Libraries, public reading-rooms, workers' clubs have taken the place of refreshment bars, night cafés, and «famous» opium dens in Hanoi.

Foreigners who came to see Hanoi, usually heard that memoirs or books they wrote about the life of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam are outdated rapidly. A German memoir writer said to me: «A few months ago, in writing about Viet Tri, I said that it was a peaceful small town submerged in the rice-fields of the fertile Northern plain. But now it is being transformed into a big industrial centre.»

PHILIPPOV
Correspondent for *Pravda*
Soviet Union — 1960

NEW LIFE IN VIET NAM

She sits upon her doorstep low,
The book between her palms held so;

Three score and ten, with failing sight
But now she learns to read and write.

The boy who hovers by her knee
Points now to «i» and now to «t»*

The heads are close, one black, one grey...
And while she reads, his glances stray.

* The letters «i» and «t» are the first to be learned in the anti-illiteracy courses.

He sees the vista of the plain
Where, buried deep in verdant grain,

The land is springing green with rice,
And crops once single, burgeon twice.

But all her gaze is centred in
The simple letters, thick and thin.

This hand that holds the pencil now
In childhood steered another's plough,

These eyes that scan the quiet page
Once burned with deep, unyielding rage

This body wrinkled, small and brown
Has felt the landlord's lash swing down

But now she reads, and on her face
The joy of youth lends all its grace

Now, in the sunset of her years,
Triumphantly, the dawn appears.

Australian writer MONA BRAND
visited north Viet Nam with her hus-
band Len Fox, a correspondent of the
Sydney paper, *Tribune* — 1957.

MAIN STAGES OF LIBERATION OF MAN

The few days fully spent in Hanoi have more and more convincingly shown me this rapid development which ushers in a forthcoming era of prosperity, happiness and peace.

The land reform which has restituted freedom and equality to the peasants, enables them to fight victoriously against famine, and it is obvious that this victory, of such great extent, is itself the basis of future developments.

The struggle against illiteracy is also nearing completion.

The economic re-habilitation already remarkable, enables one to foresee the complete success of the Three-year plan.

In these achievements I have seen the main stages of the liberation of man which enables him to secure a material and cultural life, which is part and parcel of the respect of human dignity and a condition of progress whose ever-growing acceleration is assured by the socialist transformation of the economy.

Dr LAZARD
France — 1958

STEADY PROGRESS IN EVERY SPHERE

One of the most outstanding differences is that today these people have enough to eat and can buy new clothes, as well as other necessities and a few luxuries. Under the French colonial regime which supported feudalism so strongly, it was customary for the minority people to face starvation for at least four months every year. This was brought about by the big taxes that had to be paid both to the French and to the local feudal officials, and by the fact that the peasants were always forced to devote their time to harvesting the officials' crops before their own, with the result that their own harvests were often ruined.

Looking through the windows of one house at the lush tropical vegetation—the banana trees, areca

palms, jack fruit trees and hibiscus bushes, and watching the peasants strolling home from the fields in the early afternoon to meet us, I thought how relaxed and independent their lives were now, compared with those days only a few years ago when they were so oppressed by the mandarins and local officials that they were afraid to lift their heads or raise their eyes lest they be accused of some offence.

During our stay in north Viet Nam we have been able to observe steady progress in many spheres. We have seen for ourselves how, with their greatly improved rice crops, the peasants of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam no longer have to fear starvation for part of the year, and can, in fact, export rice — a thing unknown before in the North. We have observed and taken part in their Lunar New Year and Mid Autumn Festivals as well as their May Day and Independence Day celebrations and witnessed their whole-hearted enjoyment of these occasions, made brighter for the small luxuries that only an improving standard of living has made possible.

The Government's deep concern for the many minority people who enjoy equal rights with the rest of the Vietnamese, is another outstanding feature of the new life.

MONA BRAND
Australian writer
1957

I CAN TALK TO MANY PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA...

I can talk to many people in Australia of my experiences working as a newspaperman for two years in the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. I can assure them that the government and people of the Demo-

cratic Republic of Viet Nam, the victors of Dien Bien Phu, know very well what war is, that they want no more of it, and that they wish for nothing more than the honest friendship of all peoples and governments as they set about their heavy task of transforming their north Viet Nam, for centuries a prey to feudalism and colonialism, into a modern Socialist land. I can tell them of the progress already made in this direction — that in north Viet Nam the spectre of annual famine, chronic for centuries, has been laid to rest forever ; that the standard of clothing was visibly better at the end of my stay than at the beginning ; that the road from Hanoi to Ha Dong, for example, is today one huge construction site as the factories, denied north Viet Nam by both feudal and colonial power, are at long last being built. I can speak of the vigorous spirit with which north Viet Nam's age-old heritage of ignorance, superstition and disease is being tackled by the government, through the agency of the organised people themselves. I can speak of sixteen million people stepping out along the road of modern development. From my knowledge of what is happening in other South-east Asian countries, I can assure my fellow Australians that fundamental social advances have been made in north Viet Nam that are still things of the future for all other countries in the region.

MALCOLM SALMON
South-East Asia Correspondent
for Australian newspapers
Tribune and Guardian — 1960

UNRIVALLED ANYWHERE IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

Briefly, here are some of the impressions I take away with me after my travels in north Viet Nam :

Many thousands of healthy, happy children with strong teeth and easy, friendly, smiles... Thousands of bicycles. Bookshops and many books...

Everywhere, in towns and villages — for I went deep into the countryside, visited many homes, factories, co-operatives, schools, farms, industrial sites — ample food and cloth, shops filled with basic consumer goods sold at reasonable prices.

Millions of men and women, busy all day long, building, working, learning, planning, teaching, studying, co-operating.

Thousands of bright, fit, energetic and enthusiastic Pioneers and Labour Youth.

Throughout the country an atmosphere of intelligent security, of quiet determination to make definite, if unspectacular, material progress according to a national plan based on practical, sensible, voluntary co-operation among all the people.

A national resolution that Socialism through co-operation, which does not yet involve fully most families in north Viet Nam, though of vital importance to the country's development, will be gradual and strictly in accordance with the wishes of the people. A national longing for the reunification of Viet Nam, a steadfast belief that this will come about in due course.

No sign anywhere of preparation of war.

Those are some of my impressions. They add up to a conclusion that north Viet Nam's national drive is based on peace ; that comparatively, Viet Nam's steady rate, depth, and scope of economic and social development is unrivalled anywhere in South East Asia.

...
During a month's travelling about in north Viet Nam I saw no warlike preparations. On the other hand, I have seen millions of workers and peasants working hard in fields and newly-built factories.

True, I saw soldiers but they were helping in the field digging ditches or making roads.

I have lived in the Far East for 12 years and travelled extensively. Let me say this: north Viet Nam is making material progress unequalled by any country in South East Asia.

ALEX JOSEY

South-East Asia Correspondent for
the London Paper **Reynolds News**
1960

PRIORITY TO ECONOMIC CONSTRUCTION

From all I have seen, it is clear that the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam is giving priority to the economic reconstruction of the country, has respected the Geneva Agreements to the letter, has no intention of interfering in the affairs of Laos, has, since the re-establishment of peace, built no strategic roads or military bases threatening its neighbours, that it is ensuring its own safety through the peasant and minority population, who are daily becoming more attached to it thanks to a wise, human and clear-sighted policy.

Mme ISABELLE BLUME
Member of the Presidium of the
World Peace Council
1959

THE SOLDIERS OF PEACE

The glorious division 320 which fought not far from Hanoi during the war has in peace time brought its contribution to a great victory over an enemy just as dangerous: drought!

More than 2,000 soldiers took part in the construction of the Bac-Hung-Hai agricultural hydraulic system, side by side with thousands of peasants.

I have chosen the example of these soldiers and officers of Bac-Hung-Hai—a great building site of socialism in Viet Nam—to show how closely the life of the Viet Nam People's Army is bound to that of its people.

During my three weeks of travel through democratic Viet Nam, I met soldiers everywhere, wherever there is the need to produce and to build.

It is a really hard job for them to fell trees for months on end in the mountains of Bac Son.

Everywhere, the soldiers volunteer for the hardest jobs. In January 1958, they were given orders to build a State farm on the hills of Phu Tho for cultivating tea. After only five months' work, they were able to build this farm, 200 houses, 15 kilometres of road, to weed 310 hectares and clear 130 hectares. According to the results obtained, I think this plantation will be completed three years before the plan foreseen.

In the Army farms, they cultivate rice, plant rubber trees, coffee, tea, pepper, and they breed animals.

An exhibition was organized in Hanoi last December on the technical improvements and inventions made by the Army in the sphere of handicrafts and industry. This exhibition was very interesting, especially for those who know little of the conditions of work in a country not provided with machines. It is strange to see a wooden crane able to lift heavy loads to a height of 12 metres, or to see an electric battery with wooden parts.

The soldiers manufactured a car themselves as a trial in their own workshops, as we say in our country «on one's knees». Their prototypes of dynamos, turbines, etc., also deserve mentioning because they show us the capabilities of a people freed from the colonialist yoke.

BOREK HOMOLA

Writer for the Czechoslovak Army newspaper
Defence of the People
1958

IMPRESSIVE PROGRESS

The Vietnamese people who made the French colonialists bite the dust at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, are achieving impressive progress in restoring life and prosperity to a country which had been bled white under foreign occupation.

Illiteracy and other social evils which had the force of law under the colonialist regime are visibly disappearing. The people are showing the same zeal in the work of national reconstruction as they showed formerly in the heroic resistance against the French colonialists. This is the best guarantee of success.

Of course, the struggle of the Vietnamese people has not finished. As in the Cameroons, Viet Nam is divided, and partitioned families continue to live, one part in the North and the other in the South.

All African peoples in general and the Cameroons people in particular wholeheartedly support the peaceful struggle which is being waged in this part of Asia for the building of a unified and independent Viet Nam.

ERNEST OUANDIE

Vice-President of the Union
of the People of the Cameroons
1959

NOT ONLY MERE FIGURES

Before the war, in the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam (north Viet Nam) the total rice output amounted to 2.4 million tons on the average. As a result of huge and evergrowing irrigation work and the extension of the acreage of arable land and thanks to the efforts made in agriculture, chiefly the battle to obtain two harvests per year, in 1954 the total rice production reached over 4 million tons. Last year, particularly propitious to Viet Nam, it exceeded the mark of 5 million.

This is not only mere figures, this is the path of life, the right to live as a rule. The famine which carried off more than 2.5 million people in 1945, is no more a threat to that country. The great battle waged under the slogan « Rice » enters a new period though it is not completed as yet, and the planned figure of 500 kilogrammes per head of population per year is still short by 50 kilogrammes. The suppression of the famine spectre and even the twofold increase of the rice yield from 1,300 to 2,500 kilogrammes per hectare, are but the beginning, the preliminary steps.

TRIBUNA LUDU
Poland — 1960

A PLAN OF PROSPERITY FOR ALL

The aim of the three years of economic reconstruction was common prosperity for all the people. The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam Government has scored brilliant successes. The Vietnamese people are resolute in building their country into an advanced industrial country. They have outstripped the pre-war production level in many fields.

Though of course not yet satisfactory, the results the Vietnamese people have achieved in their efforts to develop their country economically within the last four years are very great. In the countryside, in the factories, as well as in the coalmine we visited, we saw the people working hard and with enthusiasm. They are working for their country and for themselves. We were very much impressed by the modesty of the leaders who are now also in the forefront and working hard. We are confident that with abundant natural resources, ample manpower, a good program and organization under the leadership of President Ho Chi Minh and others, the Vietnamese people will surely achieve much progress in the economic field in the near future, on the road to Socialism.

L. DJAWOTO
Vice-Director
Antara News Agency
Indonesia — 1958

KEY TO SUCCESS

What is the key to their success? It is the determination of the Vietnamese people, and the leadership of the most advanced class in history: the working class.

Viet Nam which was formerly considered as a backward agricultural country by the colonialists, has embarked today on the path toward socialism, prosperity and strength.

HARIAN RAKJAT
Indonesian newspaper — 1958