

Anniversary of Korean. . . (II)

« The evident clear-sightedness of your President, whose principal concern is to watch over his people's welfare, has permitted immense progress, and by now, you are enjoying one of the highest standards of living in Asia, » he said.

« I can also assure you, » he continued, « that in my country, under the inspired leadership of my great President Syngman Rhee, an obvious improvement in many fields has been noted, in spite of the evil plotting of the enemy who, only a few miles from us in the north, is trying to undermine our institutions and efforts. »

After recalling the obligation of Vietnamese and Koreans to work for their countries' unification, the Ambassador pointed out that both peoples cherish peace, « but a peace in freedom, not one in slavery. »

« In the past, » he added, « we have had to fight for freedom, and we may fight again for it. »

Yesterday evening's reception was attended by heads of government departments and diplomats stationed in Saigon, in addition to many others. A film show highlighted the occasion.

The Korean community in Saigon is very small. In addition to the embassy personnel, there are about 30 Koreans, mostly engaged in business.

HOME AFFAIRS

MADAME NGO DINH NHU DISCUSSES ELECTION WITH MEMBERS OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu answered criticisms about the National Assembly and discussed the role of women in the forthcoming election of the National Assembly before a large gathering of members of women's organizations including delegates from the Women Civil Servants' Organization and from various girls' schools at the City Hall Tuesday morning.

Reviewing « the most repeated, if not the most pertinent criticisms regarding the management and conduct of the National Assembly whose mandate has just expired » Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu asserted:

« All of the criticisms are, in general, based on a false conception of the constitutional role of the Legislative Power. The critics seem to believe that the function of the Legislative Branch is to throw roadblocks in the way of the Executive Branch.

« They appear to forget that the power to control carries with it not only the right to criticize, but also the obligation to aid and abet the reasonable and constructive measures taken by the Executive Branch, » she continued adding « This is simple common sense. »

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Referring to « those critics who relish the subject of the salaries of the Deputies as if it were a scandalous subject, » Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu said that « these salaries were established to assure a decent life to the representatives and to preserve their integrity before possible temptation. »

As for the « chronic critic on a habitual target, » that is, « those who do not often present wordy challenges to their colleagues on the floor of the Assembly, » Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu suggested » perhaps the critics forget that the assembly is not a three-ring circus where each performer has a well-defined act and a spotlight under which he must shine. »

She continued : « They would be wise to consider the Assembly as a united and unanimous corps and to judge on the basis of the accomplishments of the whole body. »

ROLE OF WOMEN

Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu also devoted time to discussing the role of women in the present development of the country and especially in regard to the forthcoming election.

« I recognize, as do you all I am sure, that the first duty, the first preoccupation, the first concern of woman must be her home » she asserted, then added :

« Let us then be realistic enough to recognize once and for all this great truth : the place of woman is, before all else, in her home: but to confine herself there, seeing and doing nothing else in the outside world, is surely to risk losing all which she cherishes most. We must not forget that the home is like one's country, one's stronghold. The wish to defend it carries with it, above all, the obligation to vigilance. »

« Let us begin by fully comprehending that the ballot, which we now have the right to cast is not a scrap of paper without a soul, » she emphasized, adding : « It is especially with it, and thanks to it, that we are able to show what we are, to gain respect and even fear. »

Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu concluded her address by advocating that Vietnamese women use their vote wisely. She then invited her audience to ask questions.

Several people voiced their approval of Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu's address and Mrs. Nguyen Van La submitted a motion inviting Vietnamese women to take part in the election of the second National Assembly. The resolution was unanimously endorsed.

To be sure, accusing a critic of the false accusations mentioned above provokes immediate denial. In this case, one wonders why these same critics continue to devote themselves to such chivalries as policing for all what they call « Yes-Deputies » (Nghia Cao). What shame do they see in approving that which is reasonable and necessary for the public good? Not only is it nothing to blush about, but it is the highest duty to approve that which we find just and good. Would they prefer to have « Nyer-Deputies » (Nghi Lao) who spend their time voting against any and every thing presented to them; and who as a result would accomplish absolutely nothing in their three years' term?

**ADDRESS OF MADAME NGO DINH NHU, GIVEN ON AUGUST 11, 1959,
AT THE CITY HALL, TO THE MEETING OF ALL VIETNAMESE
WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS, ON THE OCCASION OF THE COMING
ELECTIONS OF AUGUST 30, 1959, FOR THE SECOND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

My Dear Sisters :

All shades of opinions have been expressed and continue to be verbalized in one form and another, in the press as well as in public and private pronouncements, concerning the approaching elections.

Amidst this cacophony of diverse and contradictory ideas, aspirations and opinions, it is an arduous task to find one's bearings. So, some well-intentioned souls have had the goodness of heart to define for us, the women of Viet Nam, our course of action. Whatever are we to think?

From all this mass of opinions, I wish to consider today only that portion of expression which has been negative and critical. I shall therefore attempt to review the most-repeated, if not the most pertinent criticisms regarding the management and conduct of the National Assembly whose mandate has just expired. In examining together this aspect of opinion, perhaps we, the women of Viet Nam, can formulate a useful plan for our line of action.

All of the criticisms are, in general, based on a false conception of the constitutional role of the Legislative Power. The critics seem to believe that the function of the Legislative Branch is to throw roadblocks in the way of the Executive Branch. They appear to forget that the power to control carries with it not only the right to criticize, but also the obligation to aid and abet the reasonable and constructive measures taken by the Executive Branch. This is simple common sense. Moreover, history has proved that no regime can stand if each of the constitutional powers considers itself the foe of the other. The critics would, it seems, attribute to the Deputies of the National Assembly the loveable magic virtues of Father Christmas, making of them little tin gods capable of resolving all difficulties as well as giving complete satisfaction to all the varied wants and aspirations of their electors. It is in thinking thus, in confounding the possible with the desirable, and more often in simply allowing ourselves to treat such matters lightly, that we not only do injustice to others but bring harm to our institutions and play the game as our enemies wish it played.

To be sure, accusing a critic of the false conceptions mentioned above provokes immediate denial. In this case, one wonders why these same critics continue to devote themselves to such childishness as poking fun at what they call « Yes-Deputies » (Nghi Gat). What shame do they see in approving that which is reasonable and necessary for the public good? Not only is it nothing to blush about, but it is the highest duty to approve that which we find just and good. Would they prefer to have « Nyet-Deputies » (Nghi Lac) who spend their time voting against any and every thing presented to them; and who as a result would accomplish absolutely nothing in their three years' term?

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It is worthy of note that our severest critics are those who never bother to read the debates of the Legislators. If they would take the trouble to consult the actual records of the Assembly, they would certainly have a more just opinion of it.

There are also those critics who relish the subject of the salaries of the Deputies as if it were a scandalous subject. And this when the salaries of our Deputies are so low as compared to those of the legislative representatives of other countries.

These salaries were established to assure a decent life to the representatives and to preserve their integrity before possible temptation. Further, cut X% by taxes, these stipends are barely sufficient for those Deputies not having a home in Saigon.

Then, of course, those who do not often present wordy challenges to their colleagues on the floor of the Assembly are an habitual target for the chronic critic. Perhaps the critics forget that the Assembly is not a three-ring circus where each performer has a well-defined act and a spotlight under which he must shine. They would be wise, I believe, to consider the Assembly as a united and unanimous corps and to judge on the basis of the accomplishments of the whole body. To think otherwise and to proclaim it, is to push a few poor excited persons to using the parliamentary tribune as their own stage where, physical performances being forbidden, they are left to verbal performances the verbosity of which results only in wasting the precious time of everyone.

Those of you who know the histories of other parliaments of the world may say to me that these are the classical criticisms of deputies the world over, and that for this reason we should not attribute great importance to them. This is true. But it is also true that in a new country, democratically speaking, such as Viet Nam, this can be extremely discouraging to the people.

I come now to the point which concerns those of us here today more directly. In spite of the fact that we hear from all directions fine proclamations of the rights and duties of all citizens, it would appear according to certain *Professeurs es-democratie* that women should hold themselves aloof from the political scene and lock themselves in their homes, for fear that they might lose everything in trying to gain too much. I should not have even mentioned this attitude because of its disarming naivete, if I did not know that this view is shared not only by certain men among us, but also by some of our sisters.

I recognize, as do you all I am sure, that the first duty, the first preoccupation, the first concern of woman must be her home. But to state from this premise that it is impossible to carry on two different occupations and to persist in them without risking defeat on both sides is going, or rather retreating, too far.

Are we not forgetting that it is not for lack of applying the ever-eternal formula: « Woman's place is in her home, » that for lo ! these many years women have not ceased to see their homes constantly in menace ? In fact, it is not negligence nor frittering of energies which has prevented them from protecting their homes;

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it is because their all was confinad to their families and because none of them were there in the place where the laws were made without them — the laws which worked against them and against their most precious possession, their homes.

Let us then be realistic enough to recognize once and for all this great truth: the place of woman *is*, before all else, in her home; *but* to confine herself there, seeing and doing nothing else in the outside world, is surely to risk losing all which she cherishes most. We must not forget that the home is like one's country, one's stronghold. The wish to defend it carries with it, above all, the obligation to vigilance.

Of course, staying in the background and forming the rear-guard is the role which suits all of us the best. But let us no forget that the shock-troops, the front line forces, are absolutely necessary to a well-organized defense. If we are not fortunate enough to have a front-line already prepared for duty, then it is our duty to form one and to back it up with all our might.

This does not mean that it is necessary for each and every one of us to throw ourselves into the political arena. I know how much the public life inherent in politics is difficult to reconcile with our traditional semi-nice reserve. I know also too well how painful it is for women not accustomed to the battle of public life to be obliged to face head-on the pack of clacking-tongued jackals who attempt to intimidate by the force of calumy and insult, whether loudly or with whispering rumor. But this is what one must be prepared to face on entering the political scene.

However; as I said earlier, it is fortunately not necessary for all of us to throw ourselves into this unpleasant situation since, thanks to our Constitution, we can be just as effective and at the same time not neglect our homes. It is sufficient, for example, to well understand our rights and to use them with wisdom to fortify our rearguard which, solely by the fact of its solidarity and determination, will give greater weight and value to the shock-troops who must fight for our defense at the front lines; that is to say, in the National Assembly itself.

Let us begin by fully comprehending that the ballot which we now have the right to cast is not a scrap of paper without a soul. It is especially with it, and thanks to it, that we are able to show what we are, to gain respect and even fear.

There will, of course, be those who abstain from voting. Whoever they may be, let them not be one of us, My Sisters! Let not one among us feel that her vote is only a drop of water in the sea. And, even if it were, let us remember that the sea is made only of a multitude of drops of water. Without them, there would be no sea. It is the same with that which constitutes our Force. And if we do not create this Force by our cohesion, this multitude of ballots expressing our will and our presence, then we need not be astonished when they turn their noses up at us. If by laziness or foolishness, we choose to be naught, let us no longer moan when they tramp on our heads. In fact, why should they take into consideration something which does not exist?

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This duty and this right being understood, let us not waste it by throwing our ballots into the box without rhyme or reason. Such an attitude, even if it proves our presence, proves only a brainless presence.

To avoid such errors, we must then choose with the greatest care our representatives, who can of course be men as well as women. Indeed, we must not forget that in our First Legislative Assembly, on the occasion of the vote of the Family Law, there were men who did, after all, defend us; while there were women who blindly and obstinately worked against our interests. Let us then base our choice on a human value.

And we must beware of the demagogue who stands by himself, the one whose principles of life we do not know, neither his conduct, save by his own words which can easily change color with their audience. We must also beware of those whose family life is not exemplary. Disloyal to their families, what loyalty can they possibly have for us who are for them an anonymous crowd.

Finally, we must watch out especially for those who, in the guise of electoral arguments know only how to incite our basest instincts; hatred, envy, bitterness-those who base all their ideals on the material and only the material, making us believe that we shall possess all manner of heavenly joys the day that we have in our grasp all material goods and who push us to such acquisition, not by honest means or healthy competition, but by murder or intimidation. Let us leave them to gargle their stale cliches: «Our bowl of black rice mixed with our sweat and our tears, while...» etc. Let us learn to recognize in their fallacious promises the cooing of the Communist agents who have no other aim than to attract by any and all means the largest number, the better to subjugate them to a materialistic ideal, an ideal which horrifies us when we put it beside that which we have chosen and which has been well defined in our Constitution; that of personalism, the respect of the human person.

Much prudence and circumspection in our choice is necessary and justified when we realize that, since we cannot all be there where they make the laws which rule our destinies, we must not let ourselves be betrayed by those whose duty it is to defend us. Let us remember that the Family Law which has returned to us many of our rights is still incomplete without the Law of Inheritance, the only protection for widows. Let us remember also that we must constantly defend that which we have gained against all attempts to go backward. This is not so easy; for we must not forget that it takes only one little retrogressive law, insidiously introduced, to put all our rights in question once again!

Let us then entrust our voices, after having exacted public promises from the candidates, to those who present serious guarantees—the guarantees of an organized and disciplined Party, Movement, or Union which we know and whose views, whose political and social ideals we share, or to one whose life and whose personal accomplishments speak well for themselves.

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To do otherwise is to risk deceiving ourselves, and being deceived while at the same time weakening the aim of our actions and our decisions. For we must never lose sight of the fact that in order to destroy the old prejudices afflicting us for so long the stigma of undiscriminating minors, we must by the multitude, cohesion and wisdom of our votes, show that *Feminine Force* is not a vain word, and that it is long past time for everyone to take it into account, to respect it, and above all to think twice before daring to betray it.

ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN STARTS

The electoral campaign committees, set up on August 4 by 625 candidates who are contending for the 123 seats in the Second National Assembly, started operating Saturday afternoon, August 15.

The committees are each composed of at least two agents commissioned by the candidates to campaign for them. No government workers are admitted to the committees.

The provincial authorities will intervene however, if the candidates are unable to agree on the committee representatives in their constituency. In this case the authorities will supervise the drawing of lots of people proposed by the candidates.

While carrying out their duties, which include printing hand-bills and posters and calling meetings at which candidates will address voters, the committees must observe strict impartiality towards all the candidates. They are also entitled to « total independence » with respect to public authority.

In addition, the electoral agents may authorize expenses higher than those provided for by the Election Law, which limited these expenses to two piasters per candidate. In such case the extra expenses will be charged to the candidates.

Limiting each candidate's expenses to two piasters, to be paid by the national budget, is an innovation in the election law. It is aimed, observers remarked, at assuring equal opportunity for every candidate. Able individuals can thus meet their opponents on equal terms without fear of being handicapped by their modest financial resources.

It was also announced that the 625 candidates whose names were posted for the first time on August 3 are engaged in a wide variety of professions.

Government workers, including those retired, top the list with 112. Next come school and university teachers with 92. There are 2 students, 3 painters and 19 journalists and writers.

EIGHTY-SEVEN CANDIDATES VIE FOR NINE PREFECTURE SEATS IN ASSEMBLY

Eighty-seven people are seeking election to the nine seats of the Prefecture in the National Assembly, according to the second and final posting of candidates' names August 14.