

REPORT ON THE CEREMONY HELD IN THE VILLAGE OF HOA-KHANH
PROVINCE OF CHOLON, ON DECEMBER 29, 1955:

ALEXANDRA ROLLAND
DANG-VAN-DE
NGUYEN-QUAN

We left the city of Cholon at 8:20 in an MSU car, arriving at the village of Hoà-Khanh at 9:25. Although the trip covered only 23 kilometers, about 1/3 of the road is in bad condition which accounts for the time taken. The village of Hoà-Khanh is a regular village; most of the population are farmers although a goodly number are engaged in raising horses for the race track in Saigon-Cholon. Also, there are some refugees located in this village.

There was a very festive atmosphere at the village. Archways had been set up over the road; group of youth cadres lined the pathway from the road to the platform. When we arrived, the ceremony had already begun.

The Province Chief of Cholon, Major Y, was delivering a speech. He said:

Since October 26, 1955, as proclaimed by President Ngô-Dinh-Diệm, elected by all Vietnamese the day of the referendum, Viet-Nam has been a republic. The five families under cooperative control is the most important social reform to date. Now, let me give you a clear picture of this new system: 5 families form a group. This group of 5 families under cooperative control must elect 1 chief. This chief is responsible to the authorities for the actions, the presence, and the absence of the members of these 5 families. On the other hand, he is responsible to those five families for the maintenance of security in the village. The chief must set up a complete list of all the members of these families; then, if someone comes to visit - or stay - with one of the families, that family must inform the chief of the presence of the visitor or new family member. In other words, the chief is the representative of the 5 families.

The second chief or representative is responsible for economic matters.

The third chief or representative is responsible for youth and religious matters.

The fourth chief or representative is responsible for health and hygiene.

The fifth chief or representative is responsible for education.

I know well that the Viet-Minh have this system too; but they have a quite different purpose: they use this system as "Eyes and Ears" for their Communist party. The Viet-Minh want to make each of the citizens an intelligence service agent against his compatriots, even against his family. But the Nationalist Government has a constructive spirit in organizing the system of 5 families in cooperative control: The Nationalist Government wants to raise your living standard. You will be taught about your civic duties and also your rights as citizens of an independent nation. You will have means to send your children to school. Your life will be secure and ordered. Your roads will be repaired. Your health will be

protected - I can assure you of all this because there will be 5 chiefs who will be responsible for every facet of your life.

Sir, the Secretary of State for Information,
Sir, the Délégué,
Gentlemen,

Thank you for your presence at this ceremony. We deeply believe that our new system will be successful and we hope that in three months you will see our province in another light. From now on, your chiefs of services will have 12,000 advisors for we have 12,000 groups of 5 families in cooperative control. Their knowledge and their experience will be very useful.

We, the population of the province of Cholon, are proud of our past: we participated with our blood in several battles against colonialists with only one purpose in mind "Independence for our nation - Viet-Nam must be governed by the Vietnamese,"

We are proud of our present: we are the first volunteers in applying this new system,

So that we may be proud of our solid future.

Speech of the President of the Provincial Council:

.....we are in a period where words must be proved by deeds. I have the great pleasure to introduce myself as the chief of youth and religion in my group of 5 families in cooperative control. I'm happy in my job and I can do it successfully as I'm secure....

Speech of the Secretary of State for Information:

.....under French occupation, we were taught only about our duties as slaves, but never were taught about our rights as human beings. Thanks to President Ngô, our condition of life is better. Thanks to him, we have security, freedom, and peace. He is the only leader of the nation of Viet-Nam our real chief....

Speech of the Délégué of South Viet-Nam:

.....Cholon is my native province. I've seen Cholon in blood during anti-colonialist battles, during battles against the rebel Binh-Xuyen, and now, I see Cholon united and gay in taking the first step of a regime chosen by all free Vietnamese: the Republic of Viet-Nam....

After this speech, two ex-Viet-Minh cadres spoke. They spoke of the cruelty, the crookedness of the Viet-Minh and the social injustices in the regions occupied by the Viet-Minh. "...Since 1945 until 1950, the communist Viet-Minh profited by the patriotism and the anti-colonialism of our countrymen in order to lead them in the battles against the French.

From 1951 to 1953, the Viet-Minh instructed us in the Communist doctrine. From 1954, they were strong enough: they showed themselves in their true colors - servants of Russia and the Chinese communists...." Following this, one of the two speakers showed, then ripped apart the Viet-Minh and communist flags.

During the speeches, the audience (with the exception of the cadres and the functionaries) was apathetic.

Following the ceremonies, the entire group visited the new village and a nearby refugee center. The first 5 family village was set up very well. Each house had a front lawn and a space in the back for a vegetable garden. The houses were well built and relatively spacious. There was also a dispensary, an infirmary, a school, an information hall, and a church. Another building had been constructed for crafts - weaving especially.

We then returned to Cholon where the province chief gave a luncheon for all the persons who had participated in and witnessed the ceremonies from the platform. (Estimation: 80 guests for the luncheon.)

The three of us returned to the office at 3:30 p.m.

NB: A translation of the complete model village program for the province of Cholon will be available shortly.