

Writer Kills Self To Protest Diem

Washington Post 7-9-63

SAIGON, July 8 (UPI) — South Viet-Nam's most prominent writer, Nguyen Tuong Tam, committed suicide with poison today in a protest against President Ngo Dinh Diem's policies which, he said, could force the nation into communism.

His death came on the eve of his trial for alleged complicity in the abortive 1960 coup d'etat against Diem and is expected to have widespread repercussions, including new protests against the government and its alleged religious discrimination.

Reliable sources said the government had asked the family for permission to bury Tam because it feared student riots and other demonstrations if there is a public funeral. The government was also said to have asked the hospital

where he died to attribute death to natural causes.

The tribunal before which Tam was to have appeared today acquitted six soldiers accused of taking part in the revolt and sentenced 13 others to terms ranging from five to 18 years at hard labor.

Diem, who heads a predominantly Roman Catholic Government in a country where two-thirds of the people are Buddhists, has been embroiled in a dispute with the leaders of the Buddhist majority who are threatening the survival of his regime.

Tam, 58, a Buddhist, was considered South Viet-Nam's greatest writer of the 20th century. A novelist and poet, he had been a prominent nationalist leader and took an active role in the underground campaign against French co-

lonial rule. His pen name was Nhat Link.

He left a short statement: "History alone will judge my life. I will allow no man to try me. The arrest and trial of all the nationalist opponents of the regime is a crime which will force the nation into the hands of the Communists."

"I oppose this crime and like the high priest Tich Quang Tuc who burned himself, I also kill myself as a warning to those people who are trampling on all freedom."

His testament was signed and written in Vietnamese on a small piece of paper. It was found in his wallet with a suicide note to his family.

Reliable sources said Tam took the poison yesterday at his home and died today in the French Grall Hospital.

Tam appealed to the intellectuals and Vietnamese students who considered him a great nationalist leader and symbol of intellectual integrity.

Vietnamese sources said Tam received a government summons Saturday along with 34 other civilians, many of them former nationalist politicians, to appear before a special military court on charges of threatening the security of the state by allegedly taking part in the unsuccessful 1960 coup by disident paratroop units in Saigon.

The charge carries a maximum penalty of death and a minimum of five years in jail at hard labor.

Tam wrote many novels and poems, most of which had political significance and dealt with the exploits of the anti-French underground.

At the trial of the 19 soldiers, government prosecutors claimed they had evidence of American involvement in the plot. Despite the American disclaimer, the court accepted the evidence and made the charge against the men treason.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, JULY 9, 1963.

Vietnamese Writer Kills Himself to Protest Trial

By DAVID HALBERSTAM
Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, Vietnam, July 8— Nguyen Tuong Tam, one of South Vietnam's most celebrated writers, committed suicide today by taking poison.

Nguyen Tuong Tam, whose pen name was Nhat Linh, was to have gone on trial with 34 other civilians tomorrow on charges that he was a conspirator and a supporter of the abortive paratrooper coup d'etat of 1960.

In his wallet was found a small piece of paper with his last will. It said:

"History alone will judge my life. I will allow no man to try me. The arrest and trial of all nationalist opponents of the regime is a crime which will force the nation into the hands of the Communists. I oppose this crime and, like the high priest Thich Quang Duc, I also kill myself as a warning to those people who are trampling on all freedoms."

He referred to the Buddhist priest who, after being doused with gasoline, set fire to himself in protest against the religious policies of the Government of President Ngo Dinh Diem.

The Saigon military tribunal handed down verdicts tonight on 13 of the 19 army officers and enlisted men who were tried for participating in the 1960 coup. The sentences were considered light in view of the charge of rebellion. One major received a sentence of 18 years at hard labor and three years banishment from his village. Six re-

Charged With Role in Coup of '60, He Takes Poison —13 Are Sentenced

ceived five-year jail sentences. Four received 16 years at hard labor and three-year banishment from their villages. Two received 10 and seven years respectively.

Unrest Growing

Nguyen Tuong Tam's suicide came at a time when there was already growing unrest in South Vietnam.

Vietnamese sources reported that Vietnamese students reacted emotionally to the writer's death.

The students were reliably reported to have asked the family for permission to hold funeral services.

Nguyen Tuong Tam's numerous books — he wrote about 30 novels — are studied in all universities and secondary schools PU 27 1st add Viet 76F

Led Anti-French Group

In the nineteen-thirties, during the days of French colonial rule, Nguyen Tuong Tam emerged as a leader of the Vietnamese Kuomintang (the then Vietnamese Nationalist party) and was in charge of the Vietnamese intellectual underground against the French.

He was the head of a group of writers who tried to incite the people against French rule. It

was widely considered an effective force.

During the early years of the Ngo Dinh Diem Government, he concentrated on writing. During the abortive 1960 coup, his name appeared on a declaration by politicians and other civilians supporting the military rebels.

Doubt on His Signing

According to Vietnamese sources it was never made clear whether Nguyen Tuong Tam had actually signed the declaration or whether others had signed for him to exploit his prestige.

Since the coup attempt, he had been under constant surveillance by the Government secret police. Saturday, he received a summons to court.

He was a Buddhist and this led some observers to believe that the anti-Government Buddhist leadership might attempt to hold a public funeral service for him. This could create an extremely explosive situation.

The suicide was termed significant by some observers who noted that Vietnamese opponents of President Ngo Dinh Diem have said that many nationalists feel themselves hopelessly caught between the Communists on one side and the authoritarian Government on the other.

Sources also noted in recent weeks that there had been open defiance of the Government by the leaders of the Buddhists and growing unrest among army officers.

They expect the unrest now to reach the students.

Week Post 7/11/63
**Diem Finds
Self in Feud
Over Burial**

By Neil Sheehan

SAIGON, July 10 (UPI) Students and President Ngo Diem's government are engaged in a quiet struggle over who will conduct the funeral of an eminent writer who killed himself Monday to protest Diem's rule, Vietnamese sources said today.

They said the students have asked the family of Nguyen Tuong Tam, South Viet-Nam's most respected author, for permission to carry his coffin through the streets.

The government opposes a mass march by the students and also has asked the family's permission to conduct the funeral, the sources said.

Tam left a note indicating Diem's authoritarian rule, warning that his methods could force the nation into the hands of the Communists. But his family was believed hesitant to grant the student request for fear of incurring government displeasure.

The government wants to avoid any further public protests at a time of tension between Diem's Roman Catholic government and the Buddhists, who represent a majority of the population.

Tam was to have gone on trial this week with 34 other defendants on charges of attempting to overthrow Diem's government, but it was not made clear up to the time of his death whether Tam actually had taken part in it.

About 20 of the defendants wore black patches in Tam's memory. Yesterday, the prosecution refused defense pleas to have Tam's name stricken from the indictment.

It was not clear whether this refusal meant Tam was being tried posthumously.

Wash. Evening Star 7/8/63
**Ex-Minister Kills Self
On Eve of Saigon Trial**

SAIGON, Viet Nam, July 8 (AP).—Former Foreign Minister Nguyen Tuong Tam, charged with 93 others with involvement in an attempted coup against the government of South Viet Nam, committed suicide last night, his defense attorney reported.

Mr. Tam was to go before a special military tribunal tomorrow. All the defendants face a possible death penalty. But court sources said they expect only a few death sentences.

Members of Mr. Tam's family said he took poison. Mr. Tam, 58, was foreign minister in the national government for several months in 1945.

Some observers regarded Mr. Tam's suicide as a possible protest against the government, since he was not expected to receive a heavy sentence.

Protest suicides are not uncommon in South Viet Nam. Quang Duc, a 73-year-old Buddhist Monk, burned himself to death in public in Saigon last month in protest against alleged government oppression of Buddhism here.

Seventy-five military officers and civilians are to go on trial tomorrow, nine in absentia, on charges of participating in the 1960 coup.

Nineteen other officers went on trial on similar charges Friday, but the verdicts were delayed.

Government prosecutors have claimed Americans were involved in the abortive 1960 coup, a claim that has been denied by the United States Embassy here.

South Viet Nam's American press corps has appealed to President Kennedy to support a protest against manhandling of newsmen by the Viet Namese secret police.

The newsmen protested to the United States embassy yesterday and cabled Mr. Kennedy after police felled and kicked a western correspondent and smashed two cameras in a fracas following memorial service for the Buddhist monk who burned himself to death.

In Hyannis Port, Mass., where the President spent the week end, press secretary Pierre Salinger said the appeal had been received. "We're looking into it," he said.

About 1,000 Buddhist monks and nuns attended the service at Chantereansay pagoda in north Saigon. Quang Duc's self sacrifice protested alleged discrimination against South Viet Nam's Buddhist majority by the government.

The government banned public services for Quang Duc, apparently fearing a riot might erupt despite an agreement with the Buddhists resolving many differences.

Plainclothes secret police who have been shadowing western newsmen at recent Buddhist demonstrations were out in force yesterday.

As a monk carrying Quang Duc's ashes in a silver cup started to lead a procession out of the pagoda, uniformed police ordered the mourners to leave in small groups.

When western newsmen and photographers moved in closer, secret agents began pushing and shoving. Associated Press Correspondent Peter Arnett, a New Zealander, was wrestled to the ground and kicked, suffering cuts and bruises. Two Associated Press cameras were broken and a Columbia Broadcasting System movie camera was dented.

Steel-helmeted police did not interfere in the scuffle but eventually dispersed the newsmen and the Buddhists.

7-8-63

Viet Writer Blasts Diem, Kills Self

From UPI and AP Dispatches

SAIGON, South Viet Nam, July 8.—South Viet Nam's most eminent writer committed suicide today as a political protest on the eve of his trial for alleged complicity in the abortive 1960 coup against President Ngo Dinh Diem.

Nguyen Tuong Tam, 58, left an eloquent testament protesting against Diem's rule. The former Nationalist leaders died in a hospital after taking poison.

The suicide of Tam, considered Viet Nam's greatest writer of the century, came at a time of growing political and religious unrest under Diem's regime. His death was expected to stir further political repercussions, particularly among the country's intellectuals.

NEWSMEN ATTACKED

Tam died a day after Vietnamese secret police attacked a group of foreign newsmen covering a Buddhist religious ceremony. Plainclothes police, some of them armed with rocks, took part in the assault.

Correspondents representing U.S. news media cabled an appeal to President Kennedy to protest to the South Vietnamese government after the U.S. embassy in Saigon refused to make a formal protest over the attack.

(In Hyannis Port, Mass., where the President spent the weekend, press secretary Pierre Salinger said the appeal had been received.

"We're looking into it," Salinger said.)

The text of Tam's short testament said:

"History alone will judge my life. I will allow no man to try me. The arrest and trial of all the nationalist opponents of the regime is a crime which will force the nation into the hands of the Communists.

PRIEST'S DEATH

"I oppose this crime and like the high priest Tich Quang Duc, who burned himself, I also kill myself as a warning to those

(Concluded on Page 2A)



PETER ARNETT
7-8-63

Viet Writer Blasts Diem, Kills Himself

Continued from Page One

people who are trampling on all freedom."

His signed testament was written on a small piece of paper. It was found in his wallet with a suicide note to his family.

Tich Quang Duc was the Buddhist monk who burned himself to death last month in support of charges by the Buddhist majority that Diem's regime imposes discriminatory policies on them. Diem is Roman Catholic.

Informed sources said Tam received a government summons Saturday along with 34 other civilians, many of them former nationalist politicians, to appear tomorrow before a special military court on charges of threatening the security of the state. They were accused of taking part in the unsuccessful coup attempt by paratroop units in 1960.

The charge carries a maximum of death and a minimum of five years in jail with hard labor.

Informed sources said Tam, a Buddhist, had been depressed by Diem's handling of the dispute with the Buddhists. Although he had been under surveillance by the government's secret police since the 1960 coup attempt, he had never been arrested.

The special military court opened a trial Friday of 19 officers and enlisted men on charges of rebellion and damaging state security in connection with the attempted coup.

The long-delayed trial, with strong political overtones, has excited strong interest here. One of the reasons is a statement in secret session by the government prosecutor that the

U.S. embassy was involved with the plotters. The United States denied this.

Relations between Diem's government and the United States, its principal ally in the struggle against the Communist Viet Cong guerrillas, have been deteriorating of late. Yesterday's assault on foreign newsmen added to the concern of U.S. officials.

The newsmen were jostled, shoved and struck by rocks thrown by secret police while approximately 60 uniformed policemen and a squad of riot police stood by.

The secret police felled and kicked Peter Arnett, a correspondent for the Associated Press, and smashed two cameras in a fracas following a memorial service for the monk who burned himself to death.

About 1,000 Buddhist monks and nuns attended the service at a pagoda.

The government banned public services for Quang Duc, apparently fearing a riot might erupt despite an agreement with the Buddhists resolving many differences.

As a monk carrying Quang Duc's ashes in a silver cup started to lead a procession out of the pagoda, uniformed police ordered the mourners to leave in small groups.

When Western newsmen and photographers moved in closer, secret agents began pushing and shoving.

Arnett, a New Zealander, was wrestled to the ground and kicked, suffering cuts and bruises. Two AP cameras were broken and a CBS movie camera was dented.

In their appeal to Mr. Kennedy, the newsmen charged that South Vietnamese agents had provoked the fighting and that the Diem government had embarked on a "campaign of open physical intimidation to prevent the covering of news which we feel Americans have a right to know."

U.S. embassy charge d'affaires William Trueheart told newsmen he would not make a formal protest to the Vietnamese government because "I don't feel I have enough basis for making one. I can't conclude that it was a planned attack."

Viet Writer Kills Self in Protest over Diem's Policies

7-9-63

Free Press Wire Services

SAIGON—South Viet Nam's most prominent writer, Nguyen Tuong Tam, committed suicide with poison Monday in a protest against President Ngo Dinh Diem's policies which, he said, could force the nation into Communism.

His death came on the eve of his trial for alleged complicity in the abortive 1960 coup d'etat against Diem and is expected to have widespread repercussions, including new protests against the government.

Sources said the government had asked the family for permission to bury Tam because it feared widespread student riots and other demonstrations



Diem

Tam was to have appeared acquitted six soldiers Monday of taking part in the revolt and sentenced 13 others to terms from five to 18 years at hard labor.

DIEM, WHO heads a predominantly Roman Catholic government in a country where two-thirds of the people are Buddhists, has been embroiled in a dispute with the leaders of the Buddhist majority who are threatening the survival of the regime. The Buddhists claim the government discriminates against them.

Tam, 58, a Buddhist, was considered South Viet Nam's greatest 20th-century writer. A novelist and poet, he was a former nationalist leader and took an active role in the underground campaign against French colonial rule. His pen name was Nhat Link.

The writer's death and its expected repercussions pre-

sent the United States with a new diplomatic dilemma. The United States has backed Diem's regime despite an enormous cost—the lives of about 80 GIs and a million dollars a day—to try to keep North Viet Nam Communists from taking over the country. It is no secret that the United States would welcome new leadership in South Viet

Nam, but its hands are tied. In Washington Monday, President Kennedy called in Frederick E. Nolting, Jr., United States ambassador to South Viet Nam, for talks on the increasing tensions. Nolting was on vacation in the United States.

Before the President was a complaint from four American newsmen in Saigon on rough handling Sunday by a score of Viet Nam government plainclothesmen when the reporters attempted to cover a Buddhist demonstration.

THE DEAD writer Tam left a short statement explaining his reason for taking poison:

"History alone will judge my life. I will allow no man to try me. The arrest and trial of all the nationalist opponents of the regime is a crime which will force the nation into the hands of the Communists.

"I oppose this crime and like the high priest Tich Quang Duc who burned himself, I also kill myself as a warning to those people who are trampling on all freedom."

(Duc, in a dramatic protest

of Diem's regime, burned himself to death in public.)

Tam wrote many novels and poems, most of which had political significance and dealt with the exploits of men in the anti-French underground. Most of his books are studied in Viet Nam schools and universities.

Vietnamese sources said Tam received a government summons Saturday along with 34 other civilians—many of them former nationalist politicians—to appear Tuesday before a special military court on charges of threatening the security of the state by allegedly taking part in the unsuccessful 1960 coup in Saigon.

The charge carries a maximum penalty of death and a minimum of five years in jail at hard labor.

7-9-63
**Diem's Regime
Wants to Plan
Writer's Funeral**

SOUTH VIET NAM, Saigon, July 9.—(UPI)—President Ngo Dinh Diem's regime is seeking family permission to make funeral arrangements for an eminent Vietnamese writer who committed suicide as a protest against the government, reliable sources said today.

The sources said the government fears possible student rioting if the funeral for the writer, Nguyen Tuong Tam, 58, is handled privately.

Tam, awaiting trial for alleged complicity in an unsuccessful coup against Diem in 1960, swallowed poison at his home Sunday and died in a hospital yesterday.

He and 34 other civilians had been scheduled to appear before a military tribunal today. Yesterday the tribunal freed six soldiers but sentenced 13 others to jail terms of five to 18 years for alleged complicity in the plot.

The trial prosecutor charged that American officials in South Viet Nam sided with the conspirators—a charge which has been denied by U.S. spokesmen here.

7-14-63
**1,500 Join Rites
for Writer-Suicide**

SAIGON, South Viet Nam, July 13.—(UPI)—A prominent Vietnamese writer who killed himself Monday in a political protest against President Ngo Dinh Diem's government was buried today in a small cemetery outside the city.

A crowd of some 1,500 mourners marched in the funeral procession of Nguyen Tuong Tam, a veteran Vietnamese nationalist who wrote under the pen name of Nhat Linh.

The funeral passed without incident. The government turned out heavy numbers of police to guard against demonstrations or riots.

Funeral March Protests Oppression in Viet Nam

SAIGON, Viet Nam, July 13 (AP). — A funeral procession protesting government oppression wound through the tense and silent streets of Saigon today but here were no clashes with police.

The two-hour march was for Nguyen Tuong Tam, a former cabinet member and South Viet Nam's leading author, who killed himself last Sunday, the second protest suicide in Saigon in less than a month.

Big white letters on a black mourning cloth atop the hearse proclaimed:

"We mourn the nation's opposition that has lost all its freedoms and we follow the example of Reverend Quang Duc, who destroyed himself by fire as a warning, setting an example for 1,000 years."

Rev. Quang Duc, a 73-year-old Buddhist monk, burned himself alive in public here last month in protest against alleged oppression of Buddhists by the predominantly Roman Catholic government of South Viet Nam.

Police Clear Streets

About 1,200 mourners shuffled silently behind the hearse. The streets had been cleared by police for two blocks on either side of the entire line of march.

More than 1,000 policemen backed by jeeps and riot squads were strung along the route. Troops and armored cars were parked in strategically located courtyards.

Plainclothes police agents were scattered among the mourners and crowds of onlookers that followed the procession. But the crowds were

quiet and the police kept their distance, preventing a repetition of violence that has marked earlier funeral and memorial services in the capital.

Mr. Tam's wife and some of his sons and daughters clung weeping to the hearse. The wife collapsed at the mortuary and had to be half carried during the early part of the procession.

Newsmen Answered

Newsmen who protested an alleged manhandling incident in Viet Nam were told yesterday President Kennedy "certainly shared your view that the American people should be fully informed on the course of events" there.

The correspondents had complained to Mr. Kennedy that police in South Viet Nam had roughed up United States newsmen covering Buddhist demonstrations against alleged religious persecution by the government there.

Pierre Salinger, White House press secretary, relayed Mr. Kennedy's feelings in identical telegrams to representatives in Viet Nam of the Associated Press, United Press International, the New York Times and the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Mr. Salinger noted, as was announced earlier, that "the American Embassy in Saigon was instructed to convey the full measure of our concern to the government of Viet Nam (about the incident), and this has been done."

President Kennedy "hopes that the incident is closed, and that there will not be a recurrence," Mr. Salinger added.

SOUTH VIET NAM

Suicide in Many Forms

A South Vietnamese novelist and politician named Nguyen Tuong Tam sent his sons out to buy a bottle of whisky one night last week. For a while he sat drinking with them at his home in Saigon. "My sons, I feel very happy tonight," he said. "I am going to die very soon." Suddenly he keeled over, was rushed to a hospital where he died next morning. In his glass was found a lethal dose of cyanide.

Novelist Tam, 58, was a revolutionary leader in Indo-China's war against the French. But after independence in 1954, he grew increasingly disenchanted with the authoritarian rule of South Viet Nam's President Ngo Dinh Diem. Fortnight ago, Diem's government charged Tam and 34 others with treason by conspiring to overthrow the President in an abortive coup attempt in November 1960. It was just two days before the scheduled trial that Tam committed suicide, and he explained why in a note he left behind. "The arrest and trial of all nationalist opponents of the regime is a crime that will force the nation into the hands of the Communists," he wrote. "I oppose this crime, and I kill myself as a warning

TIME, JULY 19, 1963

to those people who are trampling on our freedoms."

Dragging Feet. Diem's government moved quickly to head off demonstrations over Tam's death, posthumously acquitted him of all conspiracy charges at the Saigon treason trial. At the same time, the prosecutors tried to implicate the U.S. as being behind the 1960 coup; the charge was vigorously denied by the U.S. At the end of the trial, government judges sentenced 20 defendants to prison terms ranging from five to eight years; nine others who had fled the country after the attempted coup were sentenced to death *in absentia*.

Tam's suicide and the Saigon trial served once again to stoke South Viet Nam's smoldering religious and political crisis. Last month Buddhist Monk Thich Quang Duc burned himself to death on a Saigon street corner in protest against restrictions imposed on the country's 12 million Buddhists by Diem's predominantly Roman Catholic regime. After a series of nationwide demonstrations,* the government, under U.S. prodding, yielded to Buddhist demands and granted them equal religious and political standing with the nation's 1,500,000 Catholics. But influenced by his brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, who believes that the Buddhists are Red dupes, the militantly Catholic Diem has dragged his feet in implementing these concessions. Many Vietnamese Buddhists, says Nhu, "have become fanatic, lost their common sense, and are ready to follow anyone who knows how to exploit them under the banner of religion." This was the kind of dogged anti-Buddhist attitude that has dangerously undercut government support. Already one general has resigned his field command in protest over government bungling of the Buddhist issue.

Simple Reason. Diem's intransigence has dismayed U.S. officials, who fear that mounting Buddhist discontent can only hinder the war effort against the Viet Cong, just when it is beginning to go well. Over the past year, government forces and their 14,000 U.S. military "advisers" have vastly increased their mobility and striking power against the Red guerrillas. More than 7,000 "strategic hamlets" have been built, now protect 8,000,000 Vietnamese from Viet Cong raids.

Despite all misgivings, the U.S. still stands behind Diem for a simple reason that he himself spelled out in a blunt warning last week: "For a moment, imagine that another government replaces this one; it could not help resulting in civil war and dreadful dictatorship." Washington has considered alternatives to Diem, but fears that the confusion of a coup could only benefit the Viet Cong and might end up with

* Watching one Buddhist demonstration in Saigon last week, nine U.S. reporters were jostled by government police and had their cameras smashed. The cops said the reporters had started the row. The vociferously anti-Diem U.S. press corps in Saigon protested to President Kennedy.



NGUYEN TUONG TAM
"I kill myself as a warning . . ."

a regime no better than the present one. Thus U.S. Ambassador Frederick Nolting, who is soon to be replaced by Henry Cabot Lodge, returned to Saigon from Washington consultations last week with a personal message of confidence for Diem from John Kennedy.

But Nolting also lightly rapped Diem on the knuckles for letting the Buddhist crisis continue. "The U.S. stands for and supports freedom of religion for all people," he said. "It would be a tragedy if the gains against the Viet Cong were wiped out by dissensions among Vietnamese citizens, who desire above all freedom of choice for themselves and for their country."