

Vietnam courier



A MONTHLY REVIEW

● POLITICS ● ECONOMICS ● CULTURE ● SOCIETY



● Editorial Office:
46 Tran Hung Dao
Hanoi, SRV.

● Distributed by:
XUNHASABA
32 Hai Ba Trung
Hanoi, SRV.

VOLUME 15

**Popular Artistic Activities
in Vietnam**



The quan ho folksong of Bac Ninh.



*One-stringed instrument solo
at the Pioneers' Club in Hanoi.*



*A folk dance performed by an amateur troupe
in Ho Chi Minh City.*

OUR MONTHLY COMMENT

Contents

● <i>Our Monthly Comment</i>	1
● At the Vietnam — China Talks: The Chinese Eight-point Proposal	3
● To Nehru	5
● For COMECON's 30th Founding Anniversary: COMECON and Vietnam	5
● Notes Taken in Phnom Penh	7

● On the Presence of Vietnamese Forces in Laos	9
● April 1975: Beijing to the Rescue of Saigon?	10
● Appeal by the Vietnam Committee for the International Year of the Child.	11
● Crèches in Quang Binh Commune	12
● The Dong Phong Kindergarten	14
● Children's Poems	16
● For the Children: Vietnamese Cartoons	18
● Struggle against Illiteracy in Vietnam	21
● Vietnam Advances: Eliminating Malaria in the Whole Country	24
● Nguyen Ngoc — The Author and His Works	25
● <i>Chronology</i>	32

Front Cover: Nhi Hoa, a border-guard of ethnic minority origin from Hoang Lien Son province, sings to the accompaniment of the Meo flute.

Photo: NGOC QUAN

Vietnam Courier

AT the plenary session on Thursday 18 May 1979, the Chinese side unilaterally declared that the first round of the Vietnam — China talks would be wound up, just one month after their commencement, and that the Chinese delegation return from Hanoi to Beijing (Peking). No previous consultations with the Vietnamese side were made and no plausible reasons were given. The negotiations have so far recorded no progress whatsoever. The conduct of the Chinese negotiators has clearly shown up their arrogance and their great-nation expansionism.

At the very first session, Vietnam put forward a three-point proposal aimed at solving the urgent questions of preventing the resumption of hostilities and allowing people captured during the war to be reunited with their families as soon as possible. The proposal is also aimed at solving the more fundamental question of restoring normal relations between the two countries and settling the border and territorial disputes.

As for the Chinese side, at first it held the view that the objectives of the negotiations should be:

— to find out practical and applicable measures to ensure peace and security in the border regions;

— to restore normal relations between the two countries;

— to settle the border and territorial disputes and other contentions between the two countries.

(Chinese note dated 6 April 1979)

All the Chinese statements from the beginning of the aggression against Vietnam (17 February 1979) to 14 April 1979 held that, because of Vietnamese attacks and encroachments into Chinese territory, China had had to strike back. Between these explanations and the views expressed in the 6 April note, there is some logical coherence.

However, on 14 April, before boarding the plane to fly to Hanoi, Han Nianlong, head of the Chinese delegation, stated that he would raise the Kampuchean question at the negotiations. And since then, official Chinese statements as well as the activities of China's propaganda machinery are concentrating more and more on the subject of "opposing the hegemonistic policy" of Vietnam, which they say is the cause of the February — March 1979 conflict. The Chinese mass media are clamouring that this hegemonistic policy has been exposed by the Vietnamese troops' "aggression" against Kampuchea. They claim that Vietnam is serving the Soviet Union, the "greater hegemonistic" power, citing the signing of the Vietnam — Soviet Treaty on 3 November 1978 as evidence.

Therefore, according to the Chinese the settlement of the conflict must first of all be found through the elimination of Vietnam's hegemonistic policy, and Vietnam must participate in the Chinese-led "struggle against hegemony", withdraw its troops from Kampuchea and Laos, recognize China's sovereignty over the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagos, and receive back the Hoa who left for China.

These demands constitute the spirit and the basic points of the Chinese 8-point proposal at the second session.

Let us examine the Chinese arguments in their eight points and see what they actually want.

When making their 8-point proposal, the Chinese flatly rejected the three Vietnamese points, although these points were very close to their views as stated in the 6 April 1979 note.

In all negotiations for a cease-fire or a cessation of hostilities, it is important to put an end to the fighting and to prevent its resumption. The separation of the contending armed forces and the establishment of a demilitarized zone under bilateral or international control are classic measures — and generally effective — to ensure peace and security in the border regions. This is the content of Point 1 of the Vietnamese proposal. It is also similar to the decisions of international conferences in which China participated: the Geneva and the Panmunjom conferences which established demilitarized zones along the 17th and the 38th parallels respectively.

Why then did China reject Vietnam's proposal, which was prompted by a sincere desire for peace between the two countries? It is well known that, while negotiations were going on in Hanoi, the Chinese authorities had dozens of army corps concentrated near the Vietnam border and built many roads in the direction of Vietnam. They are also bringing military pressure to bear upon Laos. China is giving Vietnam an ultimatum: "Change your policy or you will receive a second lesson twice as strong as the first."

A change of policy means in this case the adoption of the "anti-hegemony" policy which China has pursued with particular energy since 1972, when its leaders welcomed Nixon. In fact, this is merely a cover for Beijing's alliance with the worst imperialist forces. While people all over the world are struggling against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, apartheid and zionism, the Chinese leaders seek to divert the struggle by raising a false objective, "Soviet hegemonism".

This practice is not strange to China: in 1971, when a summit conference of the Indochinese peoples was proposed, Beijing, which was preparing to go with the US, proposed to convene a conference of five countries (the three Indochinese countries, China, and the PDR of Korea) and six parties (including both North and South Vietnam), directed against... Japan.

Equating imperialism and "social imperialism", Beijing sees everywhere the expression of contradiction between these two forces: the national liberation struggle in the Middle East and Africa is, in their view, a conflict for hegemony between social imperialism and imperialism. This is indeed an affront to these nations who are struggling for their liberation!

China says that Vietnam deserves to be "punished" for seeking "regional hegemony" and serving "global hegemonism".

Of course, this is also a fallacious allegation. Albania is not a pro-Soviet nation, but it too fell victim to Beijing, the real reason being that it refused to obey Chinese orders.

More than any other socialist country, Vietnam had for a long time paid great attention to maintaining friendly relations with both the Soviet Union and China. Even

(Continued on page 31)

THE CHINESE EIGHT-POINT PROPOSAL

At the second plenary session on 26 April 1979, Han Nianlong, Head of the Chinese Government Delegation to the Vietnam — China talks, tabled the following eight-point proposal:

WITH a view to upholding the traditional friendship between the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples, in the common interest of China and Vietnam and of the two peoples, as well as for the furtherance of peace and stability in Indochina, Southeast Asia and the Asia Pacific region, the Chinese Government delegation, animated by the sincere desire to settle questions, puts forward the following proposal of principles for handling the relations between China and Vietnam:

1. The two sides shall restore friendly and good-neighbourly relations between China and Vietnam, on the basis of the five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence. They shall seek a reasonable solution of the disputes and issues in the relations between the two countries through peaceful negotiations.

2. Neither side should seek hegemony in Indochina, Southeast Asia or any other part of the world, and each is opposed to efforts by any other country or group of countries to establish such hegemony.

Neither side shall station troops in other countries, and those already stationed abroad must be withdrawn to their own country. Neither side shall join any military blocs directed against the other, provide military bases to other countries, or use the territory and bases of other countries to threaten, subvert or commit armed aggression against the other side or against any other countries.

3. The two sides respect the Sino-Vietnamese boundary line as delimited in the Sino-French boundary accords which shall serve as the basis for a negotiated settlement of their boundary and territorial disputes. Pending a settlement of the boundary question, each side shall strictly maintain the status quo of the boundary at the time when the Central Committees of the Chinese and Vietnamese parties exchanged letters in 1957-1958, and will not attempt to alter unilaterally and forcibly the actual extent of its jurisdiction along the border in any form or on any pretext.

4. Each side shall respect the other side's sovereignty over its twelve-nautical-mile territorial sea, and the two sides shall demarcate their respective economic zones and continental shelves in the Beibu Gulf (1) and other sea areas in a fair and reasonable way in accordance with the relevant principles of present day international law of the sea.

5. The Xisha and Nansha islands (2) have always been an inalienable part of China's territory. The Vietnamese side shall revert to its previous position of recognizing this fact and respect China's sovereignty over these two island groups and withdraw all its personnel from those islands in the Nansha group which it has occupied.

6. Nationals of one country residing in the other country shall respect the laws of that country and the ways and customs of the local people and shall endeavour to do their part for the economic and cultural development of that country. The government of the country of residence shall guarantee their proper rights and interests in regard to residence, travel, making a living and employment and safeguard their personal safety and lawfully acquired properties in that country. Each side shall treat all the nationals of the other side residing in its country in a friendly manner and must not persecute or illegally expel them.

7. In response to the legitimate wish for repatriation on the part of the Vietnamese citizens forcibly driven by the Vietnamese authorities into Chinese territory, the Vietnamese Government should receive them in a proper manner as soon as possible. The Chinese Government is ready to facilitate their early return in every way.

8. The restoration of railway traffic, trade, civil aviation, postal and telecommunication services and other bilateral ties shall be dealt with by the departments concerned of the two countries through consultations.

*
*
*

At the third plenary session on 4 May 1979, Phan Hien, Head of the SRV Government Delegation to the Vietnam — China talks, made the following analysis of the Chinese proposal:

THE eight-point proposal of the Chinese side is merely an attempt to use the negotiating table for the purpose of implementing the Chinese leaders' great-nation expansionist and hegemonistic policy towards Vietnam, which they have failed to achieve despite the resort to one thousand and one tricks, including war waged by proxy and directly. In fact, as a Western journalist put it, "China wants to use the creation of tensions at the borders as a means of pressure to cause Vietnam to change its policy." (AFP, April 27, 1979)

As a matter of fact, it is necessary to point out that, in putting forward its eight-point proposal, the Chinese side labels it a "proposal of principles for handling the relations between China and Vietnam". However, apart from Point 1 about "restoring friendly and good-neighbourly relations between China and Vietnam on the basis of the five

(1) Tonkin or Bac Bo — Ed.

(2) Called Hoang Sa and Truong Sa respectively by the Vietnamese — Ed.

principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence", they have raised issues going beyond bilateral relations, making an outstanding point of the so-called "struggle against hegemonism", and "non-stationing of troops in other countries", thereby hinting that Vietnam should withdraw troops from Kampuchea and Laos. They have forgotten that through an exchange of notes, the two sides have agreed to discuss the restoration of normal relations between the two countries.

The Chinese side spoke a great deal about the struggle against hegemonism. But what about their deeds? Actually, they want to establish China's world hegemony; they are concentrating all their efforts on a race for economic and military power, for the power of iron and steel, energy and nuclear weapons, so that China might become a first-class superpower by the end of the 20th century. They are hurriedly seeking an all-round alliance with imperialism — particularly with US imperialism, calling China an eastern NATO power, with a view to materializing their global strategy against the socialist countries, the national liberation movement and peace and progress in the world. They support the fascist Pinochet clique, help Mobutu, and befriend the Shah of Iran to oppose the Liberation movement of the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In 1962, China started a war of aggression against India. In 1969, it kindled a border war with the Soviet Union. In 1974, it occupied by force the Hoang Sa archipelago of Vietnam and attempted to monopolize the Eastern sea. In the meantime, it accepted the imperialist occupation of parts of Chinese territory, and welcomed the prolongation of that state of affairs. It supplied money and weapons, and used the organizations following its line and the large masses of overseas Chinese nationals for manoeuvres to pressurize and subvert various administrations in Southeast Asia which it considers its main sphere of influence. It tried to turn Kampuchea into a neo-colony moulded after the Beijing model as a springboard for expansion into Southeast Asia; it indulged in attempts at intervention and war threats against Laos. It calls for a US military presence in Southeast Asia, meanwhile, it demands that Vietnam withdraw troops from Kampuchea and Laos. Over the past 30 years, the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea have been constantly fighting shoulder to shoulder against the common enemy — the imperialist aggressors — and after victory, the troops of each country have withdrawn within their national borders. Now, confronted with a danger of intervention, aggression and annexation created by Beijing, the three peoples are further strengthening their solidarity and helping one another by every means, including military means, to defend the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of their respective countries. This is legitimate cooperation in keeping with the UN Charter, the objectives and principles of the Non-Aligned Movement and the principles of the Bandung Conference. This is a question concerning the relations between sovereign countries, nobody is allowed to interfere in it. The Chinese leaders are seeking a military alliance with the United States, they do not oppose the maintenance of US military bases in Southeast Asia, in Asia and the Pacific, meanwhile, they

have raised the so-called issue of "neither side joining any military blocs directed against the other, providing military bases to other countries", thereby hinting at Vietnam's signing the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union. We have repeatedly made it clear that the Vjetnam — Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation does not constitute a military alliance, and is not directed at any third country. China has nothing to fear if it does not aggress Vietnam. Vietnam firmly opposes China's policy of colluding with the US imperialists, but we do not demand that the Chinese side give up its relations with the United States as a precondition for a normalization of relations between Vietnam and China.

It is noteworthy that the Chinese eight-point proposal is a virtual repetition of the anti-hegemony provision in the 1972 Shanghai Joint Communiqué between China and the United States, the 1978 Sino — Japanese Treaty and the 1978 China — US Joint Communiqué. As is well-known, over recent years, under the anti-hegemony signboard, China has attempted to set up with imperialism and other reactionary forces a front against the world revolutionary movement. Raising the anti-hegemony principle at the negotiations with Vietnam, it wants to compel Vietnam to give up its correct line of independence, sovereignty and international solidarity and align itself on China's policy, China wants Vietnam to abandon its lofty international obligation, first of all to the people of Laos and Kampuchea, so that China might easily materialise its great-nation expansionism and hegemonism in this region.

The Chinese side has used the so-called struggle against hegemonism to conceal its own hegemonism, to side-track the world peoples' revolutionary struggle, and to divert the attention of public opinion, which is condemning its war of aggression against the Vietnamese people. The question has often been asked as to why China is doing its utmost to publicize anti-hegemony contentions while it has given up the objectives of the world people's struggle i.e., to oppose imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, apartheid and Zionism. In fact, it regards the revolutionary struggle of the people of various countries merely as a wrangle for influence among the big powers. It does not allow the nations to decide their own affairs themselves, but adamantly tries to talk one country into adopting, and to impose on another, this pseudo-principle of anti-hegemonism. Obviously, only one question arises: the Beijing leaders should give up their great-nation expansionism and hegemonism: only in this way will there be peace and stability in Southeast Asia and the world. The peoples of the Indochinese peninsula, Southeast Asia, and the world are determined to wage in unity a struggle against all manoeuvres and the collusion of the imperialist and international reactionary forces, for peace, national independence, democracy, and social progress.

The eight-point proposal of the Chinese side contains in addition extremely unreasonable and arrogant demands. It demands that Vietnam relinquish its sovereignty over the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa Islands which have always been part of Vietnamese territory. While cynically occupying the Hoang Sa islands, China brazenly demands that

(Continued on page 29)

To Nehru

This poem was written by President HO CHI MINH in 1942-43 when he was jailed by the Chiang Kai-shek regime in South China. It forms part of the President's "Prison Diary" but has not been published until now.

I am struggling, you are active
You are in jail, I am in prison
Ten thousand miles apart, we have not met
We communicate without words
Shared ideas link you and me
What we lack is personal encounter
I am jailed by a neighbouring friend
You are chained and fettered by the enemy.

*(Translated by M.R. SIVARAMAKRISHNAN,
Ambassador of India in Vietnam)*

For COMECON's 30th Founding Anniversary

COMECON AND VIETNAM

FOUNDED in January 1949 with four members, COMECON (CMEA*) is now thirty years old. Its present membership includes ten countries, all socialist, in Europe, Asia and Latin America. A number of other countries are represented as observers.

Perfection of Organization and Extension of Activities

COMECON has never ceased, through the past thirty years, to perfect its organization which consists of the Session of the Council — its highest body —, an Executive Committee where all ten member states are represented, a Secretariat and the various Standing Commissions including the Committee for Cooperative Planning, the Committee for Scientific and Technical Cooperation, the Committee for Materials and Technical Supplies — the various specialized committees and other bodies (banks, the Standardization Institute, the Institute of Economy...)

Improvement of the organization was necessary to carry out the ever-increasing tasks :

— From 1949 to 1958 : mainly to broaden trade relations among member countries to help promote exchange of commodities and solve immediate shortages in food and industrial raw materials.

— From 1959 to 1963 : to lay the basis for cooperation and specialization in long-term needs in fuel, energy, important materials, and essential machinery and equipment.

— From 1963 on : to concentrate on coordination of national economic plans and integration of the socialist economies of the member states.

Following the 32nd Session (June 1978), a development programme was worked out for a 15-20 year period. It involves long-term cooperation plans to be implemented by a collective of scientists and economists from the member states. The plans will be directed towards important economic objectives in fuel, energy, raw materials, machine-building, agriculture, food processing, consumer goods manufacture, transport and communications.

Specialization and cooperation in production have begun among member countries. From 1971 to 1978, the production of more than 4,500 engineering products and some 2,800 chemical products was specialized.

Cooperation within COMECON has been expressed in a number of key joint projects. These include the 2,750-km Orenburg-Westgrenz gas pipeline to supply almost 20 billion cubic metres to the European socialist countries, the 750-kilovolt power line from Winniza, USSR, to Albertirza, Hungary, which completes the COMECON energy grid in Europe ; the UST-Ilim cellulose combine with an annual output of 500,000 tons ; the asbestos combine at Kijembajen, USSR ; the copper and molybdenum combine at Erdenet in Mongolia ; and

* CMEA : Council for Mutual Economic Assistance.

a project in Cuba to increase the output of nickel and cobalt by 130,000 tons a year.

COMECON operates on the principles of respect for national sovereignty and interests, non-intervention in member countries' internal affairs, complete equality, mutual benefit, and socialist internationalist cooperation, in the interests of each member state and the whole socialist community. Resolutions have to be endorsed unanimously, and cooperation in joint projects is voluntary.

Fine successes have been obtained thanks to the efforts of individual member states and their cooperation within the COMECON framework.

COMECON's industrial output in 1950 was only 83.3 per cent of the EEC's output. In 1976, COMECON produced twice as much as the EEC. From 1951 to 1976, the annual increase in industrial output was 9.5 per cent in COMECON, and 4.5 per cent in the EEC. COMECON members have already outstripped Western countries in such key industries as oil, gas, electricity, coal, steel, machine tools, rail transport, tractors, cement and fertilizer.

Relations with Developing Countries

DEMANDS have been raised by developing countries over the past years for industrially developed countries to improve the unequal existing economic relations. The plan for a "new world economic order" is an expression of the legitimate desire of the developing countries to accelerate the de-colonization process in the economy, to end the exploitation by Western industrial forces, and provide the right conditions for the developing countries to abolish their economic backwardness. What the developing countries want are equitable economic relations in the pricing of raw materials and industrial products; an international structure to reduce price fluctuation of raw materials, together with measures to maintain its financial capability to do so; transfer of technology from advanced to developing countries; transformation of the world monetary and credit systems, and restriction of operation of the multinationals and international monopolies.

The socialist countries, though not responsible for the poverty in the developing countries, have made great efforts to help these countries build their economies. Their aid is not compensation for past wrongs. It is the assistance of friends and allies in the struggle against the common enemies — imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism.

Economic relations between COMECON countries and the developing countries have become more and more diverse. They do not only concern aid, loans and investments in equipment and trade, but also cover professional training, technical assistance, surveying, and scientific and technical cooperation.

COMECON members are providing assistance to more than 3,000 industrial and other projects, of which 2,200 have already been commissioned. These include very famous ones, like the Aswan Dam in Egypt and a steelworks with an annual output of 1.3 million tons in Nigeria. Power plants built with COMECON assistance in developing countries have an aggregate capacity of 16 million kw producing some 35-50 billion kwh annually. COMECON is also helping to build foundries

capable of producing 14 million tons of pig iron and 16 million tons of steel a year, oil refineries of 18 million tons a year, and collieries to produce 20 million tons every year.

In 1975 alone, COMECON signed with the developing countries 240 agreements on economic, scientific and technical cooperation. The loans it has granted have amounted to 15 billion roubles. They are mostly long-term, either interest-free, or with slight interest. The COMECON-sponsored International Investments Bank in 1973 set up a special fund for the developing countries, with an estimated sum of 1 billion convertible roubles for 15 years.

COMECON has trained, in short and long-term courses, some two million experts for the developing countries. With the setting up of a fellowship fund in 1974, it now grants an average of 700 scholarships per year to overseas students. Under the same system, about 50,000 foreign experts, engineers and workers every year receive complementary training at 26 colleges and universities and more than 100 scientific and vocational centres. COMECON countries have also helped build 140 vocational schools, 50 colleges, and 180 engineering and metal processing factories, which will be used for training purposes.

COMECON and Vietnam

VIETNAM, like Cuba and Mongolia, is a less-developed member of COMECON and, as such, receives concentrated assistance to develop its economy and reduce the gap between it and the more developed members.

A socialist country, Vietnam has always seen the importance of cooperation among countries of the same politico-economic system. A developing country, it knows that the assistance of the developed socialist countries will enable it to build quickly an independent, and prosperous economy. From 1961 on Vietnam was an observer at various sessions of the Council and other COMECON bodies. It also joined other socialist countries in the organizations relating to railways, post and telecommunications, and in the Institute for Joint Nuclear Research. In May 1977, it joined the International Investments Bank and the International Bank for Economic Cooperation.

For many years, Vietnam entertained bilateral cooperation with all members of COMECON, and joined them in a series of multilateral cooperative measures.

Soviet assistance has played an important role in the Vietnamese economy. By early 1976, the Soviet Union had helped Vietnam build more than 170 major industrial establishments and other bases, which, among other things, are producing 100% of the country's tin, acids, superphosphate and coffee, 80% of the metal cutting machines, 71% of the coal, and 61% of the electricity.

The basis for Vietnamese-Soviet cooperation in Vietnam's 1976-1980 plan is the agreement signed in October 1975 and the document on coordination of national economic plans for the 1978-1980 period. Soviet loans are granted on a priority basis, and Soviet assistance is being provided for the construction of 40 major projects, among them the Da River Hydro-Electric Project which, with a capacity of 1,700,000 kw, will be the biggest hydro-electric station in Southeast Asia; a coal mine

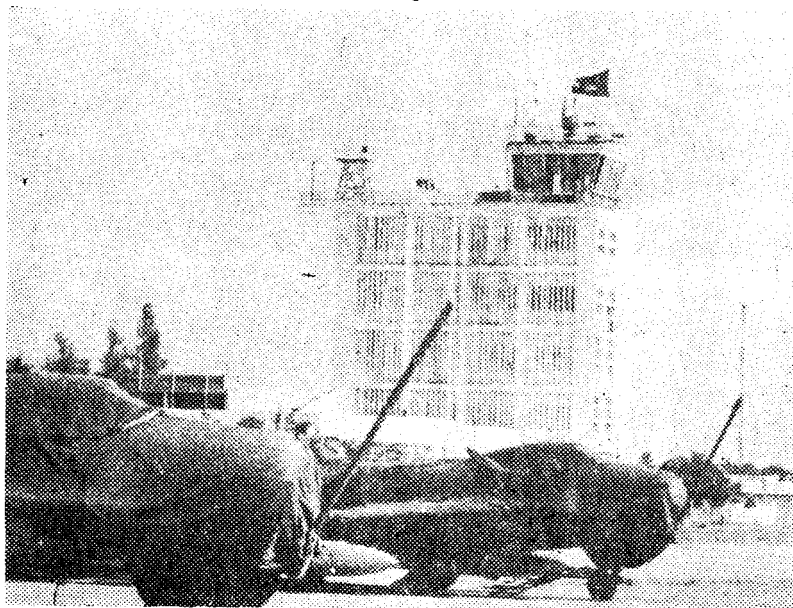
(Continued on page 30)

NOTES TAKEN IN PHNOM PENH

A city which emerged from the war almost intact, murdered but not destroyed, except for a building blown up with explosives by Khmer Rouge troops in 1975. That was the old National Bank which was, in the eyes of these "radical revolutionaries", a detested symbol of capitalism. As I look at the broad straight boulevards, the Khmer-style office buildings and the graceful villas hidden among the luxuriant vegetation, I recall the Phnom Penh of the 60's, the capital of the "peaceful oasis" in Southeast Asia with its seething half-a-million population. But the long-awaited day — 17 April 1975 — was also a day of great shock for the population of this city: the Khmer Rouge administration ordered the city-dwellers to move out of Phnom Penh as well as the other towns, allegedly to shelter from US bombing. That "temporary evacuation" lasted three years and eight months, during which time the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary clique was given a free hand to build a society in accordance with their ideal: a purely agricultural society in which "one can have everything once one has rice", to use Pol Pot's words. A society without class or religion; a kind of primitive communism.

Carrying out that ideal, Pol Pot, Ieng Sary and their supporters did not hesitate to root out all opposition forces, even those who were only potential opponents. Accordingly, all intellectuals, especially those who could speak a little of a foreign language fell into this category.

Accompanied by a guide, an official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, I visited Toul Sleng University, which had become notorious: the foreign press once referred to it as a dreadful prison set up right in the heart of the Kampuchean capital. I saw the torture room with electric-shock devices placed beside daggers and large pincers. I entered class-rooms which had been turned into two rows of prison cells, each cell for one or two persons. I also saw the fetters used to restrain



Pochentong airport after liberation.

the prisoners. There is a gallows in the yard which overlooks the new graves of the prisoners killed some time before the city was liberated on 7 January 1979. In the prison register handed me by Ms Pen Em, the curator of the new "Museum of Crimes", I saw that two names had been marked with crosses: Huot Sambath and Sieng An, both former ambassadors — Sieng An was ambassador to Hanoi. Ms Pen Em told me later that those whose names had been marked were killed in the prison.

Anyone passing through the capital on his way back to his native village can tell you of the tragedies that befell him, his family or village. One woman had been widowed, and her children had died of starvation or disease. Another was still separated from her family whose whereabouts she did not know: she was forced to leave her house in 1975 while her close relations had to join other collectives.

Four months after the fall of the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary regime, Kampuchean are still wandering

all over the country. Their numbers have been reduced compared with those in January and February, but there are still hundreds of people returning home along the road from Pochentong to Phnom Penh.

I witnessed scenes of people returning home when I visited southern Vietnam in May 1975, just after liberation. Our people quickly left the concentration camps, cities and towns where they had been forced to live under the US "forcible urbanization programme". They took the highway and were quite well dressed. They carried a lot of luggage with them: trunks, suitcases, household utensils, corrugated iron for roofing, poultry and even pigs. But the people I saw in Kampuchea show clearly the utter misery they were reduced to through the Pol Pot years: their clothes are of the same colour — washed-out black, they go barefoot or wear rubber sandals, with all their belongings packed into a small bundle which they carry

on their heads, as is usual in Kampuchea.

The Phnom Penh population is not yet allowed to return home. The streets are deserted and most of the houses abandoned. I notice lights in some houses at night. Perhaps, one Kampuchean friend told me, the owners of those houses had been driven out of the capital in such a hurry that they forgot to switch off the lights. Anyhow, it is no easy task to bring people's lives back to normal, since the economy was paralysed by the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary clique. There is the problem of census-taking too.

I was told by responsible officials of the revolutionary power at various levels that all documents such as birth, death and marriage certificates had been destroyed by the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary regime. And the people's power had not yet issued new papers. What was the use of registration under a regime which systematically eliminated intellectuals, and even anyone who had had some education, which gave orders not by written decrees but by word of mouth (as my Kampuchean friend told me), which closed down all newspapers, closed schools, banned all textbooks, and which forbade even the circulation of banknotes which would have some words on? But all this resulted in a total dislocation of the social fabric and a degradation of the society itself. Therefore the people's revolutionary power is now faced with a great problem: how to determine the identity of its citizens. How to check their names, ages and family ties.

Of course, as the revolution progresses, all the problems can be solved if a mass line is taken. But this particular problem cannot be settled overnight.

We stop at Preykai *phum* (village), about 20 km south of Phnom Penh. According to a local official this *phum* no longer exists, for all its 3,267 inhabitants were moved to an upland area about 30 km away in 1975. 30 per cent of them died of disease during and after this forced evacuation. All the civilian houses had been burned down. I still saw some charred pillars. In their place, the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary administration

built a number of wooden or brick houses which look quite comfortable. The largest was used as a rice-husking mill and the others as offices or dwelling houses for the village officials and for the two or three Chinese advisers. Away from the village lies a vast field stretching to the horizon. The local official said: "This used to belong to our peasants and was made up of many plots of land. After driving out the population, Pol Pot's men levelled the demarcation lines, and turned all the plots into a State farm. Then they brought in machines to increase the rice output. The harvested rice was sent to the husking mill. At harvest time more men and women Chinese 'advisers' arrived to weigh and pack the unhusked rice and carry it to China on trucks."

After a pause the official continued, "So Kampuchean rice was taken to China, like other produce from our country: dried fish, semi-finished rubber, timber, precious stones, etc. All this in exchange for the weapons and war equipment supplied by Beijing to the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary clique."

Thus the true masters of Kampuchea between 1975 and 1978 — the Chinese hegemonists — proved to be more expert in economic affairs than their predecessors, the US imperialists:

For all that, Beijing and Washington remain essentially similar to each other.

I recall a conversation I had before leaving Vietnam with Pham Van Ba, Vietnamese ambassador to Kampuchea after April 1975. He said: "After liberation, there were nine embassies altogether in Phnom Penh: from China, Vietnam, Laos, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Cuba, Albania, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Egypt. The Chinese embassy had a staff of 300, the Koreans, 20. The remaining missions had from three to seven each. The Chinese embassy had four military attachés: Army, Navy, Air Force and an equipment attaché. While the Vietnamese ambassador and staff, like those working in other embassies, were not allowed to leave the embassy, the Chinese

ambassador and his staff could travel all over the country. They often went to Kompong Som, a port in the Gulf of Thailand, where Chinese ships unloaded weapons and munitions for the rapid build-up of the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary army."

Pham Van Ba stressed: "To all intents and purposes, the relationship between China and the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary administration did not differ from that between the US and the Nguyen Van Thieu administration in southern Vietnam. US ambassador Graham Martin had the last word in all major policy-making, internal as well as external, of the Thieu administration, for the US was the main supplier of the dollars and weapons necessary to maintain the regime. Chinese ambassador Sun Hao occupied a similar position in the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary administration. If southern Vietnam before liberation can be considered as a US neo-colony, Kampuchea was nothing but a Chinese neo-colony between 1975 and 1978."

If the Vietnamese people are very fortunate to have had 30 April 1975, the Kampuchean are just as lucky to have had 7 January 1979.

During a reception, Chan Si, Director of the Political General Department of the Kampuchean Revolutionary Armed Forces, said: "The revolutionary forces liberated Phnom Penh and other towns on 7 January 1979. But part of the enemy forces had withdrawn to the mountains, possibly according to a set plan. All radio messages sent by the enemy command to their troops which we monitored ordered them not to oppose any resistance but rather to scatter rapidly into the forests. The total number of enemy troops hiding in the forests rose to nearly 120,000. Thus the first task of the revolutionary army over the past four months has been to pursue and wipe out the remnants of the enemy forces. Now we can say that this task has been essentially carried out. The number of remnants of the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary forces is negligible. All the evidence our forces have obtained during their attacks on the enemy's last hide-outs point to an obstinate Chinese attempt to maintain the

Pol Pot regime in power and even to persuade Thailand to join hands with Beijing in opposing our people."

Ever brighter prospects are opening up for Kampuchea; the revolutionary power is being consolidated and the situation is more and more stable.

An increasing number of offices are re-opening in Phnom Penh. Music from the revolutionary radio station is often heard, and every day the Pochentong airport welcomes guests and friends from other countries who come to visit this suffering but courageous land and bring it both moral and material support.

More and more people have returned to *phum* Preykal. A primary school has been set up in the office of the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary administration. It is really moving to see the still poorly dressed boys and girls sitting in those classes, seven to eight at a desk, with only one book and a stub of pencil, practising reading out loud in chorus. As a Vietnamese I am proud to see Vietnamese military medical workers help train more than 40 public health workers for the district, in a course organized in the very mill which used to husk rice for China. These medical workers are from one of the Vietnamese units stationed in the neighbourhood, under the treaty signed between the two governments.

I foresee the future of Kampuchea through the small class of children and the medical training course. The resurrection has started of this talented nation, the builders of the Angkor civilization. The three years of the anti-national and inhuman regime set up in conformity with Beijing's theories to serve China's expansionist designs were like a nightmare. The consequences must be very dreadful. But the Kampuchean people have won back their right to live. They have won back their independence and sovereignty. They have to start again, almost from scratch. But they are marching forward. It is the duty of everyone in the world who cares for justice and peace to come to their assistance.

May 1979

NGUYEN HOANG

On the Presence of Vietnamese Forces in Laos

ON 23 April 1979, Khamphay Boupma, acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Democratic Republic of Laos, sent a note to UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim. The note reads in part: "The presence of Vietnamese forces in Laos within the framework of the treaty signed between the two countries is a just measure stemming from the legitimate right of a sovereign country, and this is also a common practice in international relations in perfect conformity with the UN Charter."

Vietnam News Agency interviewed Nguyen Duy Trinh, SRV Minister of Foreign Affairs, on this issue. The Minister said:

"The Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed between Vietnam and Laos on 18 July 1977 aims to strengthen mutual assistance in all fields of national defence and national construction in each country. The governments of the two countries have agreed on the presence of Vietnamese forces in Laos to join the Lao people in the struggle to defend the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of each country, to build each country, and to help maintain peace and stability in Southeast Asia and the world. This is legitimate cooperation, in keeping with the UN Charter, the objectives and principles of the non-aligned movement, and the principles of the Bandung Conference. It is a matter relevant only to relations between two sovereign States, in which nobody has the right to interfere..."

On the Chinese authorities' demand for the "withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Laos", Nguyen Duy Trinh said: "Many foreign news agencies have clearly pointed out that the Beijing rulers are concentrating troops on their borders with Laos and Vietnam, and are backing reactionary Lao forces to oppose the Lao Government. Many Lao Government officials including Vice-Premier Phoumi Vongvichit, Advisor Souvanna Phouma and Information Minister Sisana Sisane, have exposed the Chinese authorities' scheme which is to invade Laos and turn it into a springboard for annexing Vietnam and Kampuchea, in furtherance of their expansionist and hegemonistic ambitions in the whole of Southeast Asia... The militant solidarity between Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, strongly supported by the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, and by broad sections of world public opinion, is an important factor ensuring the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of each country, and peace and stability in Southeast Asia."

APRIL 1975: BEIJING TO THE RESCUE OF SAIGON?

ON the morning of Monday 28 April 1975, at the side gate of Villa No. 3, Tran Quy Cap Boulevard in Saigon there were people busily coming and going. The premises was the private house of Duong Van Minh, newly-elected President of the Saigon regime in place of Tran Van Huong. Inside, debate was raging on the way to deal with revolutionaries' attack on Saigon and on the formation of a new cabinet. Among the crowd in the courtyard behind the green hedge, there was a European: none other than Vanuxem, a French general who commanded Groupement Mobile No. 3 in the Indochinese war and was the boss of Nguyen Van Thieu. He was also an international secret agent. He had been in Saigon for weeks as supreme advisor to Thieu and remained in Saigon as a reporter for the French paper *Carrefour* after Thieu and his family had fled to Taiwan with tons of gold and jewellery.

Vanuxem, thick-set and sweaty, was circulating in the crowd, trying to persuade Saigon "statesmen" not to surrender to the Liberation Army. He went to great lengths to explain that the Liberation Front could not win and that Saigon would not fall into their hands. Well-informed sources from Washington, Paris and Beijing, he said, had let him know that China was not in favour of a complete victory of the South Vietnam Liberation Front. Therefore, the Saigon authorities should take advantage of this chance to launch counter-offensives.

He, as well as other European and American secret agents, was well aware of the collusion between the USA and China after the Sino-American joint communique was signed in Shanghai in 1972. They knew that China's attitude was to keep the Saigon authorities in power and to maintain the partition of Vietnam. One of the proofs was that the Chinese *People's Daily* in its issue of 16 January 1975 carried the 14 January Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, but left out two sections: one a Vietnamese denouncement of US crimes, and the other containing the two urgent requirements by the Provisional Revolutionary Government in its declaration on 10 August 1974 that Nguyen Van Thieu and his clique be replaced and that the USA end its intervention in southern Vietnam.

Even US Ambassador Graham Martin and his French counterpart, Ambassador J.M. Mérillon, believed that in the face of Chinese pressure, an attack on Saigon was impossible and therefore the Saigon regime would remain standing.

But on the afternoon of 28 April 1975 our airforce bombed Tan Son Nhat airport and our regular army corps were approaching Saigon. The last general offensive had started. We know that at that time diplomatic ploys were being made in many capitals by US imperialists, Saigon officials and other foreigners

including the Chinese; as well as hints and threats with a view to hindering the total liberation of southern Vietnam and particularly of Saigon. That situation required us to work against time by stepping up our military activities for speedy total victory. As for the Beijing rulers, we already knew of their scheme to bargain our revolutionary cause with the USA in favour of their worldwide strategy. They brought pressure to bear upon us to accept the status quo in southern Vietnam: i.e. to maintain the Saigon regime in power.

Their leader once said: "It is a lasting problem to overthrow Nguyen Van Thieu. If the broom handle is short you can't sweep far. China's broom is too short to sweep away the Chiang Kai-shek clique from Taiwan. So is Vietnam's: it is too short to clear away Thieu." Right at the start of our campaign in early 1975 to fulfil our nation's task—to liberate the South—it was the Chinese leaders who said to us: "The Vietnamese people's struggle must be a long one. The USA will not reconcile itself to withdrawing from Vietnam. Vietnam should launch minor offensives and if necessary stop for some years."

The order of the Vietnam Workers' Party Political Bureau to the whole campaign on 29 April 1975 said:

"Go on attacking Saigon according to the plan, advance vigorously, liberate and occupy all the cities and towns, seize enemy weapons, disband the puppet administration at all levels and completely crush any resistance." On the morning of 30 April many columns of our forces were advancing to Saigon. The "new cabinet" of the puppet administration was then about to present itself to the public in the Palace of Independence. In the spacious entrance hall, over fifty ministers, senators and politicians were eager for the ceremony to begin. Duong Van Minh, Nguyen Van Huyen and Vu Van Mau were sitting in a

In his book "Decent Interval", Frank Snepp, a former CIA employee in Saigon, tells that during the morning of 29 April 1975 the American general Timmes met with General Duong Van Minh. The Vietnamese general told the American that the French ambassador J.M. Mérillon felt that there was still a small chance of coming to an agreement which would allow certain pro-American elements to stay in power in an eventual coalition government.

"What gives the French that impression?" asked Timmes. Minh replied that the French believed that the Chinese were still opposed to any hegemony of the North Vietnamese over the whole of Vietnam and that they would exercise all their influence to prevent complete Communist victory.

(Continued on page 20)



APPEAL OF THE VIETNAM COMMITTEE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD

The Vietnam Committee for the International Year of the Child has just made an appeal to parents all over the world, the Secretariat of the UN Committee for the International Year of the Child, all national Committees for the International Year of the Child and other international organizations. The appeal says:

AS you know, Vietnamese children suffered greatly from the US war of aggression.

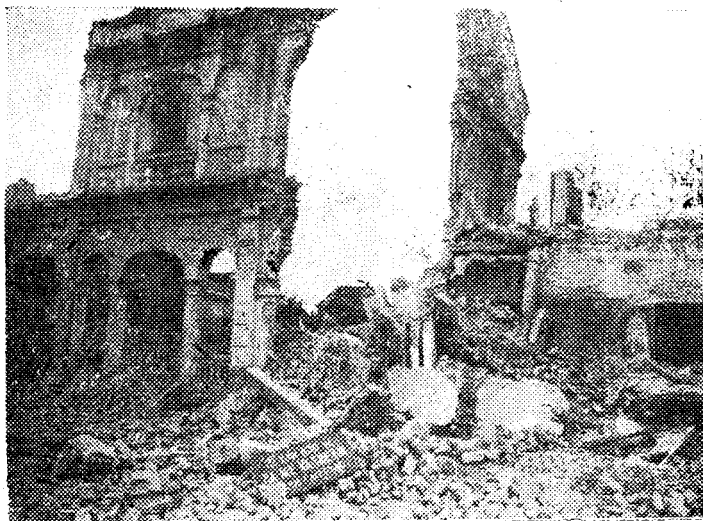
While the heavy consequences of that war are being overcome, on 17 February 1979 the Chinese authorities started a war of aggression against Vietnam. Wherever they went, Chinese troops destroyed everything. They killed civilians, especially mothers and children. Before their withdrawal, Chinese troops dynamited roads, railways and bridges. They also destroyed economic, cultural and educational installations. Thousands of crèches and kindergartens, almost 800 first- and second-level general education schools, more than 400 hospitals, health centres and maternity homes were destroyed, many populated areas along the border are now in ruins.

Having suffered heavy defeat and condemned by the world and the Chinese people, China

had to withdraw its troops and agree to sit down at the negotiating table, but the Chinese authorities still continue to prepare for a new war against Vietnam. We parents in Vietnam are determined to sacrifice all for a life of peace and happiness for our children.

We urgently call on parents all over the world, in this International Year of the Child, to voice their support for the protection of Vietnamese children and demand that China stop its aggression against Vietnam so that Vietnamese children can enjoy peace, care and education like their friends in other countries.

We also appeal to parents and various organizations in the world who have at heart the happiness of children, to take concrete and significant actions to help restore a normal life for children in Vietnam.



Left: The office of the Committee for Mother and Child Welfare of Cao Bang province destroyed by Chinese artillery.

Right: Nong Vinh Kao, aged 10, victim of Chinese atrocities.



CRÈCHES in Quang Binh Commune

QUANG BINH commune is in the low-lying area of Quang Xuong district, Thanh Hoa province, about 200 km south of Hanoi. Average cultivable area per head of population is very small as the commune has only 417 hectares of land for a population of 3,800. To ensure sufficiency for its population, efforts must be made to practise intensive farming and develop animal husbandry and sideline occupations. That was the orientation adopted by the members and leaders of the commune's large-scale cooperative.

Women account for 70 per cent* of the cooperative's labour force of 1,080, and three-quarters of them have small children. So only 70 per cent of women could be mobilized for field work during periods of intensive labour in the farming years, the rest having to stay home to look after their children. Many mothers had very small number of work-days to their account, and some did not work at all for six or seven months in the years when their babies were born. Every year 80 per cent of women did not reach the required number of work-days or work-points and the cooperative had to sell them 50 to 60 tons of food.

Was this because women in Quang Binh commune preferred to stay home to do household chores and look after the children rather than to participate in production?

No. This low-lying and easily flooded land requires that everybody, man or woman, work hard

for their living. Moreover, women appreciated their right to equality with men in production and the economic independence given them by the revolution.

Added to all this, the cooperative did not pay enough attention to helping women in their work, especially since women constituted the main labour force in the countryside. Housework and child-care kept them at home and did not give them the opportunity to study science and new production techniques or even allow them time for recreations.

Previously, crèches and kindergartens were built together with other social welfare establishments like health centres, libraries, meeting-halls, etc. in the commune. But the crèches were not properly maintained and mothers were not convinced of their necessity. Meanwhile co-op members had different views as to the necessary investments. Between 1971 and 1976 production dwindled, labour productivity and co-op members' incomes were very low. The leaders of the commune realized their mistakes in the protection of mothers' health and in the care and education of children. After discussion, they decided to improve this work. They were all the more convinced of the instructions of the Party and the State concerning this work and of the good examples of an ever increasing number of model crèches throughout the country. An assembly of co-op members was held to discuss and decide

on this problem. Realizing their responsibility concerning the education of the younger generation, they even discussed plans for their own personal contribution.

30 tons of rice from the co-op's social welfare fund were earmarked for the crèche. In addition, every co-op member voluntarily contributed 1 kg of rice per month for six months. The rice thus collected amounted to 20 tons. These 50 tons were sold for 57,000 *dong*. The money was used to build a crèche upon a model drawn up by the Central Committee for Mother and Child Welfare. The construction work was not very difficult, as they had at their disposal a brick and tile kiln and specialized teams of bricklayers and carpenters. Timber and bamboo were obtained from the nearby forests. What they lacked were cement and steel which could be purchased from the province or exchanged for bricks and tiles with a neighbouring cooperative.

The entire cooperative got down to work: each mass organization was given a concrete task, all under the guidance of the chairman of the cooperative, who was also the head of the construction committee. The Women's Union was responsible for digging the foundations and the Youth Union took charge of the transport of building

* A large number of men joined the army or left to build the new economic zones or work in various industries and transport services.

materials. Old people supervised the work of the bricklaying and carpentry teams, lending a hand when necessary. After only 25 days the crèche was completed. It was called Crèche No. 1 with a floor space of 130 sq.m.

On the opening day it took in the first 30 children from the cooperative.

As a result of the initial efforts, three other crèches were built within a space of six months for 132 other children. All the necessary furniture such as beds, wardrobes, tables and chairs, and even toys were made by carpenters who belonged to the Parents' Associations.

The cooperative also paid special attention to training crèche-attendants. Young girls were encouraged to apply for the job. 78 girls applied, but only 25 met the required criteria (good health, minimum level of education: 7th year of general education). Of the 25 appointed, 21 were members of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union and the rest, Communist Party members. First, they were sent on short-term courses of 45 days for professional training and then to regular courses lasting from three to nine months. Expenses were covered by the cooperative. After graduation they were assigned jobs in the commune's crèches. Their work was remunerated in terms of work-days and work-points like all the other co-op members. The most hard-working was classified in Category No. 1 and got the highest work-points. Those whose work left much to be desired had their work-points reduced.

By the end of 1977, the commune's crèches could afford to take in 80 per cent of children in the appropriate age-group brackets. The rest were kept at home for health and other reasons. Children in the crèches were fed according

By the end of 1978, there were :

+ 1,040,841 children attending crèches in the whole country (more than 20 per cent of children in the appropriate age-group brackets). This includes 992,981 children in the North (45 per cent of children in the age-group brackets)

+ 42,031 crèches.

There are 136,861 crèche-attendants of whom 45 per cent have been trained in professional courses.

to their ages: rice gruel for those under two years old and rice for older children. For every child the parents had to pay a monthly fee of from 3 to 5 dong. Meanwhile, the cooperative supplied the crèche kitchen with rice, meat and eggs. Vegetables were donated by various production brigades or mass organizations (Women's Union, Youth Union, etc.). Following the example of Dien Chau commune, Nghe Tinh province, the Women's Union encouraged its members to grow a fruit tree each and raise a fowl for the crèche. As a result, women planted 360 banana trees and 60 papaya trees, and raised 70 chickens. Besides, each crèche had a medicinal herb garden to cater for common ailments, and a medical nurse attached.

Thanks to all this work, encouraging successes were achieved. The cooperative was able to fulfil or even overfulfil its norms of work-days. Thus in the 1977 Winter-Spring crop, the 40-day schedule for rice-transplanting was reduced and women used the rest of the time to grow 60 hectares of potatoes. The timely mobilization of the labour force greatly facilitated the development of other branches of production and there was a marked improvement in the living conditions of co-op members.

For mothers especially, there was one source of great happiness: their children were sound and healthy and they seemed to learn more quickly. They ate and slept at fixed times, learnt to observe hygiene and played interesting games. Young mothers, who were now relieved of burden of child-care, could attend complementary education courses and courses on agricultural techniques or participate in artistic activities. The commune's library was frequented by larger number of women.

In 1978, the cooperative supplied every child in the crèches with 4 to 9 kilograms of rice per month depending on the child's diet. In addition to rice, it also provided meat, fish, eggs and sesame. Every child was given a pair of trousers, a shirt, a pair of sandals, a bonnet and a pair of socks. Every crèche-attendant was given an overall. A plot of land was allotted to every crèche to grow vegetables. Every three months each household of co-op members sold to the crèche 1 kilogramme of fruit, 3 eggs and 1 kilogramme of fish. Thanks to a proper supply of food the cooperative was able to organize a common kitchen for the four crèches. Cooks were also given professional training so that the quality of the meals could be improved.

LE HUNG QUAN



THE DONG PHONG *Kindergarten*



IN 1964, the three hamlets in Dong Phong commune, Dong Hung district, Thai Binh province, were merged into a single high-level cooperative. The Dong Phong Kindergarten was built during that movement for rural modernization. Then there followed the war of destruction by the

United States in northern Vietnam. Thai Binh, a coastal province, was a prime target for the US Navy and Air Force. But even in the thick of the war, sustained attention was given to the care and education of the young generation in Dong Phong.

Future Masters of Society

A little world bursting with life, resounding with singing and laughter, animated with busy but gentle teachers. The buildings, whose clinical whiteness is relieved by green window frames, are laid out over a vast area, shaded by trees planted ten or so years ago. This kindergarten has long since become a natural part of life at Dong Phong. It takes in all the children from three to five years old.

At the end of each school year, teachers go around the hamlets to look for children who have reached the admission age. Registration is simple, needing only a birth certificate and an application form to be filled in by the parents. The time is long past when it took a great deal of persuading mothers to send their children to the kindergarten. "What kind of school is that where all they teach is singing and games?"

the sceptics asked. Or "Look at the teachers. They all seem to have a good time."

Today, mothers in Dong Phong, the new, educated generation that has grown up together with the socialist regime, see the need to educate their children properly right from infancy. A baby, at two months, will be given to the care of a crèche. At three, he or she will start at kindergarten. One of the outstanding achievements of Dong Phong is that in the past fifteen years, despite the war, it managed to take into its crèches and kindergartens all the children in the appropriate age-groups.

To the children, the kindergarten has become a necessity, a fact of life. This shows the great attraction of the school, the usefulness of its education and the good influence of the teachers.

This institution bases itself on the programme prescribed for the whole country. It also receives constant assistance from the district educational service in the training of teachers and in materials and equipment. Although toys are in short supply, the teachers try to make them during their spare time. These home-made toys, while meeting general requirements, also have the advantage of local colour. Wood blocks from the carpentry shop become building bricks for the kids. Scraps of cloth are turned into flowers and animals. These simple but attractive toys are used in games like "making a flower-garden" or "tending animals for the cooperative" to teach the children good manners, hygiene and resourcefulness, to acquaint

them with everyday life in the cooperative, and prepare them for life in the larger world that will be theirs when they leave the kindergarten — the whole commune. Under the guidance of their teachers, the children keep pot plants which they water with care. When the first flowers appear they are happy to see what they have produced, and in this way come to love labour.

The children are very fond of stories, with illustrations drawn by the teachers or by amateur artists from the cooperative. They like to hear about the "Clever Rabbit and the Cunning Fox". They are excited by the legend of Genie Giong, the boy prodigy who grew into a giant overnight and rode out on horseback to defeat the invaders from the North.

The teachers take their charges out for walks, pointing out for them the changes taking place every day in the commune, explaining the use of tractors, electric pumps, and irrigation canals. The children may meet their parents, brothers or sisters at work in the fields, and learn from seeing them producing.

The teachers do not limit themselves to teaching present-day practice. They take their

pupils to the local museum, to the war martyrs' cemetery where the sons and daughters of the commune are buried. The children trim the grass on the graves and sweep the paths, and so doing, learn to love their country and be grateful to those who have died for it.

The teachers educate their pupils to love their families,

their friends and, beyond that, their people, and the whole of humanity. The kindergarten is thus the beginning of an educational system for the benefit of the future masters of Dong Phong — intelligent people, dedicated to work, attached to their families, ardently loving their home village and their socialist country.

Teachers and Mothers

ALL the teachers who have succeeded one another at the Dong Phong Kindergarten have jealously preserved the good traditions formed over many years: love of children, dedication to their calling, model behaviour.

The local administration, seeing the importance of early education, has paid great attention to professional training. The teachers are selected among members of the Communist Youth Union and must be qualified in many respects, including personal appearance. All the twelve present teachers have attended courses at district and provincial levels. Some of them can claim a seniority of as many as fifteen years. The youngest, in their early

twenties, have worked at least for two years. All like their work, and all realize the great responsibility they have assumed for their pupils whom they regard as their own children, nephews or nieces.

It has become usual practice for the mothers to have a meeting with the teachers once a month. At such meetings, the teachers will report on progress, praise the well-behaved children and bring naughty ones to their mothers' attention. They will also give an outline of future activities and solicit cooperation from the parents.

School-family relations have become stronger each year, and parents are always glad to do what they can to supplement their children's education. School reports are duly signed and commented on by parents. Those mothers whose children make good progress will be commended over the public address system.

To the people of Dong Phong, the old and the young, the kindergarten is part of their property. They enthusiastically take part in voluntary work for its improvement — sinking a new well, planting another row of trees, adding a new building. And the school's achievements become bigger and bigger.

After HA PHUONG

By the end of the first quarter of 1979, there were in the whole country:

+ 40,129 kindergartens with 1,233,000 children under their charge (a percentage of 30.82 per cent of children in the age-group for kindergarten). The target of the 1979 State plan is 1,200,000 children.

+ 46,458 teachers (the number of teachers is bigger than that of kindergartens as there were teachers working in semi-board-ing schools, which have been developing in both the countryside and the town).



CHILDREN'S POEMS

Why Don't You Come Back To Me, My Dear Vang?*

*When I came back from school,
You would rush from the house,
Showing your joy in every way;
Wagging your tail frantically,
Moving your head up and down,
Sniffing, twitching your whiskers...
Then rising on your hind legs,
You would give me your forefeet,
As if for a warm handshake,
And precede me into the house
Making a great deal of fuss.
Wherever I went, my dear Vang,
I couldn't help thinking of you.*

*Sniffing with your black nostrils,
Stretching out your paws
For a handshake.
My hand falls limp!
Why don't you come back to me?*

*The thunder of American bombs
Frightened you away,
And I've been waiting for you
Ever since.
Your food is there, waiting for you:
Why don't you return?
How I long after you
O my dear Vang!*

*But today how big and lonely the gate looks!
For you're not there to welcome me,
With your barking as you used to
When I came home at noon.
You're not there,
Wagging your tawny tail,*

3 April 1967
After losing my dog
TRAN DANG KHOA
(9 years old)

* Common name for brown-haired dogs

Where Do You Come From, Moon?

*Where do you come from, moon?
Is it from those far-away forests?
Golden as a ripe fruit
You hang in front of my door.*

*Where do you come from, moon?
Is it from those wonderful blue seas?
Like the round eye of a fish,
You never wink!*

*Where do you come from, moon?
Is it from some playground?
Perhaps you were a ball
Kicked into the sky by a boy!*

*Where do you come from, moon?
Is it from that lullaby sung by Mother?
Poor Cuoi* sitting at the foot of the banyan
Is vainly calling his stray buffalo!*

*Where do you come from, moon?
Is it from the road to the frontline?
You give light to our marching soldiers
And splash gold on that corner of our yard!*

*Where do you come from, moon?
You who travel far and near
Tell me: Is there any place in this world
Where there is more light than this land?*

Mid-autumn Festival, 1968
TRAN DANG KHOA

* In a folk tale, Cuoi is a buffalo boy living on
the moon — Ed.

Rain

It's going to rain!
It's going to rain!
Termites
Leave their nests
Young ones
Fly high;
Old ones
Fly low.
Little chicks
Get into a flurry
Seeking shelter.
The sky makes you think
Of a knight going to battle
In black armour.
Sugar cane plants,
Thousands and thousands of
them
Brandish their swords!
The ants are on the march
In long columns along the lane.
Dry leaves whirl in the wind;
Dust swirls!

Stems of grass
Prick their ears,
And listen.
Bamboos
Pensively
Unravel their hair,
The grapefruit tree
Rocks its fruits:
Babies with round, clean-shaven
skulls!
Lightning streaks
The sky.
Thunder alights
In the yard,
Roaring with laughter!
The coconut palm
Stretches its arms,
As if swimming.
The basella vine
Rocks and sways.
It rains...
It rains...

It's as though a giant handmill
Were grinding paddy!
Drops fall,
Tap, tap...
Earth and sky
Are lost in watery fog.
The rain falls
Obliquely across the yard,
Where bubbles float.
Toads jump.
Dogs bark.
Trees and plants
Are happy and content.
Father returns from the field:
He carries on his back
Thunder,
Lightning,
And rain.

1967

TRAN DANG KHOA

Old Man Sun

Old Man Sun shines
Over the road.
Two shadows holding hands:
Mother's and mine!
Old Man Sun winks at me,
And I wink at him!
"You stay in the sky!" I say,
"I am content to be on this earth."

He smiles and I smile.
Mother, walking beside,
Smiles, too.
Old Man Sun keeps shining.

NGO BICH HIEN
(10 years old)

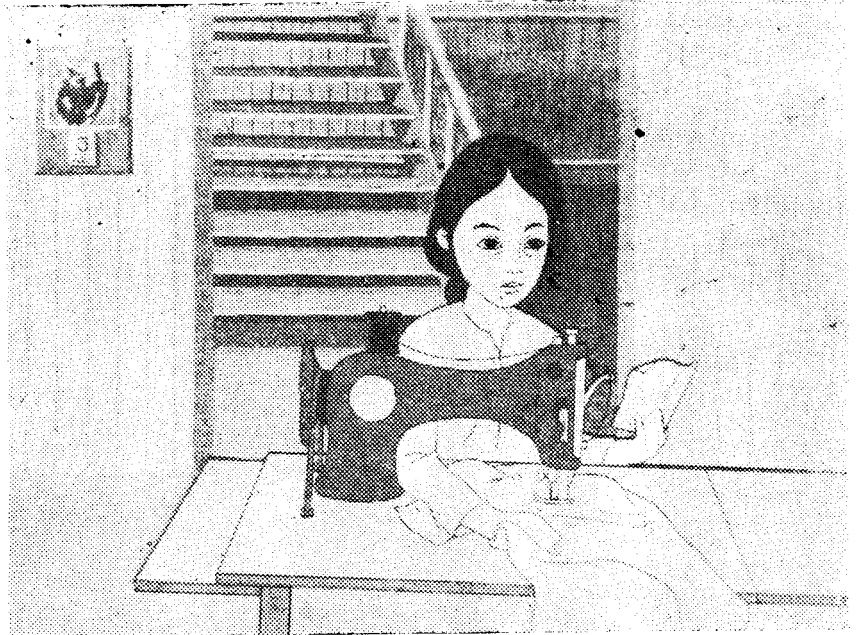
The Village Market *

There are no stalls to be seen:
The market is held under a banyan!
In the river yonder a boat
Is gliding over the stars,
Carrying squeaking pigs.
In their coops chickens chirp:
Puppies trot about;
Jackfruits took like fat piglets,
And maize ears like rockets!
Bunches of ripening bananas,
Red peanuts, black beans, brown sesame;
Little mirrors reflecting the rising sun,
And baskets brimming with potatoes!
Chubby children
Hang to the sashes of their grannies.
A light-coloured shirt: a girl from the city!

A green uniform: a soldier.
Buyers and sellers are in a flurry!
A gong resounds: the market closes.
For myself I've bought a few early guavas:
In my mouth their flesh tastes of fragrant fields
and orchards!

July 1972
CAM THO
(13 years old)

(*) During the war years, village markets were held before dawn because of the danger of American air raids — Ed.



A scene from the film
"Mother Is Pleased".

FOR THE CHILDREN

VIETNAMESE CARTOONS

A happy coincidence: the International Year of the Child, 1979, also sees the 20th anniversary of the Vietnam Cartoon Film Studio and the commissioning of its 85th film.

The Birth Certificate

IN late 1959, just four years after the liberation of Hanoi, a number of Vietnamese painters were asked to prepare urgently the first cartoon film for children. It should be noted that Vietnamese film-makers had no previous experience of this art form.

A small room — not more than twelve square metres — in Hoang Hoa Tham Street, Hanoi was their "studio". They made in that little permanently-lit room the first sketches of chickens and foxes. The more they worked the more difficulties our artists came up against, some of which seemed unsurmountable. They lacked everything: experience, technical knowledge, materials... The country had just emerged from almost ten years

of resistance against the French colonialists; reconstruction was posing so many problems. Each of these cartoon films needed about 15,000 pictures drawn on transparent paper measuring 18 by 24 centimetres while they had trouble in finding a few dozen such papers. A substitute was found in the form of thin paper bathed in oil. As they were short of drawing tables, they had to use window panes. Each artist had to provide his or her own tools and supplies for work, prompted by the determination to put out the first cartoon film on schedule. After the drawings had been finished, a bigger problem arose: how to take shots with the decrepit camera which had been mended with many parts from other discarded machines

and had often broken down during shooting.

The painters, cameramen and other personnel in the studio jumped and shouted with joy when the first metres of their film were projected on the screen. A few just sat there smiling at the still awkward and naive strokes of their drawings. They asked for many rescreenings.

That was how the first cartoon film was created. It is named "Befitting Punishment for the Wicked Fox", telling the story of a vicious fox which was defeated by the united strength of all the animals. This short film (300m) is as modest as its introduction: "Exercise by the School of Cartoon Film-makers. Script: Le Minh Hien, Duy Cuong. Director: Le Minh Hien. Drawings: Truong Qua, Ho

Quang. Music: Huy Tien. Camera: Lan and Khang."

The film was well appreciated for its clear theme, high educational value, logical sequence and marked national character.

The Stone Mortar and the First Metres of Colour Film

THAT was followed by another cartoon film, "The Banyan Tree and the Buffalo Boy", based on a folk tale about the origin of the moon. In 1962 the film-makers produced the first puppet film, "Rabbit Goes to School". A little rabbit stops to play on his way to school and arrives late to confront the laughter of his classmates. It marks a further step forward by the studio in its efforts to diversify its work. A year later, as well as more cartoon and puppet films, the studio put out a film of a completely new kind: taken from paper-cutting, titled "The Silver Neckring" and based on a mountain legend.

Some of the cartoon, puppet and paper-cutting films have been remarkably successful and greatly encouraged the film-makers. These are: "The Kitten" (Scenario: The Hoi, based on a story of the same name by Nguyen Thi. Director: Ngo Manh Lan. Drawings: Huu Duc. Music: Hoang Viet. Camera: Duy Bich). The film tells the story of a kitten which was frightened at the sight of some gutter rats. But after realizing that these were just "rats" the kitten fought courageously and put them to rout. "The Kitten" was awarded the Golden Lotus prize at the first Vietnamese Film Festival in 1970 and the Silver Pelican prize at the international cartoon film festival held in Mamaya, Romania, in 1966.

By now the number of cartoon film-makers had risen to several dozens and the sign Vietnam Cartoon Film Studio had been hung outside a modest house at 7 Tran Phu Street in Hanoi, formerly a private car repair shop. Twenty or so films had been turned out, but they were all in black and white. All the studio staff had been aspiring for a long time to make a colour film, and the decision to do so was taken in 1966. At that time, the US was escalating its air

Nevertheless, it was not able to avoid the shortcoming of the initial steps. It was awarded the Golden Lotus prize at the 2nd Vietnam Film Festival held in Hanoi in 1973.

war of destruction against North Vietnam. Hanoi was evacuated. To produce the first metres of colour film in the countryside posed innumerable problems. But the film-makers decided to go ahead with the project. Thus, the Studio's first colour cartoon film, "The Song on the Mountain Slope" was produced (Script: Nguyen Hoai Giang. Director: Truong Qua and Nguyen Yen. Drawings and scenery: Mai Long). It tells the story of a child of national minority origin in the Central Highlands who, by his courage and intelligence, outwitted and defeated a raid by the American aggressors. The colours were mixed and ground in a stone

mortar and the materials for the pigments were found on the spot. The processing was done by hand under the burning sun at a time when the air war was very fierce. The result was better than was expected and it encouraged the film-makers to produce three more colour cartoon films in the course of 1967. A year later, when it was screened at the Mamaya cartoon film festival in Romania, "The Song on the Mountain Slope" was awarded a prize by the Romanian Cinematographic Association. More than a year later, in 1969, the colour puppet film "The Warm Clothes" (Scenario: Vong Quang. Director: Ngo Manh Lan, Drawings: Phung Pham and Hoang Thai. Music: Tran Ngoc Xuong. Camera: Huu Hong) was a prize winner at the Moscow Film Festival. The film praises the solidarity of the animals in a forest who, when winter comes, pool their efforts to make warm clothes to help one another overcome the bitter cold.

Under B.52 Bombings

JUST as the US air war of destruction was heating up and spreading to the whole of northern Vietnam, the first long cartoon films "Story of Genie Giong" and "The Gods of the Mountain and of Water" were finished, both based on famous Vietnamese folk tales.

The first is a legend about the boy prodigy who grew up suddenly to fight and defeat foreign aggressors. The second is a legend about the dispute between the Gods of the Mountain and of Water which ends up with the victory of the former. It is an eulogy to the courage and persistence of the Vietnamese people who have worked from generation to generation to harness the floods in the Red River delta. The films were brought to the places where the US bombing was the heaviest and shown to the schoolchildren who were housed day and night in deep underground shelters. In their own way, the makers of cartoon films have contributed to the common struggle of the nation.

"The Stray Monkey" is one such contribution. It tells of an American pilot shot down in the tropical jungle of Vietnam. Denied all food, he had to subsist on wild fruit and in time became a monkey, living the primitive life of the Stone Age. The film is a parody of a threat by an American general to "bomb North Vietnam back to the Stone Age" (Script: Cao Thuy and Tran Ngoc Thanh. Directed and drawn by Ho Quang. Music: Ngo Huynh. Camera: Nguyen Thi Hang). Another film on a similar patriotic theme is "The Thang Long Dragon", exalting Vietnam's millennia-old tradition of resistance against foreign aggression (Script: Phan Trong Quang and Ngoc Huong. Directed and drawn by: Ngo Manh Lan. Music: Nguyen Dinh Tan. Camera: Viet Tue and Tuong Thanh).

In spite of the increasing fierceness of the war, the number of films continued to rise, bringing to the children joy and good entertainment.

Also in that period the first attempts were made to combine the use of cartoons and puppets in films with acting by real persons. The "Lat Dat and Phong Phenh" (Hurry-Scurry and Shilly-Shally) is about two well-known popular story characters and the film "The Giant Hand" tells of the dream of a child who

wished to have the strength of the God of the Mountain, a mythical figure symbolizing the collective strength of the Vietnamese people in the fight against recurring floods, building dams to harness the rivers and produce electricity for the benefit of everyone.

The Road Ahead

TODAY, annual ticket sales for cartoon films have reached almost 25 million, or half the population of reunified Vietnam. Nevertheless the number of films produced annually remains too small and their quality leaves much to be desired compared with the fast growing audiences and their changing aesthetic demands.

Looking back at more than 80 cartoon films produced so far by the Vietnam Cartoon Film Studio, one point stands out: all the films have followed a correct orientation. Their content bears a marked national character and deals with the most burning questions of the nation, thus reflecting the feelings and thinking of Vietnamese children in the difficult years the country has experienced. The filmmakers have overcome tremen-

dous difficulties and shortages to contribute to enriching the cultural heritage of the nation. The films they have made are like textbooks: they teach children through the language of art about their proud national traditions and the virtues of the new socialist man. However, as conscientious artists, the filmmakers know that what they have done are only the first attempts in a long career and should be considered only as experiments. They are busy preparing better, more interesting, more educative films for the International Year of the Child and the twentieth anniversary of the studio. As they work they learn from both their successes and failures, and thus manage to improve their standards constantly.

TRAN NGOC THANH

small drawing-room, waiting for the return of the representatives they had sent to Tan Son Nhat airport to negotiate with the PRG about a cease-fire.

Suddenly the door flew open. All three men rose in amazement, thinking that they were confronted with Liberation fighters. But in fact it was General Vanuxem, who had walked straight into the study of the head of the puppet regime. He wanted to talk to Duong Van Minh and suggest ways of solving the problem. What is more, he was convinced that he had all the communication lines at his disposal and understood the moves and attitudes of various capitals around the world. In his opinion the situation in Saigon was not quite hopeless. Duong Van Minh asked him how to save his administration, Vanuxem answered him with composure and self-confidence:

"Declare against the USSR and appeal to Beijing for help to stop the Vietnamese Communist forces' advance to Saigon. China will interfere and you will all stand firm."

Duong Van Minh was so surprised that he had to ask again in case he had wrongly understood. And when he replied that there was no communication link between Saigon and Beijing, Vanuxem said:

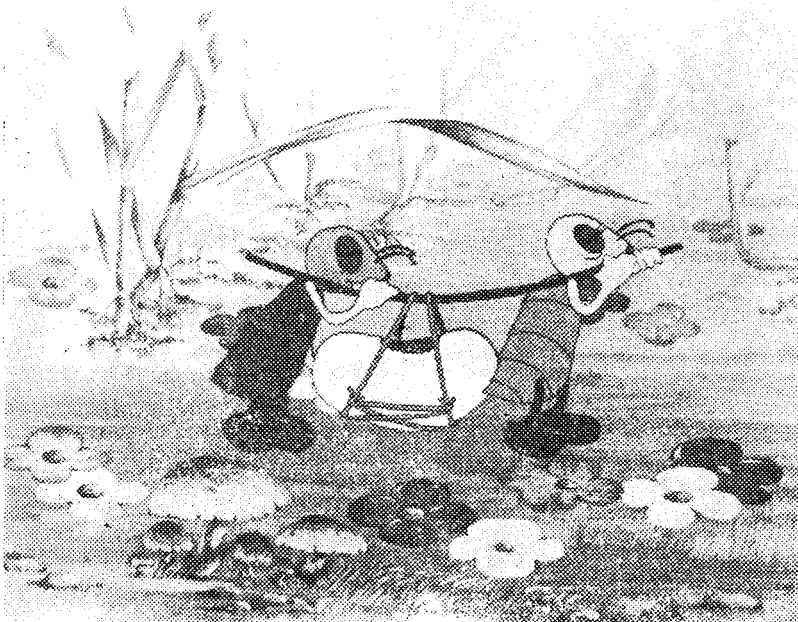
"Yes, you can get one through the French embassy in Saigon."

When Duong Van Minh said that he had not enough time, Vanuxem asked: "Is twenty-four hours not enough for you?"

"No, not enough."

Vanuxem went away, disappointed, but at that moment, gunfire could be heard in Red Cross Boulevard and Cong Ly Street. A convoy of Liberation Army tanks was thundering towards the Palace of Independence from Pasteur Road through Thong Nhat crossroads, and the first of them battered against the Palace gate.

THANH NAM



A scene from the film "A Memorable Lesson".

STRUGGLE AGAINST ILLITERACY IN VIETNAM



AFTER almost a century of domination, French colonialism left Vietnam with a lamentable cultural legacy: an illiteracy rate of 95 per cent. Poverty and ignorance had a stranglehold on the people. The masses, kept in ignorance, could not find a way to liberate themselves and, kept in misery, they were denied all access to culture.

The August 1945 Revolution overthrew the rule of colonialism and gave power to the people. One of the urgent problems then was to wipe out illiteracy. This was not only a fundamental cultural task—the laying of the groundwork for progressive education—but also an indispensable measure to increase political consciousness in order to enable the masses to act as real masters of society and of their destinies and to take part effectively in defending and building a free and independent country.

The Government Council of the then Democratic Republic of Vietnam, in its first session held after the Declaration of Independence on 2 September 1945, decided to open a **nation-wide offensive on illiteracy**. The decision was immediately followed by a decree signed by President Ho Chi Minh on the establishment of a **Popular Education Service** to take charge of the fight against illiteracy and to raise the cultural level of the working masses.

The policy was enthusiastically acclaimed by the entire people, since it met both an urgent need of the revolution and a cherished aspiration of the population. The fight against illiteracy thus became a real revolution involving millions of citizens. In response to the call of President Ho Chi Minh, people vied with one another in going to school, the old and the young, men and women, city inhabitants, peasants and mountain-dwellers. The

literate taught the illiterate, children taught their elders, husbands taught their wives, neighbours taught one another.

Classes were held everywhere, in the fields, in factories, public offices, schools and even on boats. The people, knowing the limited resources of the country, made do with whatever came to hand: bricks were used instead of chalk, doors did duty for blackboards. All means of propaganda—the press, the radio, the theatre—and all cultural and social organizations were mobilized to give a boost to the movement.

Great success was made within a year: **more than two million of the fifteen million illiterates had learned how to read and write.**

This was a good start for the movement to continue to develop during the war against French colonialism from 1946 to 1954, when the fight against illiteracy became part of the war against the aggressors. Teachers and students realized that what they were doing was in itself patriotic and that, besides the aggressors, illiteracy was an enemy to fight. Each ABC class was a chance for teachers to explain Government policies to the masses while teaching them the three R's. The anti-illiteracy campaign, therefore, gained great momentum not only in the free zone but in occupied areas as well. Its spread annoyed the enemy, and many teachers and students were arrested and disposed of.

In nine years of war against the French colonialists, a total of **7.5 million adults learned how to read and write** and by 1954, the year when peace was restored and when the country was temporarily divided at the 17th parallel, only some three million

adults remained illiterate in North Vietnam.

By 22 January 1959, the whole of the North, with the exception of mountain areas, had basically done away with illiteracy, among 93 per cent of the labouring people aged between 12 and 50.

Southern Vietnam: The Movement against Illiteracy during the Resistance to US Aggression

Meanwhile South Vietnam, under the rule of US neo-colonialism, had one of the biggest illiterate populations in the whole of Southeast Asia. Almost 20 per cent of its inhabitants could not read or write. The rate was 80 per cent in some villages, and 90 per cent among national minorities. Even in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City), more than 200,000 illiterate adults were recorded after liberation. In fact, an *Association for Popularizing the National Script* was set up by patriotic people, but it was strangled by the puppet administration and replaced by so-called "Adult Classes" which were only a front for the procurement of US aid for other purposes. The result was that in all these 20 years, only 8,000 people acquired the three R's. Meanwhile, from 1965 to 1975, the illiteracy rate increased from two million to 3.6 million, whereas in the North, which had a US war of destruction to fight against, managed to make first-level general education (four years) universal.

Also in the South but in the liberated areas or the former bases of resistance during the first war people continued the tradition of studying while fighting. Members of the Liberation Army acted as alphabet teachers, and local administrations, while organizing the fight against the aggressors, conducted the struggle against illiteracy.

With the eradication of illiteracy among national minorities in the first five-year plan (1960-1965), the Democratic Republic of Vietnam became the first entirely literate country among the poor and backward countries of the Third World.

This, of course, was no easy job, considering the repeated mopping-up operations launched by the enemy. Courses were often discontinued for long periods.

A census taken in post-liberation South Vietnam in April 1976, however, revealed that more than three million people of all ages were still illiterate, more than 1.5 million of them in the groups which should have been freed of illiteracy (12-50 for males, 12-45 for females, 12-40 for national minorities), not to mention the hundreds of thousands of children of the first-level school age who had no schooling at all. To fight illiteracy, therefore, was considered an urgent task of the revolutionary administration.

The Last Battle against Illiteracy

WHERE the old regime had failed, the revolutionary administration was successful, notably in carrying out the basic investigation, which was conducted with full cooperation of the population, and which provided correct information for the leadership to make necessary preparations; including enlistment and training of teachers and provision of classrooms, stationery and text-books.

It was then possible to weigh the relative importance of objectives, and so it was decided that

The thirty years of war against two big imperialist powers had left innumerable difficulties. The millions of displaced peasants, now back in their former villages, which in most cases had been flattened, were short of the means of production. Millions of hectares of land had been left waste, or ravaged by explosives and toxic chemicals. In the cities, millions were unemployed, and hundreds of thousands of young people of or past the age for secondary education were still unable to enrol because of the shortage of schools. To make matters worse, social vices were still rampant, and the reactionaries, though in hiding, were seeking to sow discord among the population, especially among ethnic minorities, and to oppose the revolutionary administration. But all this was outweighed by one great advantage: the people now had power with which to carry through to success, among other revolutionary tasks, the fight against illiteracy.

Since the task was a social one, anti-illiteracy committees were set up at all levels of the administration for leadership, with the education service playing an advisory and organizational role.

young people, workers, peasants and other people with jobs must be taught the alphabet in the first stage. Those who were unable to go to classes because of old age or poor health could wait until the next drive.

An appeal was made for participation by the whole population, conferences were held, and the movement was also geared to other local activities. A slogan was issued for the National Assembly election on April 25, 1976, urging voters to do away with illiteracy before election

day. This sensible call was responded to by millions.

A broad front was thus formed with the participation of mass organizations and all strata of the people. Teachers, who numbered hundreds of thousands, included young people, educationalists, students, intellectuals, Buddhist monks and Catholic priests. Thousands of them volunteered for remote mountain areas where they lived and worked together with their pupils.

Teachers received adequate training. They also improved established methods using experience gained in the North, and managed to shorten the course from three months to just one month. Volunteers from Nguyen Trung Truc School who worked in An Bien and Vinh Thuan, two districts of Kien Giang province, even cut the time down to 25 days, and each had 30 literates to their credit.

As the State, having just emerged from a long war, was not in a position to adequately provide for the movement, citizens contributed whatever they could, from manpower and materials for the construction of class-rooms, to stationery for students. In many places people started building schools immediately after liberation. Monks offered their pagodas for class-rooms, and many draft-dodgers during the war became active teachers. Members of the former Association for Popularizing the National Script were also active in teaching, in the training of teachers, and in material contributions. Mothers were very persuasive promoters. In District 10, Ho Chi Minh City, they formed groups with children and made house-to-house calls to urge people to attend school. Cat Thanh was one of the first communes to have wiped out illiter-

acy in Nghia Binh province, central Vietnam, despite the fact that 90 per cent of the houses were destroyed in the war. In many places, whole families and even whole villages went to classes.

The summer vacation of 1976 was called "Anti-Illiteracy Vacation". Hundreds of thousands of teachers and students from third-level general education schools went to villages and city wards to teach the alphabet. The motto that education is the cause of the people thus became a vivid reality.

Bearing in mind the principle that study should not get in the way of production and daily work, the alphabet was taught to small groups of learners, at home for housewives and the handicapped, in markets to suit traders, by shift for the convenience of workers, on board fishing boats, in the fields, **whenever and wherever learners could attend.** Localities competed with one another for the "First Literate Unit" title.

A conference was held late in 1976 to review the movement, and it was announced that 775,000 people had become literate and that illiteracy had been basically wiped out in 1,380 communes, 77 districts and four provinces, namely Long An, Tien

Giang, Nghia Binh and Binh Tri Thien.

Still greater efforts were made in mountain and border areas, in the form of a campaign called "Cultural Light", jointly conducted by the Ministry of Education and the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union in the summer of 1977. Teachers, school and college students were mobilized for the campaign. They were sent as groups of volunteers to the mountain areas or even border areas to teach the local population. The 80 students of the Tay Ninh Teacher Training College who formed a volunteer brigade in the border district of Chau Thanh in Tay Ninh province taught the alphabet to 1,250 people within 40 days, thus making the locality an entirely literate district.

By 28 February 1978 illiteracy had been basically wiped out in all the 21 provinces and cities in the South, among 94.15 per cent of the population for which literacy was compulsory (1,323,670/1,405,870). Hundreds of thousands of other people, though excused, also became literate through voluntary class attendance. The people of socialist Vietnam, now almost entirely literate, entered with confidence the realm of culture and science to build a modern and happy country.

Complementary Education

TO prevent a relapse into illiteracy, a movement for complementary education has been conducted vigorously. The watchword is that **complementary education must take over where anti-illiteracy has finished.** Newly literates will be admitted to the second class of the complementary programme,

the first class being the ABC course itself. How successful a locality or unit is in making the second class universal, will be a measure of its achievement in the fight against illiteracy. As in the North, full-time or on-the-job courses have been opened in all districts and provinces in the South, attended by young people

Eliminating Malaria in the Whole Country

"BY the end of 1980, malaria must be basically eliminated all over the country. This is a most important and urgent requirement. It aims to protect and improve people's health, create favourable conditions for developing the economy and culture according to the second five-year plan and pave the way for the next one."

Such is the target put forward by the Prime Minister. The prevention, treatment and elimination of malaria in 1979 is significant in that it drives at an all-round fight against malaria in southern Vietnam, so as to keep the disease from breaking out and prevent it from spreading afresh to northern Vietnam.

Measures have been taken in the southern provinces to get rid of malaria. According to still incomplete figures, in 9 months, DDT has been sprayed in 1,329 communes and 96 new economic zones — areas inhabited by more than 6 million people. 4,024,797 malaria cases have been treated. Basic epidemiological investigation has been conducted in 183 communes and 102,406 people examined. Thanks to the implementation of prophylactic anti-malaria measures in the southern provinces, the number of malaria carriers has been reduced 47%.

The number of epidemics has dropped 16.8 times, the total of malaria cases, 30 times and the death rate in epidemics, 23 times lower than in 1976. Those who settled in new economic zones in Dac Lac and Gia Lai — Kon Tum provinces felt able to step up production, and the number of malaria cases dropped consider-

ably. In Nghia Binh province where the complete elimination is expected in two years, the rate of splenitis and malaria carriers in the whole province dropped 80%, and no epidemic was recorded.

The setting-up of an anti-malaria network has been satisfactorily carried out. There is now an anti-malaria station in almost every southern province. In this network alone there are 94 doctors, 415 assistant doctors and specialists in the whole of southern Vietnam. In Central Vietnam and the Central Highlands 78 anti-malaria teams have been formed at district level and this is being followed in all the other districts of southern Vietnam.

1,313 communes in all the provinces of northern Vietnam have been sprayed thoroughly with DDT. Another 228 mosquito breeding places have been sprayed and 3,923,440 people have been protected against the disease. Within 9 months 1,015,401 cases have been discovered and examined in the northern provinces, thus achieving 79.1% of the norm for the whole year. The provinces of Lai Chau, Quang, Binh, Hai Hung, Thai Binh and Hoang Lien Son, etc., have done better than the requirement of diagnosing malaria cases. Many districts in coordination with the grassroots public health network are organizing or consolidating their anti-malaria teams. The Central Institute of Malariology, Parasitology and Entomology is focusing its efforts in guiding the provinces with an increasing rate of malaria cases and other border provinces.

of working-class background and past the proper ages for regular schools, by revolutionary cadres and soldiers whom war denied opportunities for formal schooling, to facilitate their work in the new stage of the revolution: that of national reconstruction. Of the nearly 1.5 million newly literates, some one million are attending such classes.

There is still much to do in this regard. The aim for the im-

mediate future is universal first-level general education (four years) for working people. Later it will be the second-level (three years) and then, third-level (three years) programmes for young people. The sights, in fact, are not too high, considering what has already been achieved by Cam Binh, a poor commune in Nghe Tinh. Before the liberation of the North in 1954 after the war of resistance against the French colonialists, 99 per cent

of its inhabitants were illiterate. Now it has made first-level education universal, and second-level education compulsory for young people and key officials, some of whom are even taking college correspondence courses in the College of Agriculture and the College of Economics. Its success has earned it the N.K. Krupskaya Prize from UNESCO.

MAI ANH

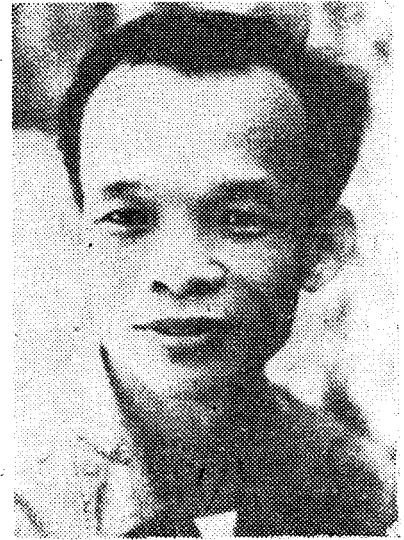
We apologize for printing the wrong photograph above the article on child-care in Ho Chi Minh City which appeared on page 20 of issue 5, 1979.

Nguyen Ngoc

The Author and His Works

Editor's Note: *Nguyen Ngoc is the third Vietnamese author, after To Hoi and Thu Bon, to have received the Lotus Prize of the Afro-Asian Writers' Association. The prize has been conferred on some thirty other writers of the two continents, among them Agostinho Neto, now President of Angola, Alex La Guma (South Africa) Mahmoud Darwish (Palestine), Kateb Yacine (Algeria), and Mikhail Solokhov (Soviet Union).*

Vietnamese revolutionary literature counts many soldiers-turned-writers, among them Nguyen Ngoc, a veteran of the two resistance wars. Starting as a military cadet, Nguyen Ngoc is now a leading member of the Vietnamese Writers' Association. As he puts it, he has not only used "the weapon of language", but also perfected "language as a weapon". His lifestyle and his achievements in battle have earned this soldier-writer a special place in Vietnamese literature.



NGUYEN NGOC'S real name is **Nguyen Van Bau**. He was born on 5 September 1932 in Da Nang, the second biggest city on the Central Vietnamese coast. He followed his father, a post-office clerk, to Hoi An, where he spent his primary-school years. Then he left home to study at the Khai Dinh College in Hue. After graduation he returned to Hoi An and shortly afterwards responded to the call of the August 1945 Revolution by joining up as a cadet. Because he was a minor, Nguyen Ngoc was sent to school again. But when the war took on a decisive turn in 1949, it became impossible for him to continue his studies, and he returned to the army together with his friends, among them Le Kham or Phan Tu, now also a writer. Like many of his class-mates he was attracted by the legendary image of the revolutionary fighter in uniform. To him, fronts and resistance

bases sounded like wonderlands where ordinary people could become heroes. So, after a crash course, Nguyen Ngoc became a corporal, and was assigned to Dac Lac in the south of the Central Highlands where the main mode of operation of the army at that time was armed propaganda. While on a mission, each man was given a rice ration to live on until he could find a family willing to lodge him. Then from this base he would persuade people to join in the fight. Living with highlanders, eating with them, learning their language, Nguyen Ngoc was amazed by their militancy, patriotism, stubbornness and resourcefulness. He was deeply impressed by the *khan* (epic poems) he heard at the many festivals. In 1951, he was given a reporting job on *Ve Quoc Quan* (National Defence Army) newspaper in the Fifth Zone, which enabled him to trav-

el extensively and broaden his knowledge of this beautiful region. But only in 1953, when he was sent together with his unit to prepare for joint actions with the North, did Nguyen Ngoc find a chance to see the northern part of the Central Highlands. He was wounded and, as soon as he recovered, his unit crossed Highway 19 in search of a suitable base for the liberation of Pleiku. In Xi To village, a famous guerilla base, Nguyen Ngoc came to know a Ba Na national who became the guide of his unit for several months. That guerilla leader later became an emulation fighter, and his report to the Congress of Emulation Fighters in the Fifth Zone was translated by Nguyen Ngoc himself from the Ba Na dialect to the national language.

The Ba Na guerilla, now a national hero, inspired a novel written by Nguyen Ngoc after he had been regrouped to northern Vietnam following the

1954 Geneva Agreements. The novel was written in three months, five times revised. When it was finally published in late 1955, it was entitled "Truyen Anh Hung Nup" (The Story of heroic Nup). Then Nguyen Ngoc joined other authors in land reform activities in the district of Thuy Nguyen, Hai phong. Meanwhile, although he had not intended to enter, his novel came to the attention of the jury of a national literature competition, who immediately decided to award Nguyen Ngoc the first prize.

Nguyen Ngoc was recompensed for his first novel, written when he was only twenty-three. Indeed, stories about heroes and outstanding fighters had been turned out regularly since the beginning of the war, but none had gone beyond the usual journalistic form. Nguyen Ngoc's *Dat Nuoc Dung Len* (1) was the first of this genre to have achieved a solid literary value, with its faithful portrayal of the people's war and its true-to-life, appealing characters. With his first-hand knowledge of the highlanders and his simple style Nguyen Ngoc gives a vivid account of the awakening of a mountain village, its everyday life, and its original combat methods. His two-hundred-page book explains why the Vietnamese people, with small numbers and a small, poor and backward country, would eventually fight and defeat an enemy many times stronger—the French imperialists. The answer is dedication to an ideal, good political motivation, and good organization. *Dat Nuoc Dung Len*, therefore, is rightly considered as an epic on Vietnamese people's war.

Published in many foreign languages (including an English version entitled "The Village That Wouldn't Die") and widely read throughout the world, *Dat Nuoc Dung Len* has, for many years, not only acted as an introduction to Vietnam's struggle against the French imperialists, but also helped strengthen the world's belief in Vietnam's ultimate victory. Moreover, it has built up the morale of peoples of similar circumstances.

From 1955 to 1959, as an editor of *Tap Chi Quan Doi*, the army's literary monthly, Nguyen Ngoc travelled the length and breadth of northern Vietnam, enthusiastically engaging in peaceful labour for socialist construction. Of the books he wrote in this period *Reo Cao* (High Up Places) is a good collection of short stories on minority nationals in Tay Bac and Viet Bac.

Meanwhile, sad news came almost every day from the South, which was languishing under enemy rule. As a southerner, Nguyen Ngoc was under the influence of these hard years, influence which can be felt in his works and which explains his bitterness at his own helplessness. But the South, after years of suffering and of accumulated hatred, finally rose up in one move. This called for assistance from the North, and Nguyen Ngoc seized the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to travel along the Truong Son Range to return to his victimized native land. Like a character in *Dat Quang* (The land of Quang) he would write ten years later, "he entered the fight with a simple, clear-cut and very sincere attitude".

The situation was good in the South following the concerted

uprisings. By 1964, many rural areas had been almost completely liberated. The puppet administration was on the verge of collapse. The US imperialists, deciding not to leave their henchmen in the lurch, started escalating the war.

One afternoon in 1965, as Nguyen Ngoc was returning to Chu Lai, an ordinary village in Quang Nam—Da Nang where a military base was under construction, he was shocked to see hundreds of helicopters swarming overhead. Only back at the base did he learn that US troops were arriving en masse. The local war had begun.

From these memorable days on, his works, which he signed Nguyen Trung Thanh, would evolve around one central theme—the struggle against US aggression. Whether in news reporting, a feature writing, a short story, or a novel, Nguyen Ngoc was always looking for an answer to "the great burning question: how to fight the ferocious enemy so that he might soon be defeated and the nation restored its right to live?"

In the midst of his work as editor both of a regional paper and of a literary Army magazine, Nguyen Ngoc joined an advance party to prepare the ground for the first attack on the US army. He wanted to make sure that "the US aggressors can be coped with and can

(1) Yun tek dak (*Fatherland, rise up!*) in the *Ba Na dialect*. According to the author it was the name given to an unknown leader called Yun tek dak in an anti-French movement in the region.

be defeated even though their weapons are many times better than ours". That became evident following the battle at Nui Thanh where a Liberation company managed to wipe out a US company in hand-to-hand combat. The battle sowed the fear which would become general in the US forces for bayonet charges by Liberation fighters whose victory is retold so well in Nguyen Ngoc's account of the battle.

As part of the battle preparations, Nguyen Ngoc wrote an essay, *Duong Chung Ta Di* (The Road We Take), which immediately became well known. It is beautiful in style, profound and calmly optimistic. It voices the thoughts of a Liberation fighter who, before a battle, looks back at the road taken by the revolution in the South. "For ten years we've waged a life-and-death struggle with the enemy, trying to clear a path for ourselves". The combatant, confident, serene and determined, is ready to make every sacrifice, knowing that whatever might happen to him, victory is certain. The essay was read not only by the men who were going into action that night, but also by many other young people in both halves of the country who, years later, would go to the front with the same burning feeling in their hearts, the same high spirits, the same love for the present, because "it is today, this moment, but it is pregnant, overflows, with the thousands of years past and with great spans of the future."

At about the same time, Nguyen Ngoc wrote a short story, called *Rung Sanu* (The *Sanu*

Forest), about a guerilla who has lost the first joint of each finger of his hand and is returning to his village. The story explains the reason for the concerted uprisings. It was the release of penned up hatred caused by barbarous crimes of the enemy, "because the enemy arm themselves with guns, we must arm ourselves with spears". The setting is a highland area, famous for its towering *sanu* trees, which "pierce the sky to protect the village". The trees, like the villagers, show a rare vitality in face of US hardware. "They thrive with a great strength... When one falls, it will be replaced by five or six others, their tips, like sharp spears, lunging at the sky", just as people succeed one another in fighting. In this story Nguyen Ngoc uses a very tight style, and the symbols he creates are true to his personal experiences. People he knew, half-forgotten, return to memory full of vitality and take their places in the story in a very natural manner. It has won the Nguyen Dinh Chieu Literary Prize from the Liberation Association of Literary and Art Workers.

As a political cadre at the front, Nguyen Ngoc had very little time for artistic creation, although he believes that "literature is born in struggle and exists as a weapon". Besides his journalistic activities, he was busy with professional training. Whatever time was left him was taken up by conferences with political teams about to move into the cities, or by military conferences where he was looked up to as an authority. Back at the rear, he engaged in farm work, building underground

shelters and houses, editing, and handling the day-to-day tasks of a publishing office. To write he had to snatch time between urgent missions. It could be said that he preferred to work that way. Much as he values the role of literature and writers, he cannot accept the view that writers are just observers in life. To him the aim of each page must be some success in life, and he holds that writers must take a direct part in each revolutionary development and see for themselves the things they will write about.

In 1970, when the revolution in the South was confronted with a very decisive turn—the Vietnamization of the US war—Nguyen Ngoc moved to Quang Nam—Da Nang, a bitterly contested region. He was assigned to the Party Committee in Dien Ban district and was given the charge of the movement in three villages on the fringe of Da Nang. One of the village Party secretaries was killed and he had to fill the vacancy for almost a year. It was in such periods that he revised his past works and planned new ones, convinced that each creation must be a new discovery about matters vital to the revolution, and a faithful expression of life to help accelerate the evolution of society. Many of his works, therefore, have the great attraction of reality in progress, a trend from which some answer is expected. That was also why he discarded quite a number of old projects in these periods. *Thep* (Steel) did not go further than what had already appeared in print—*Tren Que Huong*

Nhung Anh Hung Dien Ngoc (Dien Ngoc, Land of Heroes) — because life had already proved human being's superiority to modern weaponry. In 1968, he started on *Dat Lua* (Land of Fire) — notes on an army heroine — but stopped midway, realities of the Vietnamized war being too complex to be treated effectively in this literary genre. Only a full novel could do that, he realized. Professionally, Nguyen Ngoc was aware of the necessity for the liberation literature to have products worthy of its stature. So, almost simultaneously with other writers in these hectic days, he buckled down to *Dat Quang* when the US 101st Airborne Division was moving in. He worked with great speed and, despite frequent evacuations, completed the first book in early 1969.

Nguyen Ngoc, as though he were born to write about Vietnamese revolutionary heroism, continues, following *Dat Nuoc Dung Len*, *Reo Cao*, *Rung Sanu*, *Tren Que Huong Nhung Anh Hung Dien Ngoc*, and *Dat Lua*, the search for new expressions of the patriotism, loyalty, steadfastness, political insight, and humanity of revolutionaries. Cruel enemy agents and the aggressors are portrayed with a sure hand, since the enemy's nature deserves a thorough study if he is to be defeated at all. Positive characters, revolutionary combatants or sympathizers — an old man, a woman, a little girl, a guerilla — all show the traditional traits of revolutionary heroism. The modern methods with which they are created, the tragic instances in their lives, a vast panorama of

the existing society, the various crucial moments of history, beautiful style, rigorous composition, and careful use of epic romanticism, all these make *Dat Quang* into an epic story.

The second volume of *Dat Quang* has not yet appeared ten years after publication of the first. This can be explained by both the author's writing habits and his conception of literary creation. He does not want his works to be outstripped by events, and this particular period of the Vietnamized war required clear but delicate interpretation and explanation. On the other hand, Nguyen Ngoc, as soon as he had written the first book, was absorbed by other pressing jobs; in 1972 he was appointed political commissar to one front and, not long afterwards, joined another operation as chief of staff. Both jobs, though unfamiliar to an ordinary writer, were within the competence of Nguyen Ngoc who had been a soldier for thirty years and who was used to accepting any tasks assigned by the revolution.

There seems to be a paradox in Nguyen Ngoc's case. His readers have noted that the author, whose works all have specific political purposes and are all meant to be weapons, is a stickler for form. "The creation of forms is part of the nature of a writer". There should not be a literary work without a new method of expression. One reason that made him abandon a number of his projects was the feeling that he was acting out of habit, that he was repeating himself, unable to get off the beaten track, even though the path was his own. He agrees

that it is not fair to ask a writer to better his works continually, because not all writers are lucky to be on an ever rising curve. But what is demanded of all of them is *novelty* — just that each book should be different from its predecessor. Nguyen Ngoc admits that none of his books was written with a purely literary purpose, that in most cases he had to work in a great hurry to serve one political task or another.

To do him justice, we must say that this man, who is so strict with himself, has surpassed, in the number of works of solid literary value, many other authors whose only concern is literature. Nguyen Ngoc, or Nguyen Trung Thanh, has done a great deal for the image of modern Vietnamese literature whose worthy contribution to the national revolutionary struggle has been officially acknowledged.

Like his contemporaries, Nguyen Ngoc has found an inexhaustible inspiration in the thirty-year struggle of the nation. He has completed Book Two of *Dat Quang*, though not yet for publication, and is working on the third book. But he is already making plans for a new novel with a much greater scope in time and space and beginning with people who stayed behind in the south since July 1954 to the day of complete victory. To reconstruct so many great events and relate all the strange things happening to our people and country over so long a period is an attractive idea indeed.

NGO THAO

VIETNAM COURIER

THE CHINESE EIGHT-POINT PROPOSAL

(Continued from page 4)

Vietnam withdraw from the Truong Sa Islands. It has forgotten Chinese Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping's words at the high-level talks between Vietnam and China in September 1975 to the effect that "Between the two sides, there is still a dispute on the question of the Xisha and Nansha Islands [that is the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa Islands] ... Of course, this question may be discussed later between the two sides."

China also demands maintenance of the "status quo" of the land boundary, and a "demarcation of zones in the Bac Bo Gulf, which is at variance with its commitment to respect the historical border-line between the two countries, as delimited by the 1887 and 1895 Conventions and officially marked out by border-markers.

Although it was the Chinese side which caused through incitement and coercion an exodus of hundreds of thousands of Hoa people to China in an attempt to create political, economic and social disturbances for Vietnam, and more perfidious still, which used a number of such people as scouts and guides in the recent war of aggression against Vietnam, the eight-point proposal demands that Vietnam receive back these hundreds of thousands of Hoa people who are to serve as a fifth column for sabotaging Vietnam from within. This is a trick which has aroused the highest vigilance of Southeast Asian countries.

A salient feature is that the Chinese side's eight-point proposal has completely evaded the urgent measures aimed at ensuring peace and stability in the border areas of the two countries, which have been put forth by the Vietnamese side and recognized by broad sections of public opinion as urgent, realistic, fair and necessary first steps to prevent a resumption of the hostilities. In Point 1 of the Vietnamese three-point proposal, we have suggested to refrain from concentrating troops close to the border; to separate the armed forces of the two sides; to stop all acts of war provocation and all forms of hostile activities; to create a demilitarized zone, etc.

It should be asked why the Chinese side failed to respond to our above-mentioned proposal while they themselves claim that "the Vietnamese side has concentrated troops and indulged in armed provocations against China." The answer will be clear enough when one knows that the Chinese side is massing more than half a million troops near the border with Vietnam, deploying over ten divisions, thousands of artillery pieces, and a great quantity of war material close to the Vietnamese border, and indulging in daily armed land, air and sea provocations against Vietnam. At the same time, the Chinese leaders have increasingly uttered war threats against Vietnam. Recently Chinese Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping himself told a delegation of the US House of Representatives Armed Services Committee and even UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim that "China would give

Vietnam another lesson"! There is only one possible conclusion: that the Chinese side wants to maintain tension in the border areas of the two countries so as to bring pressure to bear on Vietnam and to seek a pretext for aggression against Vietnam whenever it wants to.

Looking back at the history of border conflicts between China and some other countries, one sees that, in 1959 and 1962, the Chinese Government proposed to the Indian Government measures on a separation of the armed forces, a withdrawal of the troops of the two sides behind the line of actual control, and discussions between the two governments on questions concerning the prevention of clashes and the ending of the armed conflicts. It was the same with the Soviet Union. In 1969 and 1971, China proposed a separation of the armed forces of the two sides in order to avoid the danger of a resumption of hostilities.

The Chinese side once agreed with the proposal put forward by six countries at the Colombo Conference in late 1962 on the establishment of a demilitarized zone along the Sino-Indian border, then why does it not agree this time to the creation of a demilitarized zone along the Sino-Vietnamese border?

It is necessary to recall that in its notes addressed to the Vietnamese side dated 1, 19 and 31 March, and 6 April 1979, the Chinese side proposed discussions between the two sides on "the practical measures to ensure peace and security in the border areas of the two countries". Why do they deliberately try to elude this question now? Their professions of goodwill and desire for peace are merely empty talk designed to mislead public opinion and to camouflage new ventures.

The Chinese leaders should have drawn a necessary lesson from their defeat in the war of aggression against Vietnam. Nevertheless, the Chinese side has insisted in an unfounded way that its eight points constitute "the only correct way to solve the dispute between the two countries", and attempted to compel the Vietnamese side to align itself on the Chinese policy in order to have "a Chinese peace" which is even worse than the "Pax Americana" of the past. In their history, the Vietnamese people have gone through thousands of years of struggle against foreign invasion to defend their Fatherland in an effective way. In particular over the past thirty years, upholding the banner of national independence and socialism, the Vietnamese people have valiantly followed a revolutionary line, opposed the counter-revolutionary line, fought against the imperialists and the reactionary forces, and won great victories. Whoever wishes to make the Vietnamese people depart from this path will just be day-dreaming. The Chinese leaders have committed aggression against Vietnam, massacred Vietnamese people, devastated many areas in Vietnam in an extremely barbarous way and are threatening to launch a second attack on Vietnam, yet the Chinese representatives at the conference table are attacking the Vietnamese people who are carrying out with all their strength the general mobilization order. It should be made clear that the Vietnamese people are completely united and are stepping up production while standing ready to fight. We will resolutely strike back at the aggressors, should they be rash enough to launch another attack on Vietnam.

COMECON...

(Continued from page 6)

with an annual output of 2,400,000 tons; a thermo-electric station in Pha Lai with a capacity of more than 600,000 kw, a cement plant at Bim Son to make 1,200,000 tons a year; and many chemical factories and housing construction combines in Hanoi and Haiphong.

Assistance has also been received from other COMECON members. Bulgaria has helped in mining and processing copper ore and in building hydro-electric projects. Hungary has assisted in producing communications means, in surveying mineral resources and in building bakeries, freezing plants and cabinet-making factories. The German Democratic Republic has provided assistance for the Gia Sang rolling mill, a housing construction combine, and the planning and reconstruction of the war-destroyed city of Vinh. From Czechoslovakia came a cement factory with an annual output of 1,200,000 tons and a 120-megawatt thermo-electric plant. Cuba has helped in the construction of the Thang Loi (Victory) Hotel in Hanoi and of various agricultural establishments and stockbreeding centres.

A series of multilateral economic agreements have been signed between Vietnam and other COMECON countries. Thanks to the effort of COMECON, the North-South Thong Nhat railway was restored in 1976, linking Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City. 300 kilometres of track, 5,000 tons of chemicals for the impregnation of rail sleepers and thousands of tons of steel for bridges were contributed by the Soviet Union, 700 tons of equipment by Hungary, concrete mixers by Bulgaria, air compressors and breakdown lorries by the German Democratic Republic, and track and 10 groups of diesel electric generators by Poland.

Following the decision of the 74th executive meeting, a permanent working party was formed to assist Vietnam. Groups of experts from member countries have made on-the-spot studies to prepare for socialist industrialization in Vietnam. COMECON countries are also working out measures to help Vietnam in agricultural mechanization.

At the 32nd Session conducted in Bucharest from 27 to 29 June 1978, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was unanimously admitted as a full member.

This was a great historic event for the Vietnamese people and the peoples of the other countries in the socialist community. It marked a new, logical development in the relations of cooperation and mutual economic assistance between Vietnam and the other COMECON states. It conforms to Vietnam's policy of development by its own efforts plus increased cooperation and division of tasks among the fraternal socialist countries, on the basis of socialist internationalism; and also to our wish to develop economic relations with other countries on the basis of independence, sovereignty and mutual benefit. Vietnam's participation in COMECON, which followed the cutting off of Chinese aid and the recall of Chinese experts, proves that Vietnam is not alone and that it continues to develop despite China's intrigues.

The event has opened up new vistas for Vietnam to develop its economy and to contribute to the economy of the socialist community.

The 87th COMECON executive meeting in Ulan Bator from 27 September to 1 October 1978 agreed on fields in which Vietnam would participate most effectively in its own conditions and with its own means. A tropical country with plenty of land still to be reclaimed, Vietnam can be a major producer of timber, tea, coffee, rubber, citrus fruit, pineapple, banana and other fruits. It holds vast potentials in offshore maritime products with a coast of more than 3,200 kilometres. Its untapped natural resources include oil, gas, coal, bauxite and tin. Its great reserve of labour power and its existing light industry will enable it to contribute efficiently in processing foreign orders and to increase the production of consumer and light industrial goods for export. Its nascent machine building industry can turn out simple products and, later on, with more skilled labour, can be specialized to join in the motor industry and other key industries.

A programme for Vietnam's economic development in 1981-1985 has been worked out and will be discussed by COMECON members. The 87th executive meeting in Ulan Bator also decided that COMECON members would take over projects abandoned by China in May 1978, among them the Thang Long Bridge over the Red River in Hanoi.

Following the Chinese war of aggression against Vietnam, the 89th COMECON executive meeting in Moscow (27-29 March 1979) decided to help Vietnam rebuild destroyed economic installations in the border provinces.

IN the thirty years since the August 1945 Revolution Vietnam has less than ten years of peace. Its economy, therefore, remains backward, with agriculture still as the main component. Nevertheless, this economy added to all extraordinary political stability has enabled the country to overcome all difficulties arising from successive imperialist aggressions.

Assistance by the fraternal socialist countries has made a considerable contribution to Vietnam's successes. Aid by COMECON members and by the community as a whole has become more and more important.

A reunified, socialist Vietnam with modern industry, advanced culture and science, great defence potentials and a civilized, happy life was envisioned by the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

Efforts to achieve this objective are being obstructed by the great-nation expansionists and hegemonists in Beijing who seek to weaken and subjugate Vietnam to pave the way for their hegemony in Southeast Asia and the whole of the world.

Under such circumstances, close cooperation between Vietnam and COMECON will be all the more vital to serve the interests of Vietnam and the entire socialist community. And on the basis of this cooperation, Vietnam will be better able to strengthen its cooperation with other countries in Southeast Asia and the rest of the world. It will thus serve as an example for other developing countries to advance from a backward state directly to socialism, without going through the stage of capitalist development.

DUY HOANG

OUR COMMENT

(Continued from page 2)

when China became the open friend of the US (through the Shanghai joint communiqué signed in 1972), Vietnam expressed disapproval, but always treasured friendship with Beijing. Ever since, Beijing has applied an increasingly hostile policy towards Vietnam, leading to the armed aggression of 17 February 1979.

China claims to have the right to make alliances with imperialist powers, primarily with the US and Japan, so why does it object to Vietnam tightening relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries? The 3 November 1978 Vietnam-Soviet Treaty is not at all a military alliance and is not directed against anyone. China has no reason to be worried if it has no scheme to invade Vietnam. Therefore, demanding that Vietnam cut off its friendly and co-operative relations with the Soviet Union and join China in opposing that country is just day-dreaming; or a pretext for driving the negotiations into deadlock.

Insisting on the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea and Laos is a demand of the same character. The three Indochinese countries are required to remain **disunited** in the face of the common enemy. The "divide-and-rule" policy was pursued by the French and US aggressors, although in their minds, Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea constituted a single battlefield. The three Indochinese peoples, however, acted against the imperialists' wishes. They united closely with each other and their armed forces fought shoulder to shoulder.

In the past, Vietnamese armed forces went to Kampuchea to fight the French and US aggressors, at the request of the then Kampuchean revolutionary leaders who, at the time of the anti-US struggle, included Pol Pot and Ieng Sary. After the fulfilment of their internationalist duty, Vietnamese troops were pulled back, out of respect for the independence and sovereignty of this friendly country. At that time, no one called Vietnam an "aggressor".

Likewise, as long as Kampuchea is still threatened by Beijing's expansionism and

hegemonism, and as long as the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Council still requests it, Vietnamese troops will remain in Kampuchea. No pressure from the imperialists and the international reactionaries can influence this policy of Vietnam. At present, the remnants of the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary army are counting their final days in the face of staggering blows by the Kampuchean revolutionary armed forces. Supplies from Beijing will not be able to extricate these remnants from their hopeless position. It is sheer illusion if the Chinese authorities think that they can use their negotiating skill to reverse the situation!

The Chinese negotiators have proved to be extremely arrogant, giving themselves the right to interfere in the relations between Vietnam and other countries — the Soviet Union, Kampuchea, Laos. Their demands regarding the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagos and the Hoa people also testify to the same haughtiness.

No less arrogant is their method of conducting negotiations. They consider their 8-point proposal the only basis for negotiation. The Vietnamese side, in a constructive spirit, proposed the alternate discussion of Point 1 of each side's proposal and was prepared to begin with China's Point 1. This proposal was rejected. We then proposed that each side would in turn raise a subject of its choice to be discussed at each session, and were willing to let the Chinese raise their subject first. This proposal was also rejected by the Chinese who claimed that it was "dangerous" but gave no further explanation.

And at the fifth session, the Chinese delegation unilaterally declared the termination of the first round of talks.

Together with Vietnam, any impartial observer would have reason to doubt Beijing's goodwill. The Chinese only want to impose their will at the negotiations. If this is not possible, then they will use the talks for allaying the protests of public opinion and for buying time to prepare for new military adventures. In such conditions, it is understandable that Vietnam should take action and heighten vigilance.

25 May 1979

CHRONOLOGY

16 APRIL — 15 MAY 1979

APRIL

16. Minister Manuel Cespedes, envoy of Cuban President Fidel Castro, ends his visit to Vietnam. He took part in an exchange of views and agreed with Vietnam on problems concerning the non-aligned movement and the preparation for the coming Summit Conference to be held in Havana in September 1979:

17. *Nhan Dan*: The Central Committee for Educational Reform holds its first session under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Pham Van Dong. The session has approved a programme for its activities in 1979.

18. The Vietnam-China talks open in Hanoi. Vietnam tables a three-point proposal for the settlement of urgent and fundamental problems between the two countries.

20. *Nhan Dan*: The SRV has signed an agreement on co-operation in space research and exploiting outer space for peaceful purpose and becomes the 10th member of the "Inter-cosmos" programme.

21. The Interparliamentary Union meeting in Prague from 16 to 21 April 1979 approves Vietnam as a member.

23. Khamphay Boupha, acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Democratic Republic of Laos, sends a note to US Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim on the presence of Vietnamese troops in Laos by virtue of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed between the two countries on 18 July 1977.

24. Return of the body of the Chinese pilot, whose plane violated Vietnamese airspace and crashed in Ha Nam Ninh province on 15 April 1979.

26. The Government Council issues a regulation on the right of collective mastery of the workers in State enterprises.

— UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim arrives in Vietnam on a friendship visit.

— At the second session of the Vietnam-China talks, the Chinese side put forward an 8-point proposal stressing anti-hegemonism.

28. *Nhan Dan*: Between 16 March and 24 April 1979 China made more than 100 intrusions into Vietnamese territorial waters and airspace.

MAY

2. Nguyen Huu Tho, SRV Vice-President, receives the visiting delegation of the Asian Buddhists' Conference for Peace (ABCP).

3. *SPK*: A consignment of 600 tons of short-term rice strains donated by Vietnam arrives at Bassac river port (South of Phnom Penh).

5. In an interview granted to the Japanese news agency *Nihon Denpa News* and papers *Asahi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun*, the Kampuchean Minister of Foreign Affairs says: "China's raising the Kampuchean question at the Vietnam-China talks is a blatant interference in our internal affairs and an encroachment

on the sovereignty of the People's Republic of Kampuchea."

7. Minister Nguyen Van Hieu, special envoy of the SRV Government, pays a friendship visit to the People's Revolutionary Republic of Guinea.

— Minister Nguyen Thi Binh, envoy of the SRV Government, arrives in New Delhi on an official visit to India.

— A delegation of the Communist Party of Vietnam led by To Huu, alternate member of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee, arrives in Paris to attend the 23rd Congress of the French Communist Party.

— A Vietnamese delegation led by Dinh Nho Licm, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, participates in the UN Conference on Trade and Development held in Manila (Philippines).

8. Paris: After its visits to Kampuchea and Vietnam, the investigation delegation of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers holds a press conference to expose China's scheme against Vietnam and Kampuchea.

11. Closing in Thai Binh of a national conference on agriculture which started on 9 May.

12. Signing in Beijing of an agreement on Danish Government loans to Vietnam for national reconstruction.

— At the fourth session of the Vietnam-China talks the Vietnamese side proposes to start discussion on Point 1 of the Chinese eight-point proposal rightaway but the Chinese side refuses. The Vietnamese side agrees to a meeting of representatives of the two countries' Red Cross Societies at the Friendship Gate for the exchange of the first batch of war captives and discussion on further exchanges.

— A Vietnamese delegation including several former Saigon intellectuals leaves Vietnam for a visit to the Soviet Union.

13. The first shipment of Soviet aid to the Kampuchean people arrives in Phnom Penh.

— The Colombian Committee for Solidarity with and Protection of Vietnam is set up.

— *Nhan Dan*: At the end of April 1979 and in early May, the Chinese repeatedly conducted acts of provocation against Vietnam, and violations of Vietnamese airspace and territorial waters.

— Opening in the capital of Andhra Pradesh State of a conference for solidarity with Vietnam held by the Indian Youth League with the participation of representatives of 30 countries and international organizations.

14. The first permanent representative of Vietnam to the office of the UN and other international organizations in Geneva presents his credentials.

15. The Vietnam Committee for Investigation of the Crimes of the Chinese Expansionists and Hegemonists holds a press conference to denounce the crimes committed by the Chinese aggressors against the Vietnamese people in the six northern border provinces.



*"Quang Trung's Drumbeat"
played by a young drummer
from Nghia Binh province.*

**Popular Artistic Activities
in Vietnam**



*Solo by eight-year-old
Kim Thoa (Bien Hoa).*



*"The Water Pitchers"
a Cham folk dance (Thuan Hai province).*

**Popular Artistic Activities
in Vietnam**

*The choir of An Tuong
commune (Ha Tuyen prov-
ince).*



Meo flute solo (Lai Chau province).



*Solo of a "xylophone" improvised with bowls
of water (Song Be province).*



XUẤT BẢN BẰNG CÁC NGỮ :

- VIETNAM COURIER
- LE COURRIER DU VIETNAM
- НОВОСТИ ВЬЕТНАМА
- EL CORREO DE VIETNAM

BÁO ĐỐI NGOẠI **TIN VIỆT NAM**

TÒA SOẠN : 46 TRẦN HƯNG ĐẠO, HÀ NỘI
DÂY NÓI : 53 998

In tại Hà Nội

Chỉ số : 12462