

Vietnam courier



VOLUME 17
A MONTHLY REVIEW

● POLITICS

● ECONOMICS

● CULTURE

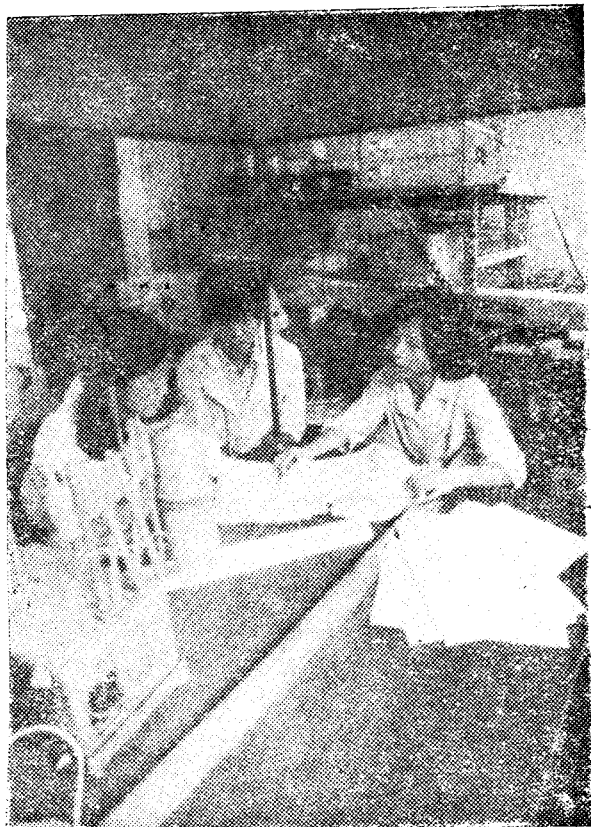
● SOCIETY



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THE VIETNAM

INSTITUTE OF SCIENCES



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1. Young engineers discussing a project.

Photo: HOANG HOA

2. Experimenting with a new rice strain.

Photo: DINH AN

3. In a laboratory.

Photo: HOANG PHUONG

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OUR MONTHLY COMMENT

THE UN Secretary-General must have been under heavy pressure when he convened the "International Conference on Kampuchea" right at the moment when UN officials were leaving for their summer holidays. Even more so since he contravened his own statement to the effect that 15th June was the deadline for all UN member countries to answer whether they would attend or not. The prolongation of the deadline "until the conference is held", however, failed to make the composition of the conference reflect that of the United Nations. Not only Vietnam, Laos and the socialist countries, but also many non-aligned countries including the most representative ones, were not present in New York. So, as commented the New York Times, the conference "applauded with one hand only". Representing the Kampuchean people at the conference was the Pol Pot clique, their own executioner, and a handful of reactionary elements who no longer have a position in Kampuchea.

This then is the forum for the US, China and those living in their orbit to exhibit their hatred for the peoples of Vietnam, Indochina and those who refuse to resign themselves to living in the neo-colonialist order set for them by the US imperialists, with the connivance of Beijing (see the article "Neo-Colonialism" published in this issue). And what nauseating hypocrisy when, in the forum of this unilateral conference, representatives of the ringleaders of world imperialism and of the greatest hegemonist country raised their voices in defence of the peoples' fundamental rights. They impudently denied the Kampuchean people's self-liberation from an unprecedentedly barbarous administration, which applied in Kampuchea a doctrine akin to that which brought about the bloody cultural revolution in China — an administration that turned out to be the henchmen of China.

Contradicting contentions prevailed at the conference. When the Pol Pot genocidal clique was riding roughshod over Kampuchea they did not utter a single word. Yet now on the one hand they invited the Pol Pot representatives to the conference, whilst on the other simulated disgust at seeing them and even refused to shake hands with them. In the face of the risk of extermination of a neighbouring people, Vietnam fulfilled US Senator Mc Govern's wish: it sent army units to help the Kampuchean people overthrow Beijing's domination through the Pol Pot clique. This is in full conformity with ethics and international law, and has a precedent in Asia as well as in Africa. But this is seen in this case as "an aggression" and those attending the conference demand that Vietnam should withdraw its troops, while they admit that there is a danger of a come-back by the Pol Pot clique.

Starting from such an erroneous assessment, they put forward a solution: to dispatch UN forces to Kampuchea to maintain order, and to set up a provisional administration as a first step to holding general elections under UN supervision. What is this if not a plot to annul what has been achieved by the Kampuchean people since liberation: restoring family and social life, rebuilding agriculture and industry, re-organising people's power at all levels, adopting the Constitution and setting up a central government elected by the people. Of course all this is not to the taste of the US, China and their satellites, for the Government in Kampuchea has chosen the road to socialism, and has pledged close solidarity with Vietnam and Laos. In fact, the Conference is creating an extremely dangerous precedent for the peoples of the Third World: to deny the fundamental principle of the peoples' right to self-determination.

The Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam have time and again affirmed that the presence of Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea comes within the jurisdiction of the two countries, and that Vietnamese troops will be withdrawn from Kampuchea as soon as the Chinese menace is removed.

The revival of Kampuchea is under way and security in this country is at least better than many other Southeast Asian countries. There is no "problem" here, except that the international community must continue to help Kampuchea step up the process of revival. Tension in Southeast Asia is a fact, but it does not arise from the situation in Kampuchea; it is not reflected in the relations between the ASEAN and the Indochinese countries, for those two groups of countries, whose genuine interests are similar to each other, wish to build a peaceful and stable Southeast Asia. It has its source in the opposition of the Vietnamese people and Indochinese peoples to the Beijing rulers' expansionist and hegemonist policy. Having suffered a bitter defeat in Kampuchea, Beijing has created a "problem" around this country. So it tries to sow division between the

ASEAN countries and the Indochinese countries. This is in conformity with Washington's interests and a great amount of ink has flowed in the concoction of this "problem".

The participants in the International Conference on Kampuchea know full well that imposing one side's view on the other contravenes the principle of negotiations on an equal footing in international relations, and that it will not succeed. If the weapons supplied by Beijing, with the connivance of Bangkok, to Pol Pot and other Khmer rebels on the border area could not reverse the situation in Kampuchea, the resolutions of this conference will certainly make no difference either.

Some participants in this conference may place their hope in the measure of "bringing pressure to bear on Hanoi" as has been impudently stated by US Secretary of State Alexander Haig: maximum diplomatic and economic isolation, combined with Chinese military pressure on the Indochinese countries.

Alexander Haig declared that: "The US would not consider normalizing its relations with Vietnam until the latter changed its present policies". Meanwhile Beijing's Foreign Ministry hurriedly made a similar statement to this effect. However, those who have read the history of the Vietnamese people will understand that such threatening words are futile. So is the carrot of "economic aid to Vietnam" if Vietnam submits to the will of the West and Beijing. The Vietnamese people are not alone, they enjoy the sympathy and support of the ~~socialist countries and~~ many friendly countries in the Third World, and even of many people living in the West and in China.

Now the "International Conference on Kampuchea" has decided to set up an ad hoc committee to maintain pressure on Vietnam and bring Vietnam to the negotiating table. We have made it clear that there is no problem to negotiate on and anyway Vietnam is not used to negotiating on the right to independence of other nations. What we wish for is to hold regional dialogues and talks with the ASEAN countries and the other Southeast Asian countries with a view to realizing a peaceful and stable Southeast Asia where friendship and co-operation hold sway.

The United Nations Organization has many a time lent its name to the creation of structures aimed at changing the situation in East European countries after World War II. What has been the result of those futile efforts is common knowledge.

25 July 1981

THE STATE ORGANS OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

(Elected by the National Assembly on 4 July 1981)



NGUYEN HUU THO

Chairman: National Assembly



TRUONG-CHINH

President: Council of State



PHAM VAN DONG

Chairman: Council of Ministers

I – COUNCIL OF STATE

President: **Truong-Chinh**
Vice-Presidents: – **Nguyễn Hữu Thọ**
– **Lê Thanh Nghị**
– **Chu Huy Mân**
– **Xuân Thủy**
General Secretary: **Xuân Thủy**

II – NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Chairman: **Nguyễn Hữu Thọ**
Vice-Chairmen: – **Xuân Thủy**
– **Nghiêm Xuân Yêm**
– **Nguyễn Xiển**
– **Y Peh (Y Mot)**
– **Cam Ngoan**
– **Huỳnh Cương**
– **Superior Bonze**
Thích Thế Long
– **The Reverend**
Võ Thành Trinh
– **Phan Anh**

III – COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

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Vice-Chairmen: – **Tố Hữu**
– **Phạm Hùng**
– **Võ Nguyên Giáp**
– **Huỳnh Tấn Phát**
– **Võ Chí Công**
– **Đỗ Mười**
– **Nguyễn Lam**
– **Trần Quỳnh**

Minister and General Secretary of the Council of Ministers: **Đặng Thái**

IV – NATIONAL DEFENCE COUNCIL

Chairman: **Truong-Chinh**
Vice-Chairman: **Phạm Văn Đồng**

V – THE PEOPLE'S SUPREME COURT

President: **Phạm Hùng**

VI – THE SUPREME PEOPLE'S ORGAN OF CONTROL

President: **Trần Lê**

II. MAOISM and SOUTHEAST ASIA

SINCE the birth of the People's Republic of China thirty years ago, Southeast Asia has had to face the threat posed by the Beijing ruling circle's policy of expansionism and hegemonism.

This threat is large and long-standing, not least because the region has an important strategic position contiguous to Southern China. China has long considered Southeast Asia its traditional sphere of expansion, but since Mao's rise to power the Chinese rulers have regarded Southeast Asia as Chinese territory occupied by Western powers, which they have the responsibility to recover. Owing to this geopolitical character the Chinese threat to Southeast Asia is particularly dangerous. The nature of imperialism does not change but, when it is defeated and has to withdraw from a region, its threat still lingers on in a limited and indirect way. On the contrary, the threat of China's policy of expansionism and hegemonism to Southeast Asia will remain until the Beijing rulers end their reactionary policy. China's threat is all the more dangerous to Southeast Asia as the influence of Maoism has deeply infiltrated the revolutionary movements in the region through pro-Mao forces and the millions of Chinese residents and people of Chinese descent.

To realize fully the dangerous character of Maoism one has to grasp the important position of Southeast Asia in Beijing's global strategy. China's choice of Southeast Asia as one of the most efficient tools for its counter-revolutionary strategy springs from various reasons.

First of all, Southeast Asia is the home of small countries. The population of the biggest one is but one-tenth of China's. The colonialists' divide-and-rule policy has left many inimities, conflicts and contradictions among the countries of the region. This has provided an opportunity for China to fish in troubled waters with ready tools for its intervention.

Secondly, Southeast Asia is a region where the strategic interests

of the imperialist powers constantly clash and therefore a lot of contradictions have accumulated that China can turn to its advantage. China used the contradictions between the imperialists to compromise with France in 1954 at the Geneva Conference on Indochina so as to drive away US influence from its southern borders. China has also used the contradictions between the Southeast Asian peoples and imperialism to develop its own influence in the region, not to mention the contradiction between various forces, particularly the pro-Mao forces, against the governments of these countries in order to bring pressure to bear upon them.

Thirdly, Southeast Asia is a region with a most active and resolute revolutionary movement. However, these movements generally have to cope with enemies tens of times bigger, possessing a huge economic and military potential. To be victorious the revolutionary movements in Southeast Asia need foreign support and assistance. Availing themselves of this characteristic, the Chinese rulers have resorted to economic and military aid, using these movements as a tool to bargain with imperialism and trample underfoot the Southeast Asian peoples to attain great-power status.

Over the past thirty years China's policy with regard to Southeast Asia has changed many times but its strategic goal remained to serve China's hegemonist ambitions in Southeast Asia and the world.

From 1949 to 1958 under the newly-won power China's general strategy was rapidly to restore its war-torn economy and deal with two imperialist hotbeds of war close to its northern and southern borders (the Korean and the Indochina wars) while opposing the US policy of encirclement and military threats. At that time the world was enmeshed in a cold war. China signed a treaty of alliance and mutual assistance with the Soviet Union regarded as lead-

ing the world revolution, so as to acquire Soviet aid and economic assistance and use the Soviet-Chinese alliance to contain the USA. This was also the period when China sent troops to help the Korean people to fight the US war of aggression in Korea and actively supported the national liberation movement in Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, specially after the end of the Korean war, China strove to use the national liberation struggle of the Southeast Asian peoples—the Indochinese in particular—as a tool to attain great-power status and to bargain and compromise with the French colonialists. At the 1954 Geneva conference on Indochina, for the first time China appeared on a par with four other great powers (the Soviet Union, the USA, Britain and France) while China's seat as permanent member of the Security Council in the United Nations Organization was still in Jiang Jieshi's (Chiang Kai-shek) hands. Fearing that the USA might intervene in Southeast Asia, China sought to help France end the Indochina war, split Vietnam, maintain French presence and influence in South Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea while containing the Vietnamese revolution and tying Vietnam to China.

At the same time, China signed a declaration with the Southeast and Southern Asian countries on five principles of peaceful coexistence, and ordered the pro-Chinese "communist parties" to stop armed struggle and enter into negotiation with the Southeast Asian Governments. China also opposed Vietnam and Laos for waging armed struggle to liberate their countries.

These moves by Beijing were meant to prevent the USA from intervening directly in Southeast Asia and at the same time to offer it signals of détente. Contacts between China and the USA had already begun at Panmunjom (Korea) and went on at the 1954 Geneva Conference. At last, official talks at ambassadorial level between the two countries opened in mid-1955 in Geneva and continued later on in Warsaw.

THE LAO NATIONAL GOLDEN ORDER CONFERRED ON LE DUAN

On 17 July, 1981, President Souphanouvong of the Lao People's Democratic Republic signed a decree conferring the National Golden Order on Le Duan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam. Based on a decision of the People's Supreme Council, this is the highest distinction of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and is bestowed upon Le Duan for his major contribution to the solidarity, special friendship and co-operation between Laos and Vietnam.

From 1959 to 1969 the balance of forces began to tip towards the side of the Soviet Union and the revolutionary forces. Soviet achievements in strategic weapons and in space conquest brought about Soviet-American strategic parity while the national liberation struggle vigorously developing after Dien Bien Phu compelled the USA to seek a détente with the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, owing to the "big leap forward" Chinese economy was in chaos with famine and unemployment rife. The prestige of Mao and the Maoist ruling clique seriously declined. The fierce tussle among Mao's followers led to a civil war dubbed "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" in the late sixties.

China's strategy in this period was to win over the national liberation movement and the world revolutionary movement, to oppose both the USA and the Soviet Union, while pitting the Soviet Union against the USA so that both met with difficulties, leaving China free to solve the power struggle in China, and creating favourable international conditions for China to wrest the leadership of the world revolution. Once again, China's moves in Southeast Asia at that time show that China used the region as its main tool to implement this strategy. Frantically China worked to convene a second Afro-Asian Conference, boosted the movement of newly emerging forces (GANEFO), subsequently setting up an international of the newly emerging forces organization (CONEFO), accelerated the formation of a Beijing-Hanoi-Phnom Penh-Jakarta-Pyongyang axis, incited Indonesia to withdraw from the United Nations Organization and then masterminded a putsch in that country.

This was also the period when China did its utmost to split the international communist movements. As well as putting forward a "25-point programme" for the international communist movement, China strove to cause schisms within the world communist and workers' parties, instigated the founding of Maoist groups labelled "true Marxist-Leninist parties" throughout the world, and energetically worked to convene a conference of eleven communist parties, mainly from Southeast Asia, aiming at setting up an international communist movement led by China.

To create difficulties for the Soviet Union and the USA the Beijing reactionaries engineered clashes on the Soviet-Chinese border, launched big campaigns in the world against the Soviet Union and the USA. They ordered the Maoist groups in Southeast Asia to carry out armed struggle against the USA and the Southeast Asian Governments under the motto: Power comes out of the barrel of the gun.

In this period the USA was waging a war of aggression against Vietnam and the other Indochinese countries. On the one hand, Beijing sent word to the USA that if it did not attack China, then China would not attack it either. At the same time Beijing refuted the founding of a world people's front in support of Vietnam with Soviet participation and persuaded Vietnam to waive Soviet help; the Chinese rulers also exhorted Vietnam to fight to the bitter end and opposed Vietnam's negotiating with the USA. Just as Maxwell Taylor stated, Beijing was determined to "fight the USA to the last

Vietnamese." Beijing's aim was to manipulate our people's war of resistance to seek a détente with the USA.

The post-Vietnam era began in 1975. The US defeat in Vietnam hastened an economic and political crisis which weakened the USA, and drove the whole world capitalist system into a crisis. The rapid growth of the Soviet Union and the three revolutionary currents of the time has tipped the balance of forces on the side of peace, national independence and socialism. Meanwhile, China faces a collapse both politically and economically after many years of trouble. China's foremost strategic task in this period is to stabilize internal order and modernize the country rapidly to turn it into a great power. China wants to pit the USA against the Soviet Union while capitalizing on the weakening position of the US and its need to cope with the growth of the Soviet Union and the world revolutionary movement. On the one hand, China puts forward the "three-world theory" calling for a struggle against the two superpowers and sabotaging Soviet-American détente by setting the USA and the Soviet Union at loggerheads, on the other China sets up a front with the imperialists and the international reactionaries against the Soviet Union, calling on the USA and other imperialist forces to help build a powerful China as the 16th member of NATO to defend imperialism in the East. China has thrown off its revolutionary mask and openly colludes with imperialism, particularly US imperialism, to oppose the Soviet Union and the world revolutionary movement.

China's betrayal begins and climaxes in Southeast Asia. After its defeat in Vietnam the USA was compelled to implement the Nixon doctrine and the Vietnamization of the war, the aim of which was to withdraw US troops from South Vietnam while maintaining the Saigon puppet administration. The Nixon doctrine was also aimed at withdrawing US troops from the Southeast Asian mainland while preserving US interests there. China's betrayal helped the Nixon Administration realize these aims. China agreed to help the USA maintain the puppet regime in South Vietnam; for its part, the USA agreed to withdraw from Taiwan, not to oppose China's entry into the United Nations Organization and let it become the third pole in the US "triangle" strategy. At the same time China colluded with the USA and ASEAN to contain the Vietnamese and Indochinese revolutions and check the influence of the Soviet Union in Southeast Asia. To serve this strategy China ordered the rebellious "Maoist" groups to end their armed struggle and cooperate with the local governments.

The complete victory of our people in their war of resistance against US aggression to save our country and reunify our homeland, the victory of the Lao revolution and the victory of the Kampuchean people overthrowing the rule of the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary genocidal clique have dealt a deadly blow at China's dark schemes, shattering a part of China's strategy to collude with the imperialists and reactionaries. With the victory of the Indochinese revolution the trend of peace and independence has pervaded Southeast Asia. In this situation, the Beijing reactionary clique has attempted to distort the presence of Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea, who are actually there at the request of the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Council helping the Kampuchean people sweep away the remnants of the Pol Pot troops. China's intention is to slander Vietnam for "aggression against Kampuchea" so as to rig up a "Vietnamese threat" and a confrontation between the Indochinese and ASEAN countries. Day after day the Beijing rulers have grown more hostile to the Indochinese peoples and tried to set the ASEAN countries at odds against the Indochinese countries.

China use of the Pol Pot clique to rekindle a war in Southeast

Asia and its aggression with over 600,000 troops against Vietnam in February 1979 were aimed at invading Vietnam, intervening and weakening it, then dividing the three Indochinese countries. At the same time, the Beijing reactionaries want to cause a crisis in Southeast Asia and undermine the trend of peace and friendly co-operation now developing among the Southeast Asian countries after the victory of the Indochinese countries. This crisis helped shape a regroupment of forces in Southeast Asia: China, the USA, Japan and the ASEAN countries on one side, and the Indochinese countries on the other; it boosted the collusion between the USA and China, to a climax in 1979 and 1980. No wonder that the Beijing reactionaries—the most brazen—are frantically opposing the repudiation of Pol Pot and the trend of dialogue in Southeast Asia. Defeated by our army and people, China had to withdraw its troops but continues to nurture aggressive designs against our country. The Chinese reactionaries are doing their best to apply military pressure on China's border with Vietnam and Laos, and to use the "Kampuchean issue" to maintain a state of confrontation in Southeast Asia. With regard to ASEAN, on the one hand they try to bribe and coax them, then dissuade them from negotiating with the Indochinese countries, on the other China carries on using economic aid and rebellious Maoist groups to press the ASEAN Governments to toe its line of opposition to the Soviet Union and Vietnam. These Maoist groups have in fact become Beijing's tools to sabotage the Indochinese revolution and undermine the interests of their fellow-countrymen. China's expansionist scheme with regard to Southeast Asia is also apparent through its design and ambition over the South China Sea which is vital to the interest of the Southeast Asian countries. China wants to monopolize these 3.4 million square kilometres of sea and turn it into a Chinese *mare nostrum*. In the maps published by China, the southern borders of this country include the exclusive economic zones and continental shelves of Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. To control the South China Sea means to effectively hold sway over Southeast Asia on the sea, to monopolize the exploitation of its submarine

wealth and to command the international communications line through this region.

The main contradiction in the region at present is between the reactionary forces within the Beijing ruling circles in collusion with US imperialism together with reactionary elements within the ruling circles of some ASEAN countries on the one hand, and the three Indochinese countries, the Southeast Asian peoples and the other forces of peace and national independence in the region on the other. The struggle of the Southeast Asian peoples today is a struggle for peace and national independence.

In short, the experience of the past thirty years shows that Southeast Asia is the main direction of expansion and the main tool of the Beijing reactionaries in their global strategy. Like elsewhere, the Beijing reactionaries can only make mileage out of Southeast Asia when the region has no peace and stability. But Southeast Asia is also the place where China suffers the most lamentable defeat in its counter-revolutionary global strategy.

The struggle for peace and national independence in Southeast Asia in the past as at present is a struggle between the imperialists and the Beijing reactionaries on the one hand and the forces of peace and independence in the region on the other; at the same time it is a struggle between two trends in the revolutionary movement in this region: the Maoist line and the line of independence and self-mastery. The experience of the Pol Pot clique and the rebellious Maoist groups in Southeast Asia shows that the Maoist line is to serve Beijing, to counter the interest of one's nation, ending only in crisis and betrayal. The experience of the Indochinese and other Southeast Asian peoples shows that only by following the line of independence, self-mastery, solidarity with all the forces of peace and progress in the world against imperialism and the Beijing reactionaries can they bring their struggle to a victorious end, consolidate their national independence, and ensure peace and stability in the region.

PHUC CUONG

Next issue: III. The only way

NEO - COLONIALISM —

MORE THAN EVER, A REAL PROBLEM

NGUYEN KHAC VIEN

A changed situation

Since the end of the Second World War, imperialist powers find themselves in a changed situation with regard to their colonies. The national liberation movement grows apace, class consciousness has been raised and there is the appearance of various forms of struggle, armed fighting frequently being of prime importance. The demands for freedom, national unity, development, and a cultural identity have become mass demands, forcing all political bodies whether national or international to define their strategy vis-à-vis these problems.

This national liberation movement is growing at a time when new socialist countries have appeared alongside the Soviet Union. The socialist system has become an essential factor in determining the international situation, tilting the balance of supremacy which imperialism had hitherto enjoyed. If there exists a real solidarity amongst the so-called underdeveloped or Third World countries (a solidarity expressed in fact by the non-aligned movement) then the historical process which leads to national independence, economic development, the safeguarding of cultural identity also leads sooner or later, in one way or another, to each of these countries being drawn into the sphere of influence of one or the other of the two systems — imperialist or socialist.

The scientific and technological revolution in the imperialist coun-

tries (the U.S.A., Western Europe, Japan) furnishes them with much more powerful means than they possessed previously: arms, technology, finance. Multinational companies weaving their spider's web on a worldwide scale often command a material force which far surpasses that of newly independent States. The growth of the social sciences also permits the imperialist powers to improve their strategies and tactics of intervention, domination, repression and propaganda. Political independence has scarcely loosened the ties between the old colony and the metropolis; the imperialists' desire for raw materials, labour and markets on the one hand and the dependencies' need for goods, provisions, equipment as well as their need in cultural and scientific fields on the other has, if anything, reinforced the dependence of many countries on the imperialist powers while the mass media is another extremely effective string to the imperialists' bow.

Within the imperialist countries more and more people have realized that the destiny of Western society (a term of convenience which includes Japan) is inextricably linked to the fate of the millions of wretches who constitute two-thirds of humanity. There are two clearly opposed strategies — on the one hand those who wish to repress at all costs the revolutionary movements of the Third World so that it can be brought into the orbit of the imperialist system, and on the other those who advocate multilateral aid to

the dependent countries to allow them to peaceably attain economic and social development

If we compare old-style colonial strategy, of the 1900 era for example, with neo-colonialist strategy in the second half of the 20th century we note first of all a great difference in the international context and secondly in the ways and means implemented.

The old colonialists had merely to contend with backward pre-capitalist regimes, which, left behind by history, allowed the theory of capitalist development and bourgeois democracy to gain the upper hand. The intellectual élite, although fighting for national independence, adopted the ideologies and doctrines of the conqueror, but in the post-World War II period these élites in colonised and dependent countries, just as the popular masses, were to feel more and more the attraction of socialism and Marxism. The era of absolute political and ideological supremacy for the imperialist-capitalist system was over and it began, on the contrary to occupy a position of inferiority.

However, on the material, technical and financial levels present-day imperialism has far greater means at its disposal than it had 50 years ago.

We can say that neo-colonialism is a strategy which has developed:

— In a position of political and ideological inferiority.

— By virtue of accumulated material strength.

Economic integration

Their material strength allowed the imperialist powers to create within the old colonies and dependent territories a new economic system closely allied to world capitalism. The introduction of new techniques in agriculture and in the exploitation of raw materials contributed to the steady growth of a stream of tropical products in the direction of the imperialist countries—coffee, tea, fruit, peanuts, palm-oil, copra, minerals, fuel and precious wood. The natural resources of Africa, Asia and Latin America were exploited to the maximum without the least concern for the ecology or national needs, for the present and the future. In the countryside the use of machines, chemical fertilisers, pesticides, new rice and wheat strains brought about a marked social imbalance. Poor peasants who are unable to apply the new techniques are faced with bankruptcy while new strata of rich peasants and landlords emerge, linked more and more to local exporters and international agrobusiness. Ruined by a sophisticated market economy the poor peasants continue nevertheless to suffer exploitation and oppression as in pre-capitalist times: usury, forced labour and the selling of children...

The imperialists' investments tend to create industries which depend on the multinationals for their existence. In particular, the American and Japanese electronics industry have laid claim to Southeast Asia. Small, often microscopic parts, whose production requires a high level of technology are made in the U.S.A. and Japan, while the assembling of them, which necessitates a large, unskilled workforce, patient and dexterous nevertheless, is carried out in specially built factories in various Southeast Asian countries. In this way expenses are considerably reduced—the average wage of an Asian worker (mostly women) being one-fifteenth or one-twentieth of her American or Japanese counterpart. With a guaranteed and cheap labour force the multinationals have a commanding position on the international market. In the dependent countries the multinationals have also established certain industries (with varying levels of pollution) and assembly plants; in the shadow of the multinationals and the framework of the international capitalist market some industries created with national capital, such

as textiles and foodstuffs, may enjoy a certain growth.

A third outlet, often very important, of this neo-colonialist economy can be seen in the development of tourism—every year millions of Americans, Japanese and Europeans come to African and Asian countries for their holidays, spending vast amounts of foreign currency there. In fact, these countries have become brothels at bargain prices for the tourist, attracted by prostitution rather than the "exotic east". The figure of 600,000 Thai prostitutes, quoted in the French newspaper *Le Monde*, indicates to what extent prostitution has become an important factor in neo-colonialist society (*).

Dependent countries represent, therefore, a "suburb" of the imperialist powers, a peripheral melting pot where activities which require little skill but many hands are brought to the boil—pollutant industries and pernicious practices. The centre supplies the technological knowhow and investments and the financial backers reap the main rewards; any interruption in the flow between the two groups leaves the dependent country in a state of starvation—their economic umbilical cord having been cut.

The socio-political system

The economic integration of dependent countries into the system of world capitalism becomes more and more pressing as demands for national independence reach breaking point. Dependency has to be camouflaged at all cost and the neo-colonialist's trump-card is the setting up of a regime which has all the appearance of a national structure but on which all the functions of the old colonialist administration have devolved. There is no longer a French or English governor but a president of the Republic, ministers, generals, ambassadors, delegates to the U.N. and other international organisations—all of them natives brandishing the national flag. But this "national" government receives financial aid to cover its expenditure, military aid for security and survival and is swathed by a whole series of economic, political, military and cultural bodies whose advisers and experts, from imperialist powers needless to say, are there

to maintain social and political order.

This socio-political order is under constant threat from a popular movement in which demands for national independence and social justice combine to give it an explosive quality which increases with the attraction exerted by the socialist countries. The repressive nature of the neo-colonialist State is paramount; more often than not it takes the form of a military dictatorship, with a military junta at the head and reinforced by group of officers duly trained and indoctrinated by the imperialist advisers. Even when civilians are in power, fascist methods prevail: arrest, arbitrary imprisonment, torture, massacre and harassment of peasants and minority groups. From Chile to South Korea via Morocco, Egypt, Thailand and the Philippines it is the very same dictatorial and neo-fascist regime. Far from resolving the contradictions of a colonialist society, neo-colonialism, in spite of ensuring a certain measure of economic development, merely serves to reinforce them.

The introduction of new techniques and investments only benefits a very small segment of society whilst the social needs of all strata, including the most wretched, are heightened by the importing of foreign goods in large quantities and floods of tourists. The birth rate which is often more than 2.5% annually only serves to widen the gap between available resources and actual needs.

In the villages the number of bankrupt peasants grows rapidly; the rich buy only imported goods, hence the asphyxiation of the artisans. Traditional village solidarity which once sustained the peasant in times of misfortune or sickness disappears with the market economy, village officials no longer feel a responsibility towards their community but rather towards the town and exportation.

Millions of peasants flock to the towns in search of work but as industry can scarcely provide jobs for all of them they become still more wretched, living from hand to mouth, herded together in slums, corrupted by delinquency and prostitution. The rural exodus does not succeed in emptying the countryside, given the growing birth rate, but it creates huge cities

where only a tiny fraction of the populace can find work.

We can therefore trace the pattern of a particular social stratification:

At the top, we have a small group of landlords and bourgeois compradores who work on behalf of foreign industrial, commercial or banking companies or in services such as tourism. They cannot be considered as national bourgeois since their enterprises are overshadowed by foreign interests and they willingly serve multinational organisations—the national interest is in fact the least of their concerns.

Linked to foreign interests and the big landowners and bourgeois, maintained by financial and technical aid from the imperialist powers, there exists a band of functionaries and officials who in addition to their superior positions also share in the not inconsiderable perks and backhanders of multinational and foreign companies.

The two above-mentioned groups live a life of luxury, using expensive imported goods and enjoying a standard of living at least on a par with Western bourgeoisie (often with the added advantage of having a large servant staff, since it costs them very little).

If one judges the middle class as having means which are not vast but sufficient for a decent enough standard of living then we must include small traders, owners of small factories or workshops and university graduates in intellectual rather than managerial positions (the fraction of the intelligentsia which lends its expertise to big firms or the government is classed in the higher group). A small number of prostitutes also enjoy a good standard of living.

Minor officials and workers who succeed in being hired by modern enterprises may be able to reach a modest standard of living although things may be difficult if they have a large family to maintain.

On the bottommost rung of the ladder we find the millions of poverty-stricken peasants little by little forced to sell their plot of land and swell the slum population which makes up 50 or 90% depending on the country. Such wretched rural and urban masses whose daily resignation is inter-

persed with fits of anger are feared both by rich and powerful local and foreign firms.

In Southeast Asian countries there is a further category to be taken into account—the Hoa immigrants from mainland China who came in successive waves in the wake of Western colonisation and who today number around 20 million in Southeast Asia as a whole. Concentrated in the big cities—Bangkok, Manila, Jakarta, Singapore—they are artisans, workers and above all traders. Simple pedlars, small shopowners, merchants, bankers, industrialists—they are the indispensable intermediaries between Western firms and the local populations.

While manioc is grown by the Thai peasants, it is the Hoa trader who gathers the product and resells it to the export companies; it is he too who carries industrial goods imported from the West to the peasants in even the most remote villages. The Hoa are hoteliers, owners of restaurants, hairdressing salons, etc.; the tourists are Westerners (or Japanese), the good-time girls are local, but the owner of the hotel is Hoa. In fact, most of the economic and financial mechanisms in Southeast Asian countries are controlled by the Hoa. Of course there is an element of class struggle but the sense of ethnic solidarity created by the Hoa communities means that even the poorest Hoa feels more akin to a compatriot businessman than to a Malay or Indonesian worker.

The plurality of religions—Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic Christian, Animist—to speak only of Southeast Asia—transposed onto an already diverse ethnic range, succeeds in complicating the social picture still further. All this society lives nevertheless in the framework of the neo-colonialist system, an integral part of imperialism.

An unstable system

If it is the army and police force which are the essential means of maintaining law and order, then they do not suffice. The aspirations for national independence, a dignified life, social justice and cultural identity have to be stifled if they are not to be kindled into a real revolutionary movement. For this, imperialism has a whole range of methods at its disposal.

A stream of goods and gadgets passing under the noses of people living in penury creates a consumer society which sets them on a frenetic path to acquire material possessions and luxury items.

Wide scale use of the media—films, pictures, music, songs, posters, reactionary slogans and doctrines exalting violence and pornography—serves to break down traditional values.

The educated classes are constantly subjected to the cult of the West and therefore develop an inferiority complex towards their national culture; at the same time the most sophisticated Western ideas promoting irrationalism and individualism are introduced while traditional religions, even superstitions are encouraged.

In such conditions, neither national culture nor science can develop properly; many intellectuals feel obliged to leave their native land in order to live and work in the developed countries, particularly the US. This brain-drain is a cultural haemorrhage—intellectual emigration is facilitated by the fact that the universities of the new colonies are almost exact replicas of their Western counterparts. The mother tongue is hardly used for the teaching of many subjects at higher education level, English (or American) prevails in most cases. This linguistic stranglehold facilitates economic, political and ideological domination.

An unlooked for help for the imperialist powers has been the existence of Maoist groups in many Asian countries. Because of their extremism throughout many years of guerilla activity they have on the one hand prevented the formation of efficient national fronts and on the other discredited revolutionary doctrines. Beijing's about-turn and alliance with Washington succeeded in throwing the revolutionary ranks of many Southeast Asian countries into disarray and many years will be needed to reconstitute the communist parties within these countries. Whilst the police force in such countries is often of a notorious efficiency, it is also to be noted that the neo-fascist dictatorships recruit their henchmen—mercenaries, police, torturers and informers—from amongst these degraded elements, ruined peasants and urban unemployed, arming them to the hilt and initiating them by

means of "advisers" into the most sophisticated methods of repression and torture. The neo-colonialist society is characterised thus:

— The introduction of high technology means of production into the heart of a society, which although broken up by the old colonialists still has vast sectors of the population living in pre-capitalist conditions.

— The co-existence of a minority consumer society and a huge number of wretched, dispossessed people.

— The survival and often revival of religions and superstitions inherited from traditional society existing alongside the most modern way of life, and resulting in the exacerbation of the contradictions of the old colonialist society.

— A rapid popularisation of socio-political battles and hence permanent instability — witness the number of coups d'état in many countries. Many different movements — nationalist, religious,

ethnic or authentic revolutionary, not to mention the struggle for power within the ruling classes — may oppose the neo-fascist or neo-colonialist dictatorship. As far as Southeast Asia is concerned the existence of a large Chinese colony and the hegemonistic policy of Beijing reinforces even more these factors of instability in varying degrees.

Southeast Asia — Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and even South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong — is comprising more than 300 million people heavily implicated in the neo-colonialist system. The area abundantly supplies the West (and Japan) with petrol, tin, rubber, palm oil, copra, manioc and timber. Multinational companies have heavy investments in a region which each year receives many millions of American, Japanese and European tourists.

At the centre of the neo-colonialist bloc we have Vietnam with its fierce desire for independence, its

Communist Party, inspiration of the national movement, determined to create a socialist society. It is in this context that we have to understand American and Chinese policies, as well as those of other imperialist and reactionary forces, with regard to Vietnam from 1954 to 1975 and in the present day. And it is thus we come to understand too the profound solidarity which unites the peoples of the Third World, and in particular Southeast Asia, in their fight for independence, peace and social progress.

* A French author writes: "The Thai people today see him (the White man) come along with his big shoes to trample them underfoot, of course in a more civilized fashion than their neighbours on the other side of the Mekong, but just as unmercifully. And all in the name of tourism and exotism — meaning cheap food, beaches and prostitutes" — Claude Schmilt *L'Asie du Sud-Est via Bangkok* (Southeast Asia via Bangkok) p 18, Lausanne, 1978

COMING OUT SOON:

A new dossier published by Vietnam Courier

THE HOANG SA and TRUONG SA ARCHIPELAGOES (PARACELS and SPRATLEY)

I

After sending troops to attack and occupy islands in the Hoang Sa archipelago in 1956 and again in 1974 at the time when this archipelago was under the jurisdiction of the former Saigon Administration, Beijing launched a propaganda campaign to justify its occupation and further claim its right to the Truong Sa archipelago.

Vietnam Courier will publish two dossiers concerning the Sino-Vietnamese contention over these archipelagoes. Dossier I is a collection of articles on the Vietnamese view-point concerning this matter while Dossier II, to be published later, gathers together documents which prove the Vietnamese sovereignty over these two archipelagoes.

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Kampuchea:

REHABILITATION OF IRRIGATION WORKS

IN the past, Kampuchea had a number of large water conservancy works, some of which supplied tens of thousands of hectares of crop land. From 1976 to 1978 the Pol Pot clique made a lot of noise about an "irrigation movement" which was but castles in the air devoid of any scientific foundation. In fact they built only a few, and neglected or destroyed a lot of important works. During their flight, they wrecked many of these works, causing great difficulties for the Kampuchean people's agricultural production in the first days of liberation.

At that time the principal task was to mobilize the entire people to increase production by every possible means and to fight off the scourge of famine left by the Pol Pot genocidal regime. Since mid-1979, however, irrigation work has received due attention and has been tackled from both sides: the State restoring major works while the people rehabilitating and building small and medium ones.

Over the past two years, the population has dredged, repaired and built anew thousands of kilometres of irrigation canals, hundreds of dams and small and medium reservoirs. In the latter half of 1979 Kompong Speu province repaired half of its dams and dug more than 400 important canals watering tens of thousands of hectares of rice and subsidiary food crops. In 1980 Kompong Chhnang restored 21 dams, two reservoirs and many canal systems, bringing water to more than 7,500 hectares of wet and dry crops. Late in 1979 and throughout 1980 the population in the mountain province of Preah Vihear contributed tens of thousands of work-days repairing 36 reservoirs and dams, as well as building 26 new ones. Irrigation work was animated in the Bat-

tambang rice granary. In 1976-1980 the population of this province repaired more than 50 irrigation works including 30 major ones supplying about 30,000 hectares of cultivated land.

Large investments were also made by the State to rehabilitate water conservancy works. Relying both on its own forces and the manysided help of brother countries the Kampuchean revolutionary State devoted a large amount of equipment, material, and labour power to rapidly restoring and improving major irrigation works so as to boost agricultural production. Particularly outstanding in 1974 were the works around the Tonle Sap Lake like the Candang pumping station and the Carech dam in Pursat province, the Kan Nha and the Sala Tien dams in Battambang province. Moreover, many other works in the latter province were surveyed and began to be rehabilitated. In 1980 the Kampuchean people fulfilled their plan of restoring and improving 14 major irrigation works in the rice-growing provinces of Battambang, Kompong Thom, Siem Reap, Kandal, Takeo, and Kompong Speu, comprising systems of key reservoirs, dams, pumping stations and canals left in disrepair or destroyed under the Pol Pot regime and during its flight, thus ensuring water to more than 60,000 hectares of cultivated land. The Krassaing Chinit water conservancy system in Kompong Thom province, one of the biggest in Kampuchea, supplied water to more than 25,000 hectares of reclaimed land. The Salo On dam in Takeo province (50 metres long, 8 metres high with 16 sluice gates) was left in disuse by the Pol Pot regime which sabotaged its equipment, surface and main pillars. Recently the Kampuchean water conservancy branch repaired

all the equipment and made the best use of the remaining dam while removing tens of thousands of cubic metres of earth to dig canals. Thus, since August 1980 bringing water to tens of thousands of hectares of ricefields in Takeo province and in the southern part of Kompong Speu province, and helping to open Highway Three to traffic.

With the rapid restoration of irrigation works, the growing of rice and subsidiary food crops in both the rainy and the dry season was carried out in time, and their areas expanded. Preah Vihear with a small cultivated area and a late tilling in 1979 had to face a drought and repeated incursions of reactionaries from the Thai border in 1980 but managed, nevertheless, to grow more than 10,000 hectares of rice and thousands of hectares of subsidiary food crops, thus rapidly farming thousands of hectares of rice above the 1979 area. In a similar situation but with heavier enemy raids, Battambang remarkably achieved its irrigation work in 1980, expanding its rainy-season cultivated area by more than 100,000 hectares as compared with 1979. In 1980 the area planted with rice in Kompong Speu province increased four times over 1979 while the dry-season cultivated area also expanded considerably.

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In the implementation of the above-mentioned important tasks, the Kampuchean people enjoyed considerable, devoted and efficient help from the Vietnamese people. The Ministry of Water Conservancy and its provincial services as well as other production branches of Vietnam sent hundreds of tonnes of iron, steel, cement, equipment and machines to Kampuchea as well as hundreds of technical cadres and skilled workers to restore and improve Kampuchean irrigation works, and repair equipment and machines. Only a few months after liberation (7 January 1979) Bang Tam pun and Beng Tra Bék pumping stations (with a capacity of 20,000 and 8,700 cubic metres per hour respectively) south of Phnom Penh as well as tens of other irrigation works were brought back into operation thanks both to Vietnamese material and technical

assistance and water conservancy cadres and workers. In 1980 Vietnam's Ministry of Water Conservancy helped Kampuchea rehabilitate seven major irrigation works, many medium and small ones, and carry out surveys to repair three other major works supplying 70,000 hectares of crop land in many provinces. Provincial water conservancy services of Vietnam also sent 19 work-teams to assist twin provinces in Kampuchea repair reservoirs, dams, pumping

stations, irrigation canals and plan the building of new irrigation projects. Early in 1980 the Hydraulic Engineering Plant No. 276 in Ho Chi Minh City sent technical cadres and equipment to help repair seven irrigation works in Battambang, Kompong Speu, Takeo and Pursat provinces.

Besides helping restore and improve water conservancy works, Vietnam also assisted Kampuchea

free of charge with 300 pumps, of which 150 were big and 12 were outboard, tens of tonnes of spare parts, repair-kits as well as many workers to operate and maintain these pumps, thus making a sizeable contribution to the Kampuchean people's fight against drought and waterlogging during the past three crops.

HOANG TUAN

Vietnam Advances

A ROAD OF FRIENDSHIP

RECENTLY, the communications network of Gia Lai-Kon Tum province was expanded with a whole system of new roads. The new roads branch out from provincial and district towns to remote villages and the new economic zones of the province. Among them is Highway 18—"Friendship Road"—starting from Tan Canh (Dac To district town), over the Vietnamese-Lao border to the provincial town of Attopeu province, in Laos.

The two provinces of Gia Lai-Kon Tum and Attopeu are contiguous. On either side of the frontier stretch immense forests of bamboos of all kinds. In the past, the only communication links were mountain tracks. But from May 1975, and especially since the twinning between the two provinces (February 1979), the construction of a link road became an urgent need. Later that year, at the end of the rainy season, investigation teams from the Gia Lai-Kon Tum communications service with war-time experience in opening roads were sent to the area. After nearly two months spent in the forests, investigating possible routes, the projected road was sketched out on the map.

Right from the first kilometre in early January 1980, the construction teams were faced with many difficulties because of the density of mine fields left over from the war. One sapper was killed when a mine exploded. As soon as the mines were deactivated, the construction teams began their work. First, the bridge-building teams, carrying their materials and equipment on their backs, were sent to clear the trees and build bridges and fords across the rivers and streams. Then the mechanized teams moved in with bulldozers to level the terrain, fill up the craters and open the road. And finally the road-building team packed the road-bed, built embankments and drainage systems.

In the Central Highlands, the dry season is the most suitable for construction work but it is also the most severe season for the road-builders: the weather is very hot in the day time but very cold at night. Some areas are without water, and the workers have to carry their drinking water over tens of kilometres. Nevertheless, labour productivity for the whole construction site reached 130%.

Within nearly two months of intensive work, the 125 kilometre-

long road was practically completed, including 80 bridges and culverts of all sizes. Hundreds of thousands of cubic metres of earth and stone had been moved, and nearly one million square metres of forests cleared.

Thanks to the new road, communications between Gia Lai-Kon Tum and Attopeu have been greatly improved. In the past, it took a fortnight for a lorry to travel from Gia Lai-Kon Tum to Attopeu. The lorry had to drive up to Quang Tri province and take Highway 9 over to Laos. Now it takes only one day to commute between the two provinces.

At the inauguration ceremony, the Secretary of the Party Committee of Attopeu province said: "With this newly-built road, the Vietnamese comrades have enabled our hearts to beat in unison." Since then convoys of trucks have regularly transported goods from Gia Lai-Kon Tum to Attopeu. The first 500 tonnes of goods transported included cloth, petrol, oil, school equipment, and 350 tonnes of salt. Using this road, groups of Vietnamese workers from Gia Lai-Kon Tum went to Attopeu to assemble a broadcasting system and build a 100-bed hospital for Laos. Nearly 100 pupils from Attopeu also come to Vietnam for professional training.

"Friendship Road" is being maintained and widened, its bridges and culverts reinforced. In the future, the road will be upgraded and asphalted to further develop the relations between the two provinces.

After Q.H.

POLICY ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

(A summary of the resolution of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Vietnam on the Party's policy concerning science and technology)

On April 20, 1981 the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Vietnam issued an important resolution regarding its policy towards scientific and technological work.

The resolution recalls that the Party's Third Congress (1960) already pointed to the important role of science and technology in the building and defence of the country, and that the Fourth Party Congress Resolution made a point of simultaneously carrying out three revolutions: the revolution in production relations, the scientific and technological revolution and the ideological and cultural revolution, with the scientific and technological revolution as the *kingpin*. The resolution further stresses that the development of science and technology is aimed at serving production, everyday life and national defence.

For more than twenty years now, says the resolution, the Vietnamese Party and Government have not relented in their efforts to develop science and technology. After the liberation of southern Vietnam they defined the main orientations for scientific and technological work throughout the country and worked out 72 key projects for the advancement of science and technology on a national scale.

The contingent of scientific and technical cadres and skilled workers has quickly grown in size and quality. A system of institutions for scientific-technical research and management has been set up from the centre to the localities. Scientific and technological co-operation with other countries has not ceased to improve and broaden.

However, the efficiency of scientific and technological operations remains low, bearing no relation to the existing potential and not yet satisfactorily meeting the needs of the country. A unified programme for the training and

utilisation of scientific and technical workers is still lacking and the number of highly qualified scientists and managerial cadres in scientific work is still dismally small. The number of social scientists has been growing more slowly than that of other branches of science. Many irrationalities remain in the system of research and managerial institutions whose functions need to be more clearly defined and whose leadership is not sufficiently centralized.

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The resolution of the Party's Political Bureau then lays down the following *tasks and objectives for scientific and technological work in the country*:

The policy on science and technology is a component part of the strategy of economic and social development. It must direct all scientific and technological activities towards effectively serving the development of production, the stabilisation and gradual improvement of the people's living standards, the strengthening of the country's defence capabilities.

Science and technology must focus research on the laws of Vietnam's natural environment, society and people and its international relations in order to fully develop the collective forces, to create new production relations and achieve socialist construction and defence.

During the current period of transition to socialism, all scientific and technological activities must cater for socialist industrialisation, in other words must contribute to the plan of gradual reorganisation and re-equipment of the whole national economy on the basis of automation, electrification and chemicalisation. We

must advance from small-scale production to large-scale socialist production with a modern industrial-agricultural economic structure, and lay the material and technical foundations of socialism within a period of three to four five-year plans. *At the present stage*, science and technology must promote the development of some crucial industries such as energy and fuel, raw materials, engineering and metallurgy, chemicals, communications and transport... and other industries with a direct bearing on the development of agriculture.

In the years to come it is necessary to promote scientific and technological activities, to quickly and broadly apply scientific and technological advances in order to help achieve the foremost task of effecting overall progress in agriculture, developing the country's natural resources in manpower, land, tropical natural resources and gradually bringing about a large-scale socialist agriculture in order to solve the problem of food, foodstuffs, raw materials for industry, consumer and export goods.

Scientific and technological activities must also play an active part in building a new and socialist culture and people, in building a strong and numerous contingent of scientific and technical cadres and skilled workers according to a central programme, with a composition and standard corresponding to the tasks of economic, cultural and social development, effectively making up for present shortcomings in these respects.

It is necessary to prove the superiority of socialism in dealing with our cultural legacy and in developing, on a scientific basis, the nation's scientific assets and experience in production. At the same time, great importance should be attached to the selective and creative assimilation of the achievements of modern science and technology throughout the world

It is necessary to give priority to the development of some scientific and technological fields of major importance for economic, cultural and social development, for the development of the scientific and technological potential of the country, with due attention being given to the main trends of scientific and technological development in the world. Such branches of science and technology as can make the best use of the natural resources, tropical conditions and the qualities of the Vietnamese people should be stimulated to the greatest possible extent.

Due attention should be paid to biology, and other branches of science and technology associated with the tropical climate, and also the economic and managerial sciences. It is necessary to quickly improve the technical and manufacturing level, primarily in agricultural production and the consumer goods industries; and in such industries as energy, mining, metallurgy, oil and gas and chemicals, and to make wide use of scientific and technological processes in all branches of the national economy.

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The resolution points to the following orientations for developing the scientific and technological potential of the country:

On the contingent of scientific and technical workers, it is imperative to better organise and utilise the existing contingent of scientific workers. It is necessary to immediately set up a State council for the training and allocation of scientific and technical cadres in order to work out a plan and targets for the training programme. This council must have the power to transfer cadres from one branch to another, and from one locality to another if the need arises.

Priority should be given to the scientific institutions which most need able cadres while work should start to train groups of scientific and technical workers capable of solving the most important and decisive scientific and technical problems. At the same time, steps should be taken to mobilize large numbers of scientists from the various scientific institu-

tions, departments, services and localities to carry out the key programmes for scientific and technological advance.

Science lecturers should be encouraged to take part in research and production activities, and inversely researchers and technical workers engaged in productive and managerial jobs should be encouraged to teach.

We must make bold use of young and able scientific and technical workers. Efforts should be made to ensure the best possible conditions of work and living conditions for scientific and technical workers.

The training of scientific and technical workers must be done in conformity with the resolution of the Party's Political Bureau concerning educational reform (see *Vietnam Courier* No. 11-1979). Any training programme must proceed from a scientific basis and the needs of economic-social development, with due attention to the formation of suitable teams of scientists for each branch or service.

It is necessary to promote post-graduate training, first of all from courses organised in the country, and to make good use of skilled workers in order for science and technology to better serve production and society.

Due attention should be given to the training of highly qualified scientific and technical workers and steps should be taken to discover able pupils at an early stage in the general education schools, send them to special schools reserved for particularly gifted children in order to train them in the shortest possible time.

As far as the system of research institutes is concerned, the resolution underlines the need to reorganise and expand it. An Academy of Sciences, the highest State body of scientific research, is to be founded. It will be staffed by the most prominent scientists in the natural science and social sciences, who will also head the most promising branches of science and technology of decisive importance for the development of the country.

There must be a streamlining and improvement of the organisa-

tion of the research institutes of the various economic and technological branches. Steps will be taken to gradually set up scientific-productive complexes in order to coordinate the scientific-technical and production activities and shorten the period necessary to apply scientific innovations or discoveries to production.

Significant investments will be made in scientific and technical activities, in training scientific and technical cadres and skilled workers. Part of our foreign exchange reserves will be spent on meeting the needs in materials and equipment for such activities. Selective and appropriate investments will be made in the construction of a number of the most important scientific and technological institutes.

The resolution also lays emphasis on the need to develop

OVER the past thirty years since the 1945 August Revolution, in spite of modest beginnings the contingent of Vietnamese scientific and technical workers has rapidly grown in both number and quality.

In nearly one hundred years the French colonialists only built in the whole of Indochina one university with two faculties of Law and Medicine, a number of colleges: Agriculture, Commerce, Public Works, Art, Pedagogy, Veterinary Science and Science together with nine secondary vocational schools. University enrolment was 1,085 at its peak year (1942) which included 200 French students prevented by the war from returning home to study. Higher education colleges took in about 200 students each year. Teaching in all schools from general education upward was done in French while Vietnamese was considered a foreign language.

Under French domination the contingent of cadres trained in the colleges and secondary vocational schools was very small and was of course at French beck and call. In 1939, there were little more than 200 Indochinese physicians,

scientific and technological information, regarding this as a crucial factor for the development of science and technology.

The resolution attaches special importance to developing *international co-operation*, regarding this as a crucial component of State policy on science and technology. Priority in this field is given to expanding all-round co-operation with the Soviet Union and the other COMECON countries. Co-operation with the developing countries having similar natural conditions as Vietnam will be expanded as well as to other countries in order to make the most of advanced techniques compatible with the needs and capacities of the country, and on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. Efforts will be undertaken to continue expanding the relations with the scientific agencies of the United Nations. Special attention will be given to developing and strengthening the relations of co-

operation and mutual assistance with Laos and Kampuchea.

The resolution points out that international co-operation should be undertaken in selective way in order to yield the most effective results. In this sense, joint research should be conducted with other countries on subjects of significance for Vietnam but in which the partner countries are also interested. Steps will be taken to promote co-operation between corresponding scientific bodies in Vietnam and the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Conditions should be created for expanding international relations and contacts between Vietnamese scientific and technical cadres with their foreign colleagues in order to assimilate the new advances of world science. Particular importance should be given to combining scientific and technological co-operation with economic co-operation the former keeping one step ahead to create the prerequisite for

expanding the latter. Positive measures will be taken to stimulate and super-ise the co-operation programme signed with other countries from start to finish.

Import of technologies must be done in a selective way. Priority should be given to technologies of crucial importance in developing the national economy, in improving Vietnam's technical and manufacturing standards and in creating new export potential. Efforts should be made to eventually export our own technology wherever natural conditions and the country's scientific and technological capabilities permit.

Finally, the resolution of the Party's Political Bureau lays down guidelines for improving scientific and technological management and intensifying the Party leadership, State management and the working people's collective mastery over scientific and technological activities.

THE NEW CONTINGENT OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL WORKERS IN VIETNAM

barely 200 Vietnamese teachers of secondary schools, approximately 300 technicians of public works and land survey, and 150 or so technicians of agriculture and forestry. There were only a score of engineers, doctors and teachers with higher education training, most of them graduated in France.

The 1945 - 1954 period

After the 1945 August Revolution and throughout the war of resistance against French colonialism (1946-1954) Vietnam had to start almost from scratch to train and build its contingent of specialized cadres.

With the strong determination of the Government of Resistance and the efforts of our cadres and people including the valuable con-

tribution of patriotic intellectuals, we built, with our own means, a number of colleges and vocational schools. In October 1947 the College of Medicine and Pharmacy was established in a Viet Bac jungle. Teaching was done in Vietnamese. Later on we opened four other colleges with 500 students: Communications and Public Works (1948), Pedagogy for natural sciences (1951), Pedagogy for social sciences (1953), Basic sciences (1951) and eight secondary vocational schools with more than 3,000 students (Communications - Public works, Medicine, Agriculture and Forestry, Foreign languages, Post and Telecommunications). In the resistance areas of southern Vietnam we opened a number of schools and classes (medicine, animal husbandry, etc.) Together with training at home, starting from 1951 we sent 700 students to study in socialist countries, most of them to the Soviet Union.

The 1954 - 1965 period

In this period we began to establish socialist colleges and secondary vocational schools and press for the training of a contingent of socialist intellectuals.

Late in 1954 there were in northern Vietnam only 475 scientific and technical workers with a higher education level and 3,000 with secondary vocational level (according to the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Vocational Education). Most of them (85% cadres with higher education level and 70% cadres with secondary vocational level) worked in educational, cultural and medical branches, and very few in technical and economic branches.

The French colonialists left a "Higher Education Institute" with

three faculties: Medicine, Science and Law; besides there was a College of Pedagogy with a few teachers and about 1,000 students. Moreover, Hanoi and Haiphong had some vocational schools of industry, handicraft and fine-arts with 300 students. That was the whole picture of higher and vocational education in the areas liberated in 1954.

In this period, on the one hand we expanded the existing colleges: Colleges of Medicine-Pharmacy and Pedagogy in 1955-1956; on the other we built a series of new institutions.

- Hanoi University
- Hanoi Polytechnical College
- College of Agriculture and Forestry
- College of Economy and Finance (now Hanoi College of Economy and Planning)
- Vinh Teacher - Training College
- Hanoi College of Art
- College of Water Conservancy.

56 schools were opened for secondary vocational education. University enrolment rose from 1,200 to 16,700 between 1955 and 1961. Meanwhile, secondary vocational school enrolment increased 11 fold, from 2,800 to 30,000. The number of university teachers increased from 40 to 1,260 and secondary vocational teachers from 10 to 1,630. University entries went from 594 for the 1955-1956 academic year to 4,965 for the 1960-1961 academic year.

Parallel with this growth in numbers, the contingent of new intellectuals also underwent basic changes in quality. They were young men and women, who had grown up under the socialist regime, resistance cadres or sons and daughters of cadres, workers, or peasants, and thoroughly loyal to the revolutionary cause. They were not affected by the tendency to stand aloof from reality, to consider only the technical aspect, or to divorce science from politics, an attitude prevalent amongst the intelligentsia of the former regime. A change for the better also took place in the structure of professions to meet the requirements of the revolution in its new stage.

Late in 1960 the number of cadres with a higher education level rose to 3,835 (12 percent of them trained in socialist countries), that of cadres with secondary vocational level to 18,135. Technicians who had accounted for only a small percentage in the past now made up 31.4 per cent in higher education and 38.7 per cent in secondary vocational education.

In 1963, for the first time in Vietnam, nearly 500 people from minority groups studied science and technology in colleges at home, nearly 100 others abroad and 3,000 others in secondary vocational schools. Many secondary schools were established in various parts of the highlands starting from 1964 to train ethnic minorities in agriculture, forestry, medicine, water conservancy, etc.

The number of woman college students also increased dramatically: from 123 in the 1955-1956 academic year to 1,271 in the 1960-1961 academic year, and to 3,610 in the 1964-1965 academic year. Their percentage in the total enrolment was 12 per cent (1964-1965 academic year).

By 1965, there were 21,000 scientific and technical cadres with higher education and 74,000 cadres with secondary vocational education. Also at this time, to meet the teaching needs first in the research institutes we began post-graduate education, mainly by sending cadres to study and do research work in socialist countries. By the 1964-1965 academic year, more than 500 cadres were trained abroad to this effect, nearly half of them as researchers.

During the war of resistance against US aggression (1965 - 1975)

In 1965, US imperialism unleashed a war of destruction against northern Vietnam. Our people had to fight for the defence of the North while at the same time contributing to the fight for the liberation of the South. In spite of the conditions of an extremely fierce war, our scientific and technical cadres under the clear-sighted leadership of our Party and Government grew apace in both number and quality. The movement to promote scientific research for production and fighting, reform education, expand the

scope of training, and further link school to production, also grew. In spite of the war, we advocated expanding the scope of training to satisfy both immediate and future requirements, ensuring the quality of training, promoting political and ideological education, while closely combining scientific education and research with the participation in production and fighting of both teachers and students. Thanks to this correct policy and to our cadres' maturity, scientific research served both production and fighting. Groups of researchers were set up and co-operated with one another to solve the scientific and technical problems posed by the revolution, gradually building Vietnam's expertise in this area and assimilating in a critical and selective way the advanced achievements of world science and technology. Also in this stage we founded the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Vocational Education and the Vietnam Scientific Institute (formed out of the State Committee for Science and Technology).

By 1975 we had 37 universities and colleges and 186 secondary vocational schools, with 55,700 university students and 69,800 secondary vocational students. University teachers numbered 8,650, among them 770 with Master or Candidate of Science degrees.

1975 to the present day

With the great victory which completely liberated southern Vietnam and reunified our country, the contingent of scientific and technical workers increased prodigiously. To the northern contingent were added more than 100,000 intellectuals from secondary vocational education upwards, among them about 30,000 university graduates and several hundred post-graduates.

As regards quality, our scientific and technical workers, after national reunification, came from two sources of training: from both socialist and capitalist countries.

Those trained in the latter have certain strong points; Owing to their long training in developed capitalist countries, they have much practice in operating modern equipment. Some of them have a broad knowledge and high level

(Continued on page 20)

HIGHER EDUCATION

FOR KEY CADRES IN

Hoang Lien Son

HOANG LIEN SON, one of the six provinces on the China-Vietnam border, is well known for the Fansipan Mountain, the highest peak in Indochina. The province drew attention at home and abroad for its feats during the fight against Chinese aggression early in 1979. In its efforts to heal the wounds of war, since 1980 the province has distinguished itself by a programme to provide higher education for key cadres, a remarkable endeavour for a mountain area considering the present conditions of the country. This is a long-term programme with a cultural and political character, and which will have a great impact on economic life. Party cadres have set a good example by eagerly subscribing to the programme. Among those who have completed university studies are 25 of the 45 members of the Provincial Party Committee, 11 of the 13 executive members of the committee, 11 members of the Provincial People's Committee, and 89 service directors and deputy-directors. There are also leading members of the Federation of Trade Unions, the Women's Union and the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, 38 secretaries or deputy-secretaries of party committees and district chairmen and deputy-chairmen, 69 directors and deputy-directors of factories, State farms, and State companies. All told, 557 persons have graduated from in-service courses, not to mention almost 2,000 doctors, engineers and teachers who have completed studies through full-time courses.

The 750,000 population is made up of some 30 ethnic groups, including the Viet, the Dao, the Hmong, the Tay, the Nung, the Thai, the Muong, the Giay, the Phu La, etc. Twenty years ago, in 1961, when the Tay-Nung and Hmong scripts were first introduced, most of the cadres were just beginning to learn the three

R's. Quite a number were still half-illiterate. With this in mind we can see all the more clearly how fast the province has progressed in providing education for its cadres.

The experience of Lao Cai province

Hoang Lien Son was founded in 1956 through the merger of the former provinces of Lao Cai, Yen Bai and Nghia Lo, with the first province serving as the core of a movement to study science, technology and economic management.

The US war of destruction was raging north of the 17th parallel, but Lao Cai was part of a "safe

zone" tacitly agreed upon between the United States and China. Although not subject to US attacks Lao Cai had to mobilize its manpower and resources for the front. In such a situation it was almost impossible to plan anything for a long time ahead.

The leaders of Lao Cai, however had rare foresight and knew how to combine immediate tasks with long-term ones. The Party Secretary, Truong Minh, was struck by the fact that there were very few secondary-school graduates among the provincial and district staffs, and that none of the members of the Party and People's Committees had acquired university education, hence their very sketchy knowledge of science and economics. Truong Minh saw this as a great obstacle to the revolutionary State's role as administrator and economic manager whilst simultaneously conducting the three revolutions in relations of production; culture and ideology; science and technology.

So an extraordinary executive meeting was called by the Party Committee to discuss how to provide better education for people who had been well tested in revolutionary work, but who had missed opportunities to improve their knowledge. In its assessment of the situation, the meeting agreed



A class.

Photo: VINH QUANG



Group discussion.

Photo: NHU KHUE

that "ignorance and backwardness" were prevalent. The meeting also decided that provincial and district cadres would have to acquire university education one way or another.

On instructions from the provincial authorities, key cadres studied physics, algebra and chemistry in a secondary programme for adults in the four years between 1964 and 1968, in preparation for entry into universities or colleges. Also at the request of the province, a special six-year course on economic management was opened for its benefit by the Hanoi No. 1 Agricultural College. The students who graduated through national examinations in 1974 included Truong Minh, his deputy Duong Viet Tien, and 31 other key cadres.

At about the same time 36 other cadres graduated from a crash course in economics and technology run by the Hanoi Polytechnic, and 43 other people, former vocational school graduates, became factory directors or deputy directors after being granted degrees by the same institution.

Thanks to these persistent efforts, 6 of the 9 executive members and 14 of the 27 other members of the Party Committee in Lao Cai attained university level in economics and technology in 1975.

In the footsteps of Lao Cai

Six months after the merger of the three provinces, the first com-

plementary course on economics was opened in Hoang Lien Son following an agreement between the director of the provincial Board for Propaganda and Training and the dean of the Hanoi College of Economics and Planning. The local Economic-Technical School was moved to the provincial town of Lao Cai, on the southern bank of the Nam Thi River, opposite the Chinese border town of Hekou. Despite repeated Chinese provocations, classes were given regularly three days a month with the attendance of 148 key cadres, who studied philosophy, political economics, economic planning, agricultural and industrial economics, economic analysis, and other subjects. The teachers came from Hanoi every month to give lectures, correct papers, and guide the students in their work.

The first course was concluded in the autumn of 1978, and soon afterward the school was moved to the town of Yen Bai on account of mounting tension along the border. Late in the year a second course was opened for 135 students, but it had to stop shortly afterwards because of the Chinese invasion. 150,000 of the 600,000 Chinese troops swarmed into Hoang Lien Son, inflicting heavy damage on the two main towns of Lao Cai and Cam Duong, and wreaking havoc on a series of district towns like Muong Khuong,

Bat Xat, Sa Pa, Pho Lu, etc. The students, who all held key posts in the local administration, had to give up their studies, but as soon as the situation returned to normal the chairman of the People's Committee, who was also head of the school, ordered them back in April. Transport was very difficult because the Chinese had destroyed the railway line and many of the bridges. Yet, all the students managed to be present on time, although many of them had to travel on foot along jungle trails. At the end of the two-year course, 123 students passed and only 12 failed.

Great strides have been made in Hoang Lien Son since their modest beginnings. In addition to a programme for economic management conducted by the Hanoi College of Economics and Planning, there are courses run by the Hanoi No. 1 Agricultural College and the College of Forestry, and French and Russian courses by the Hanoi Foreign Languages Teacher-Training College. However the level of education is not homogeneous among the students, many of whom come from ethnic minorities. The first step is always the hardest, but once taken progress is swift.

* *

Hoang Lien Son, with its area of 14,800 square kilometres, has great agricultural, industrial and forest potentials. There are large deposits of apatite and valuable minerals. The soil is good for rice, medicinal plants and industrial crops. There are immense pasture lands and vast expanses of forest with great reserves of rare timber and animals. Only one year after the formation of the province, crop zoning was completed and was approved by the Government. The promptness with which the work was done was indicative of a higher efficiency of both the technical and administrative staffs.

In spite of heavy damage wrought by the one-month Chinese invasion, Hoang Lien Son did better in 1980 than in 1978: gross social output values went up by 10%, gross industrial output values by 16%, per capita food output by 3%, and general income by 5%.

Although academic achievements do not always have a direct effect on production, much of Hoang Lien Son's progress in this area must be ascribed to the success of this higher education programme.

After HAM CHAU

CONTRACTS BETWEEN RESEARCH CENTRES AND PRODUCTION BASES

THE Government Council has recently issued a decree which allows for the signing of contracts between scientific and technological centres and production bases. This innovation opens the way for widespread application of scientific achievements which can directly benefit production and improve the people's living standards.

The signing of these contracts obviates the need for each production base to duplicate scientific work which may well have already carried out in other areas and allows the research

centres to exercise their greater expertise for such work by concentrating on a more efficient division of labour. The setting up of research programmes also permits a more profound and extensive examination of the problems of production bases which will clearly be beneficial all round in the long run.

The parties to the contract are allowed to determine the share of profit to be paid to the scientific centres who in turn may use part of this money as material incentive to researchers. A cost accounting system is beginning

to be applied in scientific and technological offices which allows the proceeds of research to be ploughed back into the work of the centres. Employed rationally, scientific workers can widen the scope of their activity beyond the confines of their own particular area to develop both their own potential and help introduce more effective and productive method of working.

This new contract system links the research centres more closely to the production bases and hence forms an economic and technical alliance between the workers in the respective areas. In contrast to the former haphazard system when contracts were signed on the basis of personal acquaintance this new departure places everything on a uniform and legal basis and puts scientific achievements at the service of the people.

HANOI'S VIEWPOINT

THE VICTORIOUS TREND TOWARDS FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE IN AFRICA

THE most striking fact in the resolution adopted at the 18th Summit Conference of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) held on 27 June 1981 in Nairobi is its unanimous condemnation of the Reagan Administration which works hand in glove with the apartheid colonial regime in Pretoria to oppose the South African and Namibian peoples and other independent countries in South Africa. The resolution sternly denounces the Pretorian Administration backed by the US and some Western countries for their illegal occupation of Namibia. The conference confirms that Resolution 435 taken by the UN Security Council to restore independence to Namibia is the

sole basis for the peaceful settlement of the Namibian question and that the South African Administration should implement this resolution unconditionally and without any amendment. This staunch support to the just struggle of the Namibian people is a flat rejection by the African countries of the "new plan" worked out by the US and Western countries to delay the granting of independence to Namibia. Condemning the hostile acts of the Reagan Administration colluding with the racists in South Africa against the People's Republic of Angola, the OAU Conference demands that the US stop supplying arms and ammunition to the UNITA counter-revolutionaries. The conference also stresses the need

for the OAU Liberation Committee to step up its assistance to the just struggle of the South African peoples.

Another important question which attracted the attention of the conference is the situation in West Sahara. Here, in the last six years, the Moroccan Government, propped up by the US and other imperialist countries, has unleashed an aggressive war against the people of Sahrawi who are led by the Polisario Front. The OAU Conference calls on the parties concerned to sign a cease-fire order, organise a plebiscite on the right to self-determination of the Sahrawi people under the supervision of the OAU with the assistance of a UN security force. Opinions agree that the OAU should take drastic measures to guarantee the right of self-determination to the West Sahara people.

The situation in Chad also gave rise to heated debate. Everyone knows that it was thanks to the assistance of Libya that a civil war which dragged for over ten years has now ended in this country. Today under the leadership of President Gucuni, the situation there has been stabilized. Libya has time and again declared its readiness to withdraw its troops from Chad with the consent of the Gucuni Government

THE NEW CONTINGENT...

(Continued from page 16)

of skill in a number of scientific and technical fields, and are conversant with both the technical and economic aspects of their work. They have mastered foreign languages such as English and French. With a judicious combination of these two forces, our contingent of scientific and technical workers can render great service to the country.

Besides, there are also tens of thousands of students and intellectuals among nearly one million Vietnamese residents in more than 30 countries, including some scientifically and technologically advanced ones in Western Europe and North America. Most of them are turning their mind to their homeland, ready to contribute their intelligence and energy to rehabilitating their country.

By 1980 our contingent of scientific and technical workers included:

Masters and Candidates of science: 3,350

University and College graduates: 250,000

Secondary vocational school graduates: 286,000.

They work in all branches of the national economy. Those with university degree upward serve, for the most part, in 150 research and design institutes, 79 universities and colleges and nearly 300 secondary vocational schools.

This is a very big force, which is not so numerous as in developed industrial countries but bigger than in many developing countries. For instance, as regards the ratio of people with university degrees upward for every 10,000 inhabitants according to UNESCO statistics (1979) :

Vietnam : 52
Iraq : 8.1
Tunisia : 4.5
Burma : 5.9
The Philippines : 28
India : 21.3
Thailand : 4.8
Brazil : 58.5

However, we lag behind the developed countries:

Belgium : 73.2
France : 198
Hungary : 322.3
Italy : 120
USA : 76.6
USSR : 372.6
Japan : 382.

As regards the rate of training, the annual number of university graduates for every 10,000 inhabitants, we have the following figures:

Vietnam : 6.3
Italy : 2.2
France : 7.9

Hungary : 20.2 (including in-service training).

Our rate is thus fairly rapid.

To sum up, our Party and State have had correct and timely policies as well as making great efforts to build our contingent of scientific and technical workers. These policies have been implemented without ceasing, under all circumstances, from the tottering steps when our revolutionary State was born, to the firm and bold steps when our country was plunged in a fierce war. In the past we had to rely on foreign experts for many branches of production but today we have scientific and technical workers in nearly all branches and levels capable of solving nearly all

problems of economy, science, technique, education, service from research to design, production, operation, management and exploitation, and able to participate actively and efficiently in international co-operation, to assimilate and promote the help of the Soviet Union and the other fraternal socialist countries.

This force, which ably assisted in the building of the socialist North, actively and efficiently helped the great front, contributing to the defeat of the US imperialists, who conducted the war with a daunting strength in the military, economic, scientific and technical fields. After the reunification of our country this same force is serving as the core, together with the intelligentsia in the South, to take over, reform and build anew the basis of material production, service and scientific research of the newly liberated areas, thus taking a worthy share in the great cause of building and defending the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

However, it should be noted that structurally our contingent is not yet homogeneous and comprehensive, and that qualitatively it has not yet met all the requirements of the scientific and technological work in the present stage. We are confident that with the development of our economy, the improvement and strengthening of our training and management, and the endeavours of our scientific and technical workers, the above-mentioned weaknesses will be gradually overcome.

Professor

NGUYEN VAN HUONG

This time the Nairobi Conference issued an appeal calling for a gradual replacement of foreign troops by a peace-keeping force from three African countries: Benin, the Congo and Guinea and for aid by OAU member countries and the UN to the Chad Government to rebuild the country ravaged by many years of war.

The Nairobi Conference also protested against the "bilateral treaties signed between Egypt and Israel" and condemns the Israeli Zionists for their attack against the nuclear research

centre in Iraq and reaffirmed its solidarity with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole genuine representative of the Palestinian people.

Despite pressure from reactionary forces, the Nairobi Conference has decided to convene the OAU 19th Summit Conference (in 1982) in Tripoli, capital of Libya.

The Nairobi Summit Conference is of paramount importance as it was held at a time when the Reagan Administration, under the label of "fighting against terror", works together with

other imperialist countries and the Beijing reactionaries to step up their infiltration in Africa, and leaves no stone unturned to sow division and discord among the African peoples, and oppose the national liberation movement in this continent. The conference has underlined the solidarity of the African peoples against imperialism, colonialism and apartheid, and their determination to fight for independence, freedom and social progress.

(Nhan dan, 30 June 1981)

LEARNING TO READ IN THE FIRST CLASS OF GENERAL EDUCATION

Reforms in the teaching and learning to read

Until the 1981-82 school year, learning to read as well as writing and the rudiments of mathematics, were carried out in a preparatory class (*vo long*) before admission to the normal course of general education. The child therefore reached the first class having already learned to read and write. This preparatory class, which was not integrated into the system of general education, was financed by voluntary contributions from the population and the teachers were recruited randomly amongst people of a certain level of education but without any pedagogical training. For several decades this system served a country which had recently achieved independence with an economy as yet backward, an insufficient number of technical and cultural cadres and moreover which had to suffer the ravages of a prolonged and fierce war. The system however had several drawbacks:

Widely differing standards between regions and schools due principally to the fact that teaching cadres did not have a uniform training.

The teaching methods used were rather archaic, resulting in boredom and lassitude in the children.

This gave rise to a situation at the end of the preparatory class where many pupils had to repeat the year (1) and the standard of reading left much to be desired.

The majority of pupils could only read out loud in a mechanical and expressionless way; after a whole year of study the cultural level attained was poor and school work in no way filled the children with any interest or joy, the greatest motivation being the rewards and punishments meted out by the teacher.

With the return of peace and the reunification of the country Vietnam faced a new situation; progress achieved in economic and cultural fields today permits the formulation of far-reaching teaching reforms whose application will start with the 1981-82 year. These reforms will have a simultaneous

effect upon structures, teaching content and pedagogical methods.

The system of general education will comprise:

1) A basic nine-year course for all children from 6 to 15 years.

2) A further course of 3 years.

About 30% of the pupils who have completed the basic course, which is compulsory for everyone, will be admitted to the secondary course by examination; the others will be channelled into technical schools, the "study-and-work" schools or into production.

The preparatory class has been integrated into the basic course, thus forming the first class of the new system which comprises 12 classes in all. The financing of this class will be undertaken by the State; teachers, henceforth paid by the State, are recruited both from the schools and from amongst the old teachers, after retraining. Since the complete liberation of the country in 1975 large-scale experimentation with a new method of learning to read has been carried out by a team from the Institute of education in Hanoi. Tests have covered 125 classes with 5,000 pupils, in towns, countryside and mountainous regions (with ethnic minorities). This experimentation allowed a new method for learning to read and a new reading manual to be tried out. This learning process will cover the first half of the school year; in the second term of the first class, already knowing how to read the children will directly tackle the basic education course.

We will set out below the reading method which has been practised in experimental classes in these last few years and which will spread to all classes with the onset of the 1981-82 school year. One can say that this new reading method truly inaugurates the projected teaching reforms.

Teaching the national language.

Learning to read is part and parcel of the programme for teaching the national language; it cannot be reduced to the acquisition of a mere mechanism for

deciphering letters, words and sentences. The Vietnamese designation of the subject *ngu van* signifies language and literature, and the instructions given by the education services state:

"In the first course, the teaching of *ngu van* has as its main objective the study of the national language, a prerequisite for studying other subjects... Language teaching should concentrate on phonetics, spelling, vocabulary and syntax. Special attention should be paid to enriching the children's vocabulary. Through reading and studying the language of good texts pupils will acquire a familiarity with literature, building for themselves literary assets and heightening their capacity for aesthetic appreciation... In teaching children to read we must try to develop their intelligence, their ability to reflect and to reason. For first course pupils, the language—literature lessons should seek to develop the faculty of observation, imagination, ability to make comparisons and to a certain extent to analyse and synthesise.

Such teaching also has the task of contributing actively to the formation of new, socialist people. By studying good texts, chosen with regard to the capability of each age group and considering both their content and artistic expression, pupils will learn to love the respective beauties of Nature, social activity, language and literary works, according to the recommendations of our Prime Minister Pham Van Dong: 'By means of a literary text we can impress upon children not only that which is lovely and good in the language itself but also the Beautiful and the Good, expressions of the highest qualities of heart and soul, great ideas and the art of living'."

Psycho-pedagogical considerations

The child who enters the first class having completed her or his sixth year is at the pivotal point between nursery school and the elementary classes of general education. Learning to read implies the visual capacity to recognize a system of signs, to convert these visual signs into sounds and into words whose meaning is more or less understood. This ability presupposes an adequate level of psycho-physiological development which is reached by the average child in our country around the age of six and which comprises the following characteristics:

— A sufficiently developed psycho-motivity. The child walks, runs, jumps and moves with ease; co-ordination is good, allowing for the execution of fine movements using hands and fingers; to tie and untie knots, thread a needle, cut with scissors following wavy lines and to draw. A sense of orientation within space has been acquired as well as the unilateral use of the right hand in the majority of cases or the left hand for a smaller number. One notes a diminution of useless movements, in particular the synkineses which make children stick out their tongue, twist their neck and contract their lower limbs when they use their hands for delicate operations.

— Spatial structure is recognized through an organised and orientated perception of space; the child knowing how to distinguish high from low, left from right, horizontal and vertical, straight and oblique. That which enables them to distinguish between for example a "d" and a "p", the vertical stroke being differently placed in the two letters is also developed.

— The ability to make the connection between a sign and a concrete object when the sign is purely conventional and not a figurative drawing. The child already has an intuition about the written message.

— A relative ease in the use of oral language with a perception of the articulations of the spoken word and a fairly wide vocabulary.

One of the main characteristics of infantile psychology at this age is the coexistence of two types of perception of things: a global perception which grasps the wholeness of each object with rapid intuition and an analytical perception which breaks each object down to its component parts, each part having a definite relationship to the other parts and to the whole. The younger the child the more the global perception dominates. A child of 3-4 years old recognises immediately amongst a pile of bicycles that belonging to his mother without being able to say why; his elder brother aged 8 however will say that he recognised his mother's bicycle because it has handlebars of such and such a shape, a saddle of such and such a make. It is the same thing for written sentences. A nursery school child can recognise a complete sentence, even a short text, a whole word once it has been learned (for

example her name Bich Lien) without being able to recognise one by one the letters which make it up. But from the age of 6 onwards the child learns to break down these words and fragments of sentences into their various elements. After global perception comes the analysis of an object, the recognition of each part and the reciprocal relationship amongst the different parts, then the synthesis which in the end gives a much clearer and more precise image of the object than the initial global perception.

This double process, global perception then analysis and synthesis, concerns equally a text which is broken down into sentences, a sentence into words, words into letters and in the last instance one letter whose various elements can be recognised. It is by taking advantage of this psychological characteristic that we have developed our method of learning to read.

That which in the end determines success is the child's interest in reading. Children grow up in a social setting with the knowledge that in these books, newspapers, letters, notices which adults read there is an entire world, alluring and full of marvels. They passionately want to steal the keys which will open up this world to them; they will know for example what their father, who has gone on a journey, has written; they will no longer have to suffer the grumbling refusal of their sister when she is asked to read a story from a book whose illustrations are so exciting. So here they are entering a class; they are presented with mysterious signs a, b, c, an, oang, un... which have no meaning, hours and hours are spent stumbling through their recitation and learning them by heart. If they are prevented from running and playing it is for them to be able to penetrate into the written world with its marvels and mysteries; here even when comprehensible sentences are learnt they are so banal, so insipid. "Baby feeds, the dog barks", there's no need to go to school to learn such things! The child is bored in class and finds difficulty in learning so the teacher has to use threats, punishments and rewards.

By taking advantage of the global perception from the very beginning we can give the children sentences and verses to read which interest them, and not merely conventional set pieces which they find deadly dull. That

which appears complex to adults, text, sentence, word is complex because it is made up of numerous simple parts whereas in the child's perception it is in fact grasped as a single entity, therefore a simple one. The analytical process comes second and results in the recognition of the existence of the parts which go to make up the object. In a global perception there is no sentence, syllable or letter more complicated than any other—the essential point being that it is the subject which attracts interest and not its structure. One can therefore short-circuit the system with this mechanism of global perception—it is not necessary to follow a precise order in the degree of difficulty in linguistic analysis, to teach easy syllables before complex ones, it is only in the course of the analytical process, which comes afterwards that one must respect this order.

We have tried right from the beginning to stimulate the child's interest by giving each lesson a lively content. Lively firstly in its meaning—the written text evoking for the children a slice of life: beautiful scenery, an animal, something they love; lively too in form, by the imagery which the text carries, the rhythm or music of its sounds, and lively also by the fact that the written images are accompanied by visual ones, photographs and illustrations.

Classes must be made vivid by linking the abstract process of analysis and synthesis of sentences, words, syllables and letters with movements and games which make concrete the activity of the mind. Whenever possible music and drama should also be brought into the reading lesson.

It is clear that on the basis of such considerations the children have been taught rhymes, poems and songs from the very beginning, when a prose passage has to be chosen we take pieces full of imagery, sentences which when read out loud bring out the musical quality of the tones. We have no hesitation in giving the children extracts from classical verses but this sometimes provokes the criticism that we are giving them material which is too difficult and beyond their capabilities. In fact the understanding of a poem comprises different levels, ranging from an overall emotion stimulated as much by the intellectual content as the artistic expression, to a more profound semantic and aesthetic appreciation at the cultural level of the reader. A child of

six will not be expected to understand a classical poem in the same way as a well-read person but when beautiful verses evoke something which the children have already experienced, lovely scenery for example, they can grasp the image and feel the moving melody of those verses. Thus in one of the lessons in our manual we have these two lines from *Kieu* (2):

*Dưới cầu nước chảy trong veo
Bên cầu tơ liễu bóng chiều
thướt tha*

Literal translation:

Under the bridge, the water
flows, clear,

Near the bridge, a weeping
willow, by the light of the setting
sun, waves its branches.

The second part which links the image of a weeping willow with its long graceful branches undulating under the wind's caress in the last glimmer of sunset is one of the most beautiful in our national poetry. There are those who argue that its beauty is inaccessible to children but experience has shown that by far the majority of children love it dearly, having grasped it within their global comprehension and emotion.

It is this global emotion which we first of all try to evoke in order to rivet the child's attention to the lesson and the class, the initial interest is subsequently maintained by declamation, cantillation (musical improvisation) and when circumstances permit, a dramatic representation together with music. Interest and emotion allow for the analysis of the sentence, syllables and letters to be tackled later without too much difficulty.

At the end of the first term, in fact after four months of learning when the children know how to read they will have learnt by heart from our manual approximately 400 verses, chosen from amongst the works dedicated to children, popular songs or the best pieces of national literature. From the second term they will be able to tackle fairly long texts with no difficulty. The interest inspired by the texts is the basis for the concentration which the children show in their studies and which creates an atmosphere of joy, of fulfilment in the class and which shortens considerably the time needed for learning to read. Given the relative simplicity of written Vietnamese and its spelling, on average 4-5 months are needed for normal children to

learn to read. Even children who are retarded in some way manage to learn; the number of those who give up or who are obliged to repeat a year is minimal in comparison with the results of traditional classes.

Our method closely associates language and literature based on the old adage: Whoever does not learn poetry will not know how to speak well. Several years of testing have confirmed our plans and this year we have been able to apply the method to all the children in the new first class in the whole reunified country. A new manual written on this basis

has already been printed, to be used in the first reading class of 1981-82—the first year in which the educational reforms will be applied.

(Extract from a booklet to be published by the Foreign Languages Publishing House).

NGUYEN THI NHUT

1. *Hanoi*: 10%, countryside: 20%, mountainous regions: 50% — figures concerning North Vietnam.

2. *Kieu*: is a poem: which tells of the life of a beautiful, young and talented girl who is overpowered by destiny. It is familiar to all Vietnamese.

Vietnam Advances

PHYSICAL TRAINING AND SPORTS IN A STATE ENTERPRISE

FOR quite some time now, the No.1 Pharmaceutical Works of Hanoi (in Dong Da district) has enjoyed the reputation of being a particularly "healthy" enterprise.

Indeed, the enterprise has won the title of "Advanced Physical Education and Sports Unit" in 18 of the 20 years since its physical education and sports movement was launched.

Over these 20 years, the "health movement" has steadily developed, from several hundred cadres and workers taking part in the first year to over one thousand today. At the beginning, only a few groups of workers did physical exercise during their break as an experiment, now the whole enterprise practise it and realize that it is beneficial to their health. With the slogan "Good Health for Production", the workers regularly take part in the movement. Thanks to this, the calisthenics team always comes top in the district competitions, and came top twice in the City's competitions.

Defence sports such as running, jumping, swimming, shooting and grenade throwing are also practised, and were particularly stressed during the anti-US resistance war. The women's team won first prizes for defence sports at the 1967, 1968, and 1969 competitions for the whole of North Vietnam. Dang Thi Quy, who works in the liquid medicine workshop, won the overall title in two successive years, 1968 and 1969.

The enterprise also prides itself upon its women's volley ball team

which was upgraded from the City's B division to the National A1 division.

Moreover, Le Van Trang, a sports enthusiast of the enterprise, has of late, become a well-known cross-country runner for the City. Thanks to patient practice, he cured himself from chronic liver and gastric troubles. As a result, at a conference of outstanding units and individuals for the whole of the North in 1965, he was given the title of "emulation worker" of the medical branch and was awarded a Labour Order, Third class by the Government.

But possibly the greatest novelty was the enterprise's art troupe's production of the country's first ever play on a sporting theme. It was given a Gold Medal at the Hanoi Theatrical Festival in 1978. Five of the eight actors were also awarded Gold Medals.

Sick-leave in the enterprise has now dropped to 0.8 per cent, although 80 percent of cadres and workers are female. This has enabled the enterprise to regularly fulfil its production plans. For five years it was recognized as an advanced unit of the medical branch.

Twice, the enterprise has received Labour Orders from the Government for its achievement in physical education and sports. At present, it is still leading the movement in the City's medical branch.

TRAN KIEN

SINCE the August 1945 revolution and particularly the victory at Dien Bien Phu (1954) the peoples of the world have taken a great interest in Vietnamese history and civilisation which have made considerable contributions to the national liberation movement and the forward march of progressive humanity. The Vietnamese victory over imperialist barbarity was, one can safely say, a victory for humanity and civilisation.

But how can we determine the features of Vietnamese civilisation? In what ways does it differ from and resemble the surrounding Southeast Asian civilisations or of other countries like China, India or Japan. We are well aware that it is not an easy task to try and distinguish the civilisation of a social group sufficiently large to constitute a national entity, to discern its own foundations from knowledge acquired and external influences.

We have chosen the ethno-historical method in trying to paint the main outline of Vietnamese civilisation in each important period of its thousand-year history (1).

I

Research carried out in the fields of archaeology, ethnology, history and folklore over the last 25 years have enabled us to identify prehistoric Vietnamese civilisation, particularly during the Bronze Age, which followed the Neolithic period, and spanned an era approximately two thousand years before or own.

Archaeological excavations over the last decades have brought to

light vestiges of human settlement which tens go back of thousands of years: human teeth in the caves of Lang Son province, huge numbers of rough cutting edges found in Quang Ninh, Thanh Hoa and Dong Nai provinces. Is it possible that Vietnam and more generally Southeast Asia is one of the cradles of civilisation?

At Mount Do (Thanh Hoa province) paleolithic man made use of diabase rock to manufacture bifaces (double cutting edges) and cleavers. At the end of the paleolithic period we have the appearance of a new pebble industry which marks the *civilisation of Son Vi*. Our ancestors began to establish themselves in the central region of North Vietnam 15-20 thousand years ago.

In the mesolithic Age the founders of the *Hoa Binh* (approx. 10,000 years) and *Bac Son civilisations* (approx. 8,000 to 5,000 years) had already begun to cultivate tubers, fruit trees and gourds, and to raise dogs. The neolithic revolution brought in its wake a veritable cultural blossoming: pottery, the polishing of stone and the making of "Bacsonian" hatchets with well-honed edges. Human settlements tended to descend into the valleys and then towards the plain.

Paleo-anthropological discoveries lead us to think that the founders of the earliest Vietnamese civilisations belonged to different black and yellow racial groups which had co-existed for many thousands of years in Southeast Asia. From a racial point of view the present day Vietnamese belong to the Austro-Asian group of southern Mongoloids, who themselves originated from Melanesian peoples and underwent a long «yellowing» process.

From a linguistic point of view Vietnamese and Muong (an ethnic minority very close to the Viet people), the Mon-Khmer languages of the ethnic peoples who live in the mountainous North West, along the Truong Son Cordillera and on the Central Highlands, as well as the Tay-Thai language group and the Malay-Polynesian tongues of Cham, Ede, Gia Rai peoples are among the most ancient of Southeast Asia.

Data amassed from archaeological, ethnological, linguistic and folklore sources all combine to show the ancient establishment of the Viet people. Beginning at the Red River delta they gradually spread to the coastal plains and the coast of North Vietnam. During this process they met and mixed with other ethnic groups to form a new community whose ancient civilisation constituted the basis for the development of an agricultural economy. Here we are at the dawning of our national history, more than 4,000 years ago.

Thus it was that approximately 4,000 years ago the Vietnamese Bronze Age began. Taking advantage of the numerous layers of copper, tin, lead, zinc and iron which the subsoil of Vietnam conceals and by using their own particular manual dexterity and spirit of invention our ancestors brought bronze metallurgy down to a fine art. The arrival of metal in a world hitherto exclusively vegetable and stone must have been a decisive turning point for society and civilisation.

In North Vietnam, notably in the Red River basin, hundreds of archaeological sites have been discovered, belonging to the four successive stages of development in the Bronze Age: Phong Nguyen, Dong Dau, Go Mun and Dong Son. At the height of the Bronze Age our ancestors embarked on the first stage of an era of national

building: the Van Lang epoch of the Hung Kings.

The appearance of the Van Lang Kingdom ruled by the hereditary Hung kings with its fairly elaborate socio-political organisation and relatively well-developed civilisation is the result of a continuous process of development which covered tens of thousands of years. And it is with Van Lang that the ancient Red River civilisation begins to develop

The proto-Vietnamese, the direct ancestors of present day Vietnamese and Muong people, were the main ethnic elements of Van Lang — now North Vietnam — and commanded the necessary conditions to build and develop a State. They spoke an archaic language which after long evolving has become the Vietnamese of today. They grouped themselves into villages (lang cha) linked to each other by blood ties and proximity.

The homogeneity of ancient Vietnamese civilisation is reflected in the archaeological remains found recently in the Hong (Red), Ma, Lam and Gianh river deltas — the areas originally settled by the proto-Vietnamese. Among these remains the most typical is the bronze drum, commonly called *Dongsonian drum*. Hundreds of Dongsonian drums of all sizes have been found in Vietnam, certain of them being among the oldest and most beautiful known of in the whole world. These drums with their numerous geometrical and figurative designs (animals, human beings, canoes, houses on stilts...) faithfully depict all the activities of this ancient society, the material and spiritual life of its members. They constitute visible proof of the *Dong Son culture* which was more or less closely linked to the other Southeast Asian cultures and displayed sufficient cohesion to be able to create an ensemble of productive techniques: agriculture and metallurgy, social institutions, artistic practices and myths and beliefs of an original nature (2).

In the 2nd century B.C. the Han empire, which had already conquered the whole of Southern China, was also to annex Van Lang. The proto-Vietnamese territory became Giao Chi province and remained under the Chinese yoke

for more than a thousand years. This was the end of the Hung Kings whose reign had spanned an era of over two thousand years — an era of independence and national construction during which the foundations of Vietnamese civilisation were laid. It was to make its mark on the customs and practices, cultural and social life and beliefs of the eras to follow but more importantly it endowed the people with their own particular character, personality and culture which enabled them to withstand the fierce political assimilation of the long Chinese occupation.

In spite of the incorporative force of the Chinese empire the Vietnamese people maintained their national identity throughout the first thousand years A.D. Giao Chi, occupied for all that time, was never really integrated into the Chinese empire in the same way as many regions of southern China, and the history of the occupation was marked by numerous insurrections against the invaders.

II

Having shaken off the long occupation of Imperial China the Vietnamese people began in the 10th century a period of national independence within the framework of a centralised monarchy, having succeeded in safeguarding the cultural heritage of the Hung Kings enriched by Chinese, Indian and Cham contributions. The country, now called Dai Viet, vigorously defended its independence for 900 years and managed to rebuff various attempts by Chinese imperial dynasties to reconquer its territory.

During these nine centuries of independence (10th-19th centuries) Vietnamese civilisation continued to develop and thus we have the birth of a many-sided national culture — the *Dai Viet civilisation* within which framework we have the coexistence of a scholarly culture and a popular culture.

The scholarly culture of Dai Viet gave the nation its heroes and its famous men of letters: strategists of genius such as Ly Thuong Kiet in the 11th century, Tran Hung

Dao in the 13th century, Nguyen Trai and Le Loi in the 15th century and Nguyen Hue in the 18th century, poets like Nguyen Trai, Nguyen Du, Cao Ba Quat, encyclopaedists such as Le Quy Don, Phan Huy Chu, mathematicians, physicians and technicians such as Luong The Vinh, Le Hun Trac, Nguyen Van Tu et al.

Even more remarkable however was the development of traditional popular culture. One can safely say that this was the driving force behind the growth of Vietnamese civilisation and which gave the Vietnamese people their particular characteristics. Its effect upon scholarly culture and the ideology of the ruling class was immeasurable.

This popular culture had its roots in the daily life of the Vietnamese peasants as they struggled to conquer marshy terrain and thick forests and battled in the face of floods and droughts to keep their land fertile. It was born out of the community life of these individuals who nevertheless were aware of their common destiny and knew that they had to unite to survive. It is simple, practical, linked to work and close to Nature and remarkable for its human concern and self-abnegation of a peasantry who were oppressed yet optimistic and full of life.

Trampled underfoot by the foreign occupier and scorned by local feudalists this popular culture had to go back to the origin of the nation and draw on its strength. It particularly exalted the heroes of national liberation and the peace-time civilisers. This was a rich culture with a strong oral tradition of history, myths, legends, stories, fables, comic tales; it comprised poetry, songs, dances, puppets and theatres, architecture, sculpture and drawing, festival and games, practices and beliefs. But it was also the product of a pre-industrial society and clearly had its limitations and weaknesses due to the low level of production, superstition and a fatalistic attitude.

In the course of their history the Viet people also welcomed into their national community other ethnic groups who lived in the mountains of the North West

and North East, along the Truong Son Cordillera and on the Central Highlands. From the Red River basin to the Mekong delta traditional Vietnamese popular culture was continually added to—a process never harmful to national unity or the national language. The serenely cheerful nature of the culture of those who lived on the plains was tinged by the liveliness and enthusiasm of the coastal dwellers as well as the simplicity and natural quality of the mountain people. As a result we have an extraordinarily diverse popular culture—a truly multiethnic one. By the same token, the mystical elements of northern legends or Indian religions interpreted within popular culture have grown richer with the addition of typical peasant humour.

Nurtured by this popular culture, patriotic intellectuals created a progressive, positive way of thinking which opposed the rigid Confucian ideology, narrow and reactionary, embraced by the ruling class. Nguyen Trai, a great thinker, writer and sage of the 15th century, and a national hero, culled from this popular culture the fundamental elements of his humanism; his patriotic fight for national liberation was inspired by his affection and solicitude for the people.

Nguyen Binh Khiem, a 16th-century philosopher, found a way of giving a dialectic conception to the development of things by appealing to popular good sense. The great poets of the 18th and 19th centuries, Nguyen Du, Cao Ba Quat, Nguyen Dinh Chieu, used the language of popular works to introduce new elements into language and literature.

In the context of a country endlessly compelled to fight for independence, this popular culture forged a strong spirit of nationalism. During ten centuries of

feudalism the Vietnamese people had to weave a fabric of national unity strong enough to repel the attempts at secession by the feudal cliques. Whilst the different regions and ethnic groups contributed to the diversification of traditional civilisation, the various elements of popular culture sprang from the heart of a unified nation. Throughout this feudal period, popular culture fulfilled its historic mission by laying the foundations for a national civilisation.

III

With the French conquest beginning in the middle of the 19th century, then the American intervention from 1954 to 1975, the Vietnamese people were subjected to the yoke of colonialism and neo-colonialism. In spite of the invaders' century-long efforts to distort and denationalise the spirit and traditions of a whole people, they failed to smother the Vietnamese culture. At the same time as the feudal and then bourgeois classes betrayed the interests of the nation by capitulating and subjugating themselves to the colonialists and neo-colonialists, the vitality and power of traditional popular culture was ably demonstrated in its fight against subservience to the culture of Western capitalism.

The Revolution and reconquest in 1945 of national independence, the advent of the Democratic Republic, then the Socialist Republic of Vietnam opened up a new era for the Vietnamese people.

The arduous combat for national liberation with its terrible human and material losses over many decades of war did not prevent the Vietnamese people, guided by the Communist Party and its venerated leader Ho Chi Minh,

from starting to overhaul the economy and renew the cultural life based on past traditions and experience.

The cultural successes achieved during these years of ordeal justify the pride with which they are viewed by the revolutionary movement and they augur well for the cultural future of socialist Vietnam. That recently the student Le Ba Khanh Trinh distinguished himself in an international mathematics competition in London, that the young pianist Dang Thai Son won first prize in the Chopin competition in Warsaw and that the cosmonaut Pham Tuan was the first Asian to fly in space are all authentic signs of the vitality of the Vietnamese people and Vietnamese civilisation.

LE VAN HAÖ

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1. Cf. *Essays on Vietnamese Civilisation* (Vol. I) by Le Van Hao and Cao Huy Dinh. Vietnamese Studies No. 63, Hanoi, 1980, 235 pages;

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MINORITY peoples in Vietnam have many heroes: Git Giang of the Muong led his folk in killing wild beasts; Pu Luong Quan of the Tay attacked elephants, wrestled with tigers and kicked them dead; No Giao of the Hmong, for his part, subdued tigers with the mere tune of his *khen* (a kind of bamboo pan-pipe). And it is no exaggeration to say that this tune is as necessary for the life of the Hmong as the *men men* daily meals (1) or the thatched cottages on the mist-shrouded mountain tops.

with the full song of *khen* and the sweet song of flute. In spring, Hmong youths in their Sunday best flock to the mountains embellished with peach blossoms and pairs of them sing or talk heart to heart through a cord (2).

A Hmong boy proposes to a girl through the intermediacy of two matchmakers, one inside and the other outside his family. Bringing a paper umbrella and a flowered towel to the girl's house they begin to sing: "There is a tree on

Once this is done I'll leave you here and take the money (usually some leaves) to buy sweetmeats for you at the market." Or they chop leaves as vegetables and put them into a disused bowl singing: "I cook a delicious *men men*, I cook sweet vegetables..." They also sing work-songs while they mimic rice-husking or rice-pounding..

The Hmong's funeral laments are sorrowful songs. Boys, sitting on the left, weep bitterly with their heads held in their hands, while girls standing on the right with joined hands sob their hearts out in a musical lament and sway as though wanting to leave, resting their hands on one another's shoulders and swinging as if performing on a stage.

Tunes for superstitious rites constitute a big part of the Hmong music. Prayers to ghosts (*lai da*), invocations of vital spirits (*hu pli*), falling into trances (*ua nenh*), sending-off the dead soul (*khua ke*)... read by the head of the family or the magician have all the fundamental elements of a song or a recital.

Prayers to ghosts and invocations of vital spirits are relatively simple: with a joystick and an egg which has been boiled and shelled, the head of the family can read them, without the help of a magician who is however necessary for the trances or sending off the dead soul.

When falling into trances the magician, his face screened by a cloth, rhythmically shakes a *chia nenh* (a percussion instrument) and sings mysterious songs like *abracadabras*, now and then stamping his feet and shouting stop ghosts.

Sending-off the dead soul takes more than one hour's "singing" to show the soul the way to join their ancestors so as not to be abandoned. In a monotonous tone the magician reads without a break. After reading the funeral

Glimpses of folkculture

MUSIC IN THE LIFE OF THE H'MONG PEOPLE

Music pervades the life of the Hmong people—or Meo as they were called in the past—in all its aspects.

From morn till night, in the hamlets or in the fields or wherever the Hmong live we can hear the sound of song, *khen*, guitar or flute blended with the purl of the brook, the murmur of the wind, the air of a lover's song or a leaf instrument. In the still night a boy whispers to his sweetheart through a lip instrument. We have heard the Hmong Sua sing to invite their guests to eat and smoke. People put forward riddles through a six-pipe *khen*. They quarrel through a *xi u*. A Hmong boy carrying a heavy basket on a steep slope will keep on playing his *khen*. All market days in the highlands resound

the pass with a bloom as beautiful as the cloud in the sky. Having heard that the family has a precious girl, we come to offer marriage," or "We have come to the girl's family to eat with an empty stomach". When asked to wash their faces and their feet, or on going to bed, they gratefully sing: "This is pearl water... this is flowered mat..." When the bride is led to the bridegroom's house the Hmong stop half-way and sing. As a rule, after the evening meal the songs follow one another until morning, beginning with compliments to the married couple then shifting to lyrics between the attending boys and girls.

The Hmong also compose unsophisticated but witty and imaginative children's songs. When making dolls with old cloth the children sing: "I am making a doll.

oration (*hu cau*), the *khen* is played and the drum beaten to wish the dead soul a safe and good journey. These rites are performed by a hired troupe. During the funeral oration not only the dead person's family and relatives weep, but the person asked to read it often sobs, unable to bear the sadness.

"Fictitious dialogue" (*chi xay*) is a device to praise the dead person's good deeds. A man with similar riches leading an ox comes to extol his merits. The family also has to produce an ox to kill. Both oxen must be big ones with long horns hanging with a lot of silver coins. The musical instruments (*khen*, *pi le*) used on this occasion must also be festooned with coins. Another man outside his family asks in "singing": How many children has the dead man? How did he die? How was he looked after? Then the *chi xay* answers. This rite is very costly, which perhaps accounts for its virtual disappearance about forty years ago. Some *chi xay* perform it only a few times during their lifetime.

Hmong music for worship has the power to sway people's feelings. Such rites as *hu cau* can make many people moan. The wording and music of these *hu cau*, *hu pli*, *khua ke* and *ua nenh* differ greatly from one another. The tune also varies with the locality and the reader. The listener, however, can discriminate between *hu cau* and *hu pli*, *khua ke* and *ua nenh*.

Each air of *khen*, clarion, guitar or flute of the Hmong has a corresponding song with specific content. That is precisely why boys can use their *khen* to narrate tales or their flutes to make known their love to girls. And the listener—who knows the wording—can grasp the concrete content of these airs...

Khen playing always goes along with dancing. No Hmong lets his feet rest while playing *khen* and no Hmong dances so lo. Sometimes more than four people dance with uniform and vigorous leg-strokes in close and harmonious coordination with the tunes of the wind instrument. The White Hmong dance kicking one another's feet while the Flower Hmong kick their own feet. In some places, people dance while rolling on the ground, or dance on three poles, or on a bamboo pole put across a frying pan with boiling fat—and the *khen* keeps on resounding—like in a circus.

The Hmong—males—play *khen* in rejoicings and festivals. *Khen* is also played at funerals, but not in love-affairs.

Hmong traditional music comprises may collections of *khen* pieces, each of which deals with 13 different themes: stories about males, females, biography of the *khen* inventor, etc. Each group of *khen* pieces includes 5 *khen* pieces arranged following a set order. In a *khen* playing contest the competitors take turns in playing these pieces...

Khen pieces belong to two kinds: those played in funerals, votive-paper burnings, beast-sacrifices, burials... and those played in rejoicings, market goings, firewood gatherings... In markets and other public places the Hmong usually play the rejoicing pieces, should funeral ones be played, the introductory piece and the concluding one after sending off the dead soul (organized after the *khue ke rite*) are tabooed.

Tradition has it that the Hmong have up to 360 *khen* pieces (3) to send off the ghost after the *khua ke* rite. In the past the dead person's family and the mourners would play *khen* for scores of days and nights without repeating any piece.

In Hmong funerals, *khen* playing is always accompanied by drum beating. This is an elaborate art. A White Hmong *khen* player constantly creeps under a drum (usually hung on a tripod). A Red Hmong *khen* player walks around the drum, sometimes beating its frame with a drumstick, the drummer treads on his heels, beating his two drumsticks together while he leaves his drum to greet the mourners.

Formerly a Hmong *khen* had only one pipe. One day six brothers competed in *khen* playing. The six *khens* gave six different tones which made a melodious harmony. So the brothers devised a *khen* with six pipes giving six different tones—the present-day Hmong *khen*. The six-pipe *khen* tied by a band symbolizes the union between the six brothers. This is one of the folk stories about the *khen*.

Long brass clarions, bugles, buffalo horns, drums, tambourines... are musical instruments used in Hmong funeral and religious rites only. Long brass clarions are played in greeting guests, in the morning at meal-times, in sacrificing oxen, goats, poultry... to give a signal. Besides accompanying *khens* with

drums, the Hmong also accompany bugles with cymbals in funerals. Bugles are always played in pairs: one symbolizing the father and the other the mother; sometimes there are two parties (the bass as women's voice and the tenor as men's voice).

The Hmong generally use buffalo horns in big funerals. In the past, the Flower Hmong used them to chase tigers, bears or exhort troops. If the dead person is a man, nine men would run around the house nine times, and if the dead person is a woman, seven men would run around the house seven times, while blowing buffalo horns to "muster troops for the fighting". The front runner would carry a bow and a knife, and the followers buffalo horns: he who is strong blows while running and he who is weak sometimes stops to blow then runs on to catch up with the others. When they finish running they let off a gun to hail their feat.

Music takes pride of place in the Hmong's life. It encourages their bravery in fighting their enemies and conquering nature and helps them relax after work. It enhances the love for life and brings happiness to love-lorn youths and when music resounds as the Hmong say, the forest brooks stop running, the birds cease singing, the deer in search of water forgets its thirst, the porcupine digging its burrow pricks up its ears...

Since the August Revolution and particularly after the liberation of the border areas during the war of resistance against the French colonialists, the Hmong have composed many new airs. Rooted in traditional music these airs have been warmly welcomed by art troupes and ordinary people everywhere.

HONG THAO

(1) Steamed maize flour.

(2) This communication gadget is composed of 14-15 fathoms of cord, each end tied to a bamboo tube with one end open and the other covered with a frog skin.

(3) This perhaps is not the real number which certainly varies with the time and the place. A number of them have disappeared or become obsolete, while others have been composed to meet the requirements of life. This may be a convention because the Hmong use the number 360 to describe a great number: in their beliefs a year has 360 days, the world has 360 nations, etc.

POPULAR KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM: SAYINGS, PROVERBS AND RIDDLES

LIKE the *ca dao* (folk poems), sayings and proverbs spring from popular speech. In times of foreign domination in particular, they are repositories of national tradition. In feudal times, while scholarly literature made exclusive use of Sino-Vietnamese words and allusions to Chinese mythology, sayings and proverbs as well as *ca dao* preferred purely Vietnamese words and similes and metaphors drawn from daily life. Although brief and concise, they fully reflect the musicality of a tone-rich language.

More often, perhaps than is the case with other peoples, Vietnamese proverbs are in verse. Even a proverb of only a few words shows rhyme and rhythm. Thus

Mưa tháng tư hư đất

1 2 3 4 5

Rain month fourth damages soil

Rain in the fourth lunar month damages the soil

The third word rhymes with the fourth.

Proverbs have gradually evolved toward the 6-8 couplet (one line of six syllables followed by one of eight), which seems the most suited for the expression of Vietnamese feelings.

With regard to their origin, one may think of three sources: the people's life (nature and society) other popular genres (myths, tales, novels in verse, etc.), and scholarly literature.

The first source is by far the most important. Many proverbs are the result of observations of natural phenomena, so useful to a nation of peasants. They constitute a kind of oral almanac. Thus

Flashes of lightning in the east:

Rain at dawn.

A black circle round the moon:

A spell of drought very soon.

But a halo round the moon

Is a sure sign of rain.

Old women may still die of cold in the third (lunar) month.

Some sayings are expressions of admiration before the beauty of nature, reminiscent of Japanese haikus.

Winds serve as brooms to clean the skies

or

Rain is a silken curtain before the heavens.

The vocabulary of farm work is generously drawn upon: the whole process of rice growing, from ploughing, harrowing to seedling transplanting and harvesting, including references to various kinds of rice strains and fertilizers is invoked.

Water is my first concern,

Manure my second,

Diligence comes third,

And good seeds are the fourth of the elements

That will make up a bumper harvest.

A highly condensed formula for the successful growing of wet rice. Today's techniques have only developed and modernized these four fundamental factors.

Like proverbs, riddles are a treasury of popular knowledge. They describe in verse the features of objects and beings as well as natural phenomena closely related to the life and work of the peasantry: the harrow, winnowing basket, husking mill, pestle, fishing rod, weaving mill, the betel quid, the toad, mosquito, the rain, sun, moon...

They exude an acute sense of observation, good humour and a kind of impishness. They make use of puns, allusions and suggestions that arouse curiosity.

My heart is full of bitterness

But men in the village just love me

Whether I sit, stand, or lie down.

They long after me when I am away.

Pungent as I am,

I fill them with passionate feelings.

— "What's that?"

— "It's the hookah."

I used to be the colour of ivory,

*But now because of that young man
I've become rather greyish.
I reproach him, and he beats me,
And yet we sleep together.
— "What's that?"
— "The sleeping mat."*

Not too many words, and yet plenty of finesse along with great simplicity of expression. Now listen to this:

*From that tree a thousand truong tall
Millions of leaves fall
That can be boiled.
But not broiled.
— "What's that?"
— "Rain."*

Many proverbs describe the peasants' life in feudal times. The village, the cell of society, enjoyed some administrative autonomy, and elders were respected.

Village customs prevail over royal edicts.
and

If you live long enough you'll become a respected elder.

In social conflicts between rich and poor, between the feudal rulers and the peasants proverbs depict the greed of the rich and powerful:

A lawsuit is to a mandarin what a bit of fat is to an ant or their vainglory:

If you have plenty of money people will listen to all your idiocies.

They describe the destitution of the poor:

*— Rich people sell their dogs
Poor people, their children.*

their resignation:

*— If you have a short neck
You can't have your voice heard in Heaven.*

and of course their revolt:

*— Even a worm, if trampled too hard, will writhe (in protest).
— Mandarins come and go, but the people are there to stay.
— Win, and you are the king; lose, and you are the bandit.*

Proverbs ridicule vanity and foolishness:

The vainglorious:

*— For a toad sitting at the bottom of a well
The sky is no bigger than the lid of a pan.*

The greedy:

— Give him an elephant and he will clamour for a fairy.

The parvenu:

*— With luck a yawning dog will catch a fly
(in its mouth)*

The spoilsport:

— A single worm in the pot and the soup is spoilt.

The selfish:

— The house burns and he just sits still like a stone jar.

Common sense is praised:

*— One single stage in a journey
Will give you a trayful of wisdom
— Seeing a thing just once
Is better than hearing about it a hundred times.
— Flies die, attracted by the sweetness of molasses.
— Buffaloes arriving belatedly at the watering-place
Will have only muddy water left to drink.
— The five fingers of the hand are not of the same length (so you can't expect, for instance, all children of the same parents to be endowed with the same qualities).
Proverbs are imbued with a kind of folk humanism; thus they highlight the value of life:
— A dear one alive is worth more than a heap of gold.*

Patience:

*— Flowing water will erode stone.
— Rub an iron stick long enough and you will obtain a needle.*

the judgement of time:

*— The passage of a hundred years will erode the inscription on a stone,
But the people's judgement will stand intact after a thousand years.*

gratitude:

*— When you drink from a stream.
Think of the source.*

optimism:

*— So long as some water remains
Keep working your scoop.*

solidarity:

*— Only one horse fallen ill
And the whole stable won't eat.*

HUU NGOC
and FRANÇOISE CORRÈZE

VIETNAM COURIER

CHRONOLOGY

(16 June - 15 July)

JUNE

16. At the invitation of the Kampuchean Ministry of National Defence, a Vietnamese military delegation, led by Minister of National Defence, General Van Tien Dung, leaves Hanoi for an official and friendship visit to Kampuchea on the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Armed Forces

17. An agreement on cultural, educational and scientific co-operation for the 1981-1985 period is signed between Vietnam and Czechoslovakia in Prague.

- The Socialist Republic of Vietnam becomes a signatory to the Convention on the setting up of the UN Development Programme.

18. The Vietnam National Machinery Export Import Corporation and the Projects and Equipment Corporation India Ltd. (PEC) sign a contract in Hanoi for India to provide coal transport equipment to Vietnam.

- The Vietnam Women's Union holds a ceremony to receive two tonnes of toys sent as gifts to kindergartens and crèches in Vietnam by Cuban women and children.

- Pham Le Tuyet, a 19-year-old Vietnamese girl resident in France, wins first prize in a piano contest entitled "Realm of Music" organized by French radio.

- The "Gold Ship" prize, the highest award of the 9th International Festival of Red Cross and Public Health Films, held in Varna (Bulgaria), is conferred on Vietnam's film "A Vietnamese Red Cross Member".

19. In Moscow, Vietnam and the Soviet Union sign an agreement on the establishment of a joint enterprise for the exploration and exploitation of oil and natural gas on the continental shelf of southern Vietnam and a protocol on the realization of the agreement.

- Signing in Havana (Cuba) of the Minutes on the fifth meeting of the Vietnam-Cuba Joint Commission for Economic, Scientific and Technological Co-operation.

- The Vietnam News Agency (VNA) rejects the allegations by some Western sources that Vietnam has provided weapons to either side in the Iran-Iraq conflict.

21. Opening in Vientiane of the second meeting of the Mekong River Committees of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea.

22. The Vietnamese film "The First Love" is awarded a silver medal at the 21st International Neo-Realist Film Festival in Italy.

24. The first session of the First National Assembly of Kampuchea which met on 24-27 June elects Chea Sim as Chairman of the National Assembly; Heng Samrin, President of the Council of State, and Penn Sovan, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Kampuchea.

- Signing in Vientiane of a protocol on cooperation and mutual assistance for the 1981-1983 period between the Vietnamese Ministry of Water Conservancy and the Lao Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Conservancy.

25. The first session of the 7th National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam opens in Hanoi.

- A Kampuchean Water Conservancy delegation visited Vietnam from 4 to 25 June at the invitation of the Vietnamese Ministry of Water Conservancy.

- A plan for cultural, educational and scientific co-operation for the 1981-1985 period is signed in Budapest between Vietnam and Hungary.

27. A delegation of the SRV Government, headed by Deputy Prime Minister Vo Nguyen Giap, leaves Hanoi for Sophia to attend the 35th meeting of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON).

29. Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach pays an official visit to the Socialist Republic of Romania at the invitation of Romanian Foreign Minister Stefan Andreu.

30. Minister Nguyen Thi Binh, special envoy of the President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, leaves Vietnam for a friendship visit to Libya at the invitation of the People's National Committee of the People's Socialist Arab Al-Jamahiriyah of Libya.

- The Government Council issues a directive on the founding of the Government Price Commission with Deputy Prime Minister Do Muoi as its President.

3. The Vietnamese, Lao and Kampuchean Foreign Ministers issue a statement :

- strongly condemning the so-called "comprehensive political settlement for Kampuchea" proposed by the ASEAN Ministerial meeting in Manila ;

- re-affirming that the presence of Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea came under an agreement between the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, two independent and sovereign States ;

- categorically rejecting the convening of the so-called "International Conference on Kampuchea."

4. At the invitation of the Vietnam-Mongolia Friendship Association, a delegation from the Mongolia-Vietnam Friendship Association, led by its Chairman J. Zhamyan, member of the Central Committee of the People's Revolutionary Party of Mongolia, pays a visit to Vietnam to attend the activities marking the 60th National Day of the Mongolian People's Republic.

6. Ambassador Ha Van Lau, head of the Vietnamese permanent delegation to the United Nations, sends a letter to the UN Secretary-General rejecting the so-called "International Conference on Kampuchea."

8. Phnom Penh : Signing of an educational co-operation agreement between Vietnam and Kampuchea for 1981.

- At the 1981 Agricultural and Forestry Exhibition in Leipzig (GDR), Vietnamese handicraft products made from agricultural materials have won a gold medal.

- At the invitation of the Central Committee of the People's Revolutionary Party of Mongolia, a Vietnamese Party and Government delegation, led by General Chu Huy Man, Political Bureau member of the Central Committee of CPV, and Vice-President of the State Council, leaves Hanoi for Mongolia to attend the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the victory of the Mongolian revolution.

9. Moscow : Signing of minutes on national economic planning coordination between Vietnam and the Soviet Union for 1981-1985.

- Vietnamese Vice-Minister of Public Health Hoang Dinh Cau pays a friendship visit to the Lao People's Democratic Republic and signs an agreement

on medical co-operation for 1981 between the two countries.

10. At the invitation of the Socialist Renaissance Party of Iraq (BAA'TH), a Vietnamese Party and Government delegation, led by Minister Duong Quoc Chinh, leaves Hanoi for Iraq to attend the celebration of the 13th National Day of the Republic of Iraq.

11. The State Council of the SRV decrees laws on the organization of the National Assembly and the State Council.

- At the invitation of the Sandinista National Liberation Front and of the Government Council for the Rebuilding of Nicaragua, a Vietnamese Party and Government delegation, led by Huynh Tan Phat, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers, leaves Hanoi for the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Sandinista National Liberation Front and the 2nd Victory Day of the Nicaraguan Revolution

- A spokesman of the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry issues a statement refuting Bangkok Radio's report that "captured Vietnamese soldiers revealed that Vietnamese troops had been ordered to fight against Thai troops at Nonn Mak Moun last year" and had "used toxic chemicals in Kampuchea."

- At the 12th International Physics Contest in Bulgaria, Truong Ba Ha, a student of a senior high school of Phu Khanh province, won a third prize. Two other Vietnamese students won consolation prizes.

13. The State Council of the SRV decrees laws on the organisation of the People's Courts and the People's Control Commissions.

- At the invitation of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, a Vietnamese Party delegation, led by General Vo Nguyen Giap, Political Bureau member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, arrives in Warsaw to attend the extraordinary 9th Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party.

- VNA makes a statement refuting the fabrication of Bangkok Radio on 13 July saying that Vietnamese troops had continuously infiltrated and fired artillery shells on Thai territory on 11 July.

14. The State Council of the SRV decrees laws concerning the organisation of the Council of Ministers.

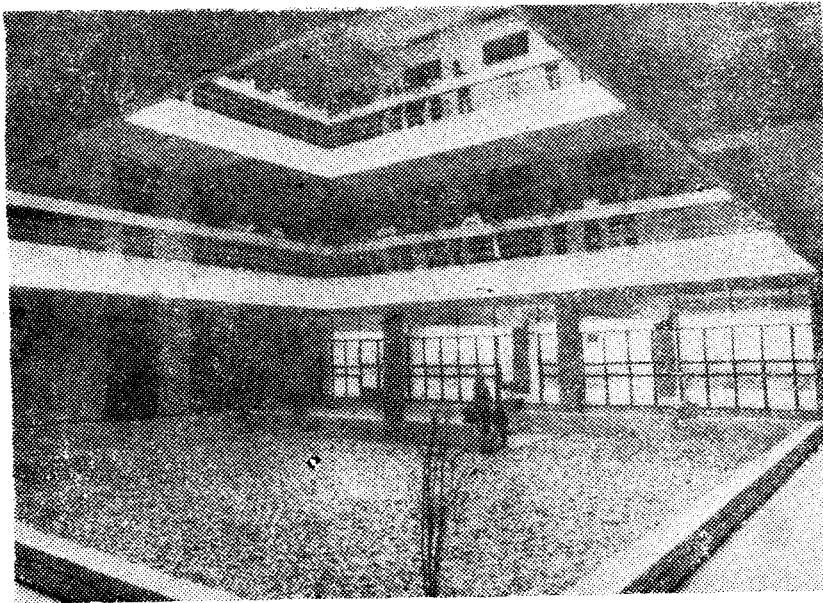
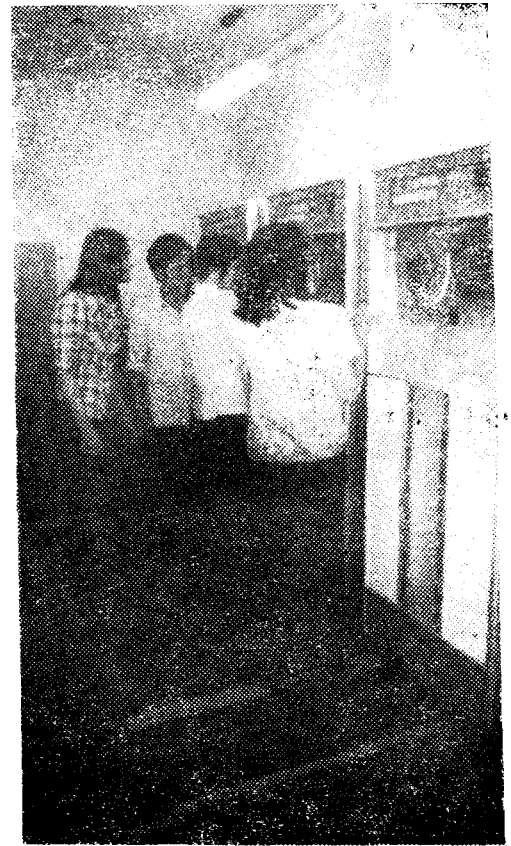
15. Hanoi : Signing of an agreement on the movement of citizens of Vietnam and the Soviet Union between the two countries.

- Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach pays an official friendship visit to the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia.



1 TRAINING OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL WORKERS

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1. The Polytechnical College.

Photo: HOANG PHUONG

2. Practical work.

Photo: HOANG PHUONG

3. The Vietnam-USSR school for miners in Quang Ninh province.

Photo: DINH AN

4. A tractor repair course in Ha Son Binh

Photo: NHU KHUE

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HEALTH

ESTABLISHMENTS

1. An operation performed by Professor Ton Thai Tung.

Photo: VINH QUANG



2. At the Hanoi Obstetrics and Gynaecological Hospital built with aid from the Women's International Democratic Federation.

Photo: VINH QUANG

3. The Hanoi Paediatrics Institute built with Swedish aid.

Photo: VU HUYEN



Vietnam
courier

HOBOCTB
BEETHAMA

Le Courrier
du Vietnam

El Correo
de Vietnam

Báo đời ngoại **TIN VIỆT NAM**

Ra hàng tháng bằng các ngữ Anh, Pháp, Nga, Tây ban nha

Tòa soạn: 46 TRẦN HƯNG ĐẠO, HÀ NỘI

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