

Vietnam courier



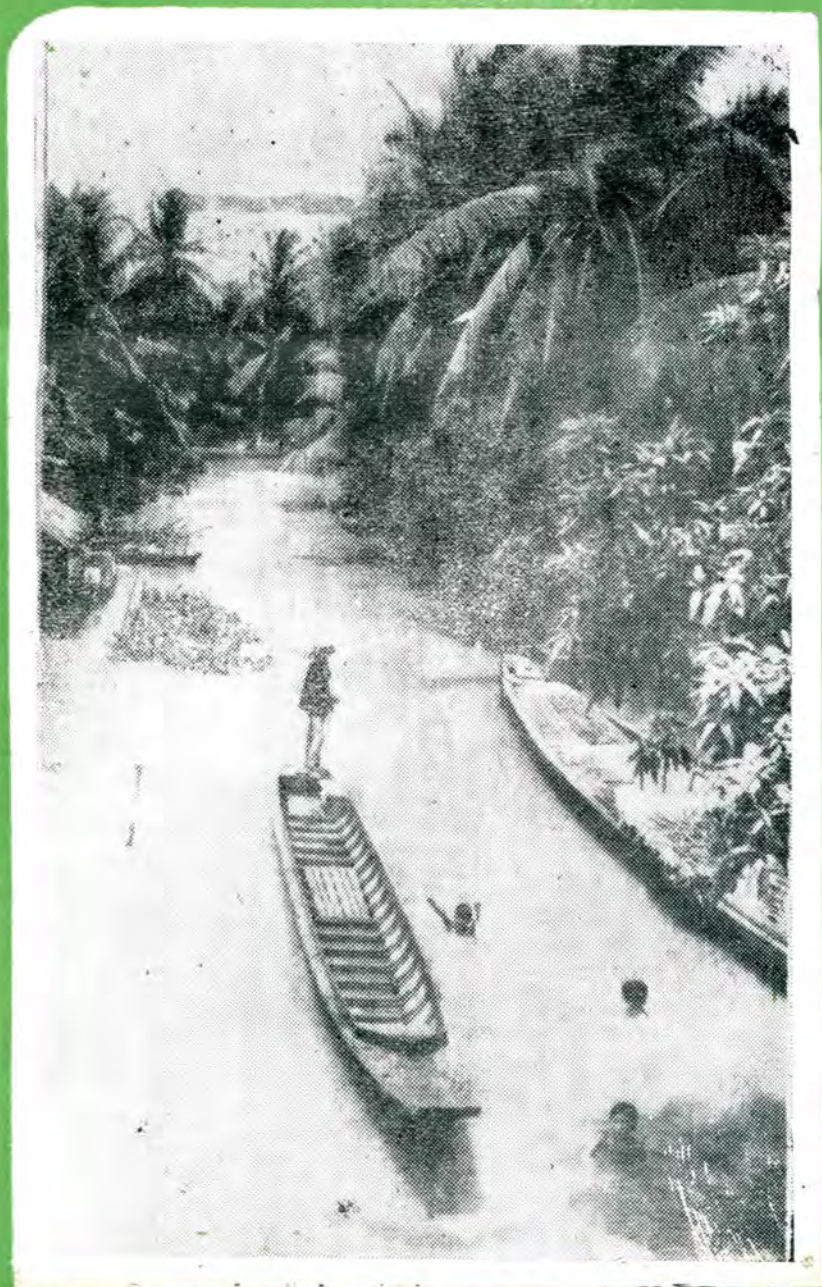
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OUR MONTHLY COMMENT

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Front Cover:

A canal in the Mekong Delta

Photo: THANH HAO

THE non-aligned movement, founded at the Belgrade Summit Conference, is now 20 years old. The Co-ordinating Committee of the Non-aligned Countries has decided to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Belgrade Conference on 3 September 1981 at the headquarters of the United Nations. It is a coincidence that 2 September is the 36th anniversary of the Proclamation of Independence — the National Day of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, now the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. In fact, the 20-year history of the non-aligned movement has been in many respects linked to the history of the Vietnamese people's struggle.

In its early days the non-aligned movement consisted of only 25 member countries. At present it includes 95 countries and national liberation movements, that is two-thirds of the member countries of the United Nations. The movement came into being during the tempestuous struggle of the peoples of the world against colonialism and imperialism after World War II, at the time when the American imperialists continued the cold war, and the settling up of military blocs, and forced the newly independent countries in the Third World to join those blocs. The refusal to join these military blocs and to "be aligned" is in fact the manifestation of the anti-imperialist spirit of the Third World. However in the early years of the non-aligned movement, some leading members advocated "standing between" the two camps — the imperialist and the socialist camps. They failed to understand the dialectical relationship between the defence of peace and the struggle against imperialism: if genuine peace is to be achieved there must be an anti-imperialist struggle. So they considered the problem of "peaceful co-existence" as the central task of the movement. When the "Bac Bo Gulf Incident" occurred on 5 August 1964, the 2nd Summit Conference of the Non-aligned Countries held in Cairo from 5 to 20 October 1964 failed to condemn the US imperialists; it only asked the countries

concerned to "observe self-restraint and refrain from taking any other action likely to increase the already tense situation on the Indochinese peninsula". Furthermore, a few months after the Cairo Summit, when the Americans started bombing northern Vietnam and sending their troops into southern Vietnam, Yugoslavia and 16 other non-aligned countries appealed to the US and the DRV to "hold unconditional negotiations" with a view to putting an end to the hostilities in Vietnam. Such an appeal is tantamount in putting the aggressor and the victim of aggression on the same footing. Naturally, it received a cool response from all people of conscience the world over. As a result in the six subsequent years, the non-aligned movement seemed to mark time, and even failed to hold any summit conference. But the fight goes on and the struggle of the world peoples for independence has gained more and more victories in Asia, Africa and Latin America. As a symbol of this struggle, the Vietnamese people's resistance war against US aggression for national salvation shook world public opinion with the 1968 Tet offensive. The Third Summit of the Non-aligned Movement held in Lusaka in early September 1970 marked a great turning point of the movement. Since then through the summits in Algiers, Colombo and Havana the movement has gradually asserted itself as the reflection of the struggle against colonialism, both old and new, and against all forms of domination by foreign countries, stressing increasingly the necessity of setting up a new international economic order.

The movement has overcome many obstacles placed in its path by the imperialists, and, during the last 10 years, by the Beijing rulers. Allegations have been put forward to divert the movement from the right path, namely the allegation about "rich nations" and "poor nations", with a view to confusing highly advanced socialist countries with imperialist countries; the allegation on the necessity to oppose "two superpowers" or to oppose "hegemonism", and not to oppose imperialism. Quite recently, an allegation was put forward about "returning to the initial objectives of the non-aligned movement" "the need to stand between the two blocs"...

At the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Non-aligned Countries held in New Delhi last

February, a number of delegates, speaking for Washington and Beijing, raised the Kampuchean problem and demanded the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea.

However, the non-aligned movement, which had warmly hailed a completely liberated and unified Vietnam (1975-1976), refused to follow this erroneous path and did not fall victim of an "anti-Vietnamese campaign" as our enemies wished. In New Delhi, the non-aligned countries flatly refused to admit the Pol Pot clique and left the Kampuchean seat vacant; they agreed to Vietnam's proposal of withdrawing all foreign troops from Southeast Asia — including Chinese troops stationed in some places on Vietnamese territory, American troops stationed in the Philippines, and troops of some other countries in Eastern Timor, Singapore, Malaysia... What is also worthy of mention is the fact that the non-aligned countries agreed with Vietnam on the necessity of holding dialogues in Southeast Asia. It should be remembered that the Foreign Ministers of the three Indochinese countries have advocated many times the holding of conversations between these three countries and ASEAN countries with a view to building a peaceful and stable Southeast Asia.

The Vietnamese people, in celebrating their National Day, are happy to see that, despite the numerous difficulties, which at times seemed to be insurmountable, and despite the present manifold problems, the Vietnamese State becomes increasingly stronger and will attain its objectives: independence for the nation, and freedom and happiness for the people.

Likewise, we celebrate the 20th founding anniversary of the non-aligned movement, encouraged by the fact that this movement is closely linked with us and that its progress, although at times discontinued, corresponds to the strong development of the national liberation movement and the consolidation of national independence on a world scale. The movement has had to undergo and doubtless will face many storms raised by imperialist and reactionary forces, but, overcoming all obstacles, will certainly grow stronger and stronger

25 September 1981

III. THE ONLY WAY

THE policy of aggression and interventions of the imperialist and expansionist forces not only plunged Southeast Asia into war throughout the last forty years but also constantly set the countries in the region against one another. US intervention and particularly the US war of aggression against Vietnam brought about a profound differentiation among the Southeast Asian countries. Right after the end of World War II, a number of countries became US neo-colonies. The Philippines and Thailand became full members of the Southeast Asian aggressive bloc (SEATO) headed by the USA. In 1967 ASEAN was founded to cope with the victory of the Indochinese revolution and the US defeat.

After the USA was compelled to end the war and withdraw its troops from Vietnam and the Southeast Asian mainland the relations between the ASEAN and the Indochinese countries have shifted to a new era. Normal diplomatic relations have been established or restored. Military confrontation has basically been ended. Between 1976 and 1978 in particular, the relations between Vietnam, Laos and the ASEAN countries showed encouraging signs of progress and this also was the period when the atmosphere of peace, friendship and co-operation between the countries in the region was improved more than ever with many prospects to turn Southeast Asia into a region of peace and stability.

The situation, however, has not developed as the peoples in the region hoped for. Since China used the Pol Pot clique to wage a war of aggression against Vietnam from the southwest and sent 600,000 troops to invade this country from the north while the Carter Administration went ahead with the "Chinese card", once again ASEAN has sided with the forces hostile to the Indochinese countries. As the balance of forces in the region has changed in the

post-Vietnam era, ASEAN's opposition lies mainly in the political economic and diplomatic fields. ASEAN has been dragged by China into a campaign of economic blockade and diplomatic isolation with regard to the Indochinese countries. It has echoed the Chinese reactionaries' allegations slandering Vietnam as the cause of tension and instability in Southeast Asia. They deliberately ignore the fact that the lack of peace and stability in the region throughout the last forty years is due to the policy of aggression and intervention of imperialism and the international reactionaries, while it is thanks to the fight of the Vietnamese, Lao and Kampuchean peoples that these destructive factors have been driven from the area and that the longest and fiercest wars of aggression caused by imperialism have been ended. The victory of the Kampuchean people in overthrowing the Pol Pot genocidal clique subservient to Beijing, the victory of the Lao people in foiling China's subversion and riot scheme, and the victory of the Vietnamese people in smashing an aggression by 600,000 Chinese troops have saved Southeast Asia from the peril of Chinese expansion. The root cause of tension and instability in Southeast Asia is the Beijing reactionaries' collusion with US imperialism, continued policy of aggression against the three Indochinese countries and intervention into the internal affairs of the Southeast Asian countries. The presence of Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea at present arises from the request of the Kampuchean Government and people to cope with China's threat. Once this threat is removed, Vietnam and Kampuchea will agree on the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops, as was done twice when the wars of aggression by France and the USA were terminated. To demand a withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea when ASEAN supports China threatening to teach Vietnam a second lesson and overtly stepping up its intervention and a subversion in Indochina, and keeps on letting China use Thai territory as

a "sanctuary" for the Pol Pot genocidal bands and other reactionary Khmer forces against the Kampuchean people, is tantamount to strip the Vietnamese and other Indochinese peoples of their legitimate right to self-defence, and connive at sabotaging peace and stability in this region. A number of rulers in the ASEAN countries also deliberately refuse to face the fact that the present tension and instability in Southeast Asia is not between the three Indochinese countries and ASEAN: It is indeed between China on the one hand, and Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea on the other. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese troops are being mustered to prepare for a new aggression against Vietnam and the other Indochinese countries. The Beijing rulers have clearly stated that they continue to apply military pressure upon the Indochinese countries while sustaining the armed activities of reactionary émigrés from Kampuchea and Laos and of the bellicose elements in the Thai army against Kampuchea and Laos. China has long since regarded the South China Sea as a Chinese sea, violating the rights of the exclusive economic zones and continental shelves of the littoral countries. In 1974 China sent troops to occupy Vietnam's Paracel islands. The South China Sea is fraught with the dangers of Beijing expansionism. On many vast tracts of Thailand, Burma and other Southeast Asian countries, Beijing refuses to withdraw its support of thousands of rebellious troops engaged in subversive activities. Tension and instability also persist in a number of ASEAN countries, particularly in Thailand, prone to putsches, and in Eastern Timor where innocent people are daily subjected to repression and massacre.

The situation in Southeast Asia at present shows that if there is a threat to the peace and stability of the region and to the security of Thailand and other ASEAN countries, this threat springs from the intervention of Beijing

expansionism and not from the Indochinese countries. On the contrary, up to now the latter have been the victims of aggressions and interventions by imperialism and the Beijing reactionaries. History has testified to the fact that the Indochinese countries have never aggressed ASFAN countries. On the contrary, Thailand has aggressed Vietnam three times and invaded Kampuchea and Laos many times.

In the US war of aggression against the Indochinese peoples, ASEAN sided with the USA and helped it to varying degrees. Thailand and the Philippines not only lent their territory as bases for the USA to aggress Vietnam and the other Indochinese countries, but also sent troops to invade these countries. The ASEAN countries, particularly Thailand, Singapore and the Philippines, have been enriched through serving the US war of aggression against the peoples.

Nor does the cause of tension and instability in Southeast Asia originate from the Soviet Union or the Vietnamese-Soviet relations. In the sixty years of its history the Soviet Union has never aggressed any people in the world. Of the five big powers which are permanent members of the UN Security Council the Soviet Union is the only country which has not been involved in wars of aggression against the Southeast Asian peoples in the past forty years. On the contrary, the Soviet Union has always sided with the Southeast Asian peoples in their struggle for national independence and peace in the region. It is precisely thanks to the great Soviet help and assistance that the Vietnamese and other Indochinese peoples have defeated the most savage aggressors of the time, brought independence to their nation and contributed to restoring peace in Southeast Asia. Therefore the relations between Vietnam and the Soviet Union like those between the Soviet Union and Laos and Kampuchea do not threaten anybody, and instead they have contributed an important part to the independence of the three Indochinese countries and to the peace and stability of the region.

At present, it is that between the Indochinese countries and the ASEAN countries there is no mili-

tary confrontation like that between the Indochinese countries and China, but there are profound disagreements on the cause of tension and instability in the region, and therefore on the measures to solve the Southeast Asian issues. Nevertheless between the countries of Indochina and ASEAN the most basic common interests in the peace and stability of the region are shared. In the immediate future there may be no possibility of settling these disagreements, but common ground exists between the Indochinese countries and ASEAN to solve the issues of the region. Today the Southeast Asian peoples only have two options: to go on with confrontation and diktat as ASEAN did in the past two years, that is the road leading to tension and crisis, the road followed by the imperialist and expansionist forces in the past forty years to separate and dominate our peoples; or to carry on the process of peaceful coexistence between Indochina and ASEAN begun and unfolded between 1976 and 1978. The interests of the Southeast Asian peoples demand that everybody must strive to make the process of peaceful coexistence between the two differing social systems a steady and irreversible one. That is the road leading to peace and independence for each nation, to friendship and co-operation between the peoples in the region, to peace and stability in Southeast Asia.

On the basis of the principles of peaceful coexistence, respect for each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, the Southeast Asian peoples, in the first place Indochina and ASEAN should discuss and agree on the issues in the region with a spirit of mutual understanding, equality, mutual respect, non-coercion and opposition to any diktat from without. Southeast Asian affairs must be settled by Southeast Asian countries. This is the path that the European, Arab, African, Latin American countries and many others in the world are following to settle the issues in their regions. This path fully conforms to the spirit of the United Nations Charter and international law.

A number of ASEAN countries argue that they do not oppose any dialogue with the Indochinese

countries, but adamantly demand that the Indochinese countries implement the UN Resolution on Kampuchea and that the settlement of the so called Kampuchea issue be a precondition to the settlement of the issues in the region and in the relations between Indochina and ASEAN. That is the path leading not to peace and conciliation but rather to serving the aggression and intervention of the imperialists and Beijing reactionaries against the three Indochinese countries. The Kampuchean people have not sacrificed so much blood merely to change one diktat for another. Any resolution on Kampuchea without the participation and agreement of the only authentic and legitimate representative of the Kampuchean people—the Kampuchean Revolutionary People's Council—is worthless. The United Nations' maintaining with a majority of votes the "seat" of the Pol Pot genocidal clique outcast by the whole of mankind is an act running counter to the Kampuchean people, to peace and stability in Southeast Asia and to international law. Hence the UN Resolution on Kampuchea is illegal and without value.

While the people of the world enjoyed peace, the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea had to go through forty years of war. The three Indochinese peoples, therefore, have no greater aspiration than to live in peace and friendship with other peoples, particularly those in Southeast Asia. Starting from that cherished and sincere aspiration, after the Indochinese peoples have let bygones be bygones, and are ready to develop friendly relations with the ASEAN countries. At present, while disagreements remain, the Indochinese countries advocate temporarily brushing them aside and discussing with ASEAN the issues of each side's concern on the basis of equality and mutual agreement to end the state of confrontation and gradually build Southeast Asia into an area of peace and stability. The proposals put forth by the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the People's Republic of Kampuchea in Phnom Penh, Vientiane and Ho Chi Minh City are to be negotiated and agreed upon. World public opinion has clearly realized the Indochinese countries' goodwill and fair and reasonable stand.

We patiently await a response from ASEAN. The situation in Thailand in the past days shows that to persist in following US imperialism and colluding with Chinese expansionism against the Indochinese countries does not bring peace and stability neither to the Indochinese countries nor to Thailand and the other ASEAN countries. It is only grist to the Beijing hegemonists' mill. The revolution of the three Indochinese countries may have to face many difficulties and trials but the greatest trial is over. No reactionary force in the world, however great it may be, can reverse the situation in Indochina today.

CONCLUSION

Forty years ago Southeast Asia was a secure backyard of three long-standing and biggest colonialisms. Since World War II Southeast Asia is one of the areas most influenced by US neo-colonialism and the largest area of expansion for Beijing hegemonism. Hence all the fierceness of the struggle in Southeast Asia between the two opposing forces of the time, on the one side the forces of peace, national independence and socialism, on the other the forces of colonialism, militarism, imperialism, expansionism and other reactionary forces.

The victories of the national liberation movement in Southeast Asia, in the first place of the Vietnamese, Lao and Kampuchean peoples, have brought complete collapse to old colonialism, badly mauled US neocolonialism and pushed expansionism one step back, turning Southeast Asia from a backyard of imperialism into the front line of the world people's struggle for peace, national independence and socialism. At present, the balance of forces in Southeast Asia has

(Continued on page 31)

MISSION OF CONSULTATION OF UN COUNCIL FOR NAMIBIA VISITS VIETNAM

*A*t the invitation of the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, a mission of consultation of the United Nations Council for Namibia led by Noel G Sinclair visited the Socialist Republic of Vietnam from 7 to 12 August 1981.

The Mission was received by Vice-President of the Council of State Nguyen Huu Tho, and Minister for Foreign Affairs Nguyen Co Thach and held substantive discussions with a Vietnamese delegation headed by Director Nguyen Thuong of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Department for General Affairs. A joint communiqué was issued as a result of the talks. These are its main points:

The Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam reaffirms its principled position of total support for the legitimate struggle—by all available means including armed struggle—of the Namibian people for self determination, freedom and genuine independence under the leadership of SWAPO which is the sole authentic representative of the Namibian people.

The Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the UN Mission declare that South Africa's policies with regard to Namibia constitute an encroachment on the fundamental national rights of the Namibian people and a threat to international peace and security within the meaning of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. These policies include the stationing of large numbers of troops in Namibia and the construction of military bases; the use of these bases to launch repeated acts of aggression against neighbouring states; the increased repression of the Namibian people; and the determined efforts towards development of nuclear weapons with the assistance and collaboration of certain countries coupled with the massive exploitation of reserves of uranium and other resources in Namibia.

The Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Mission consider that South Africa's obstinate refusal to comply with United Nations resolutions and decisions has been made possible through the strong political, economic, diplomatic and military support of certain Western powers, particularly some permanent members of the Security Council. This has so far prevented the Security Council from imposing mandatory sanctions against South Africa. This support, coupled with the failure of the five Western powers who were the authors of the United Nations plan for Namibia to bring about the implementation of the plan which they themselves had initiated, leads the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Mission to doubt the true intention of the authors of the plan and to conclude that efforts to implement this plan have reached an impasse.

The Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Mission strongly condemn the activities of all foreign corporations operating in Namibia under the illegal administration of South Africa. These activities cause massive profits to be accumulated by these corporations which in turn provide extensive financial support to the occupation regime, thus contributing towards its perpetuation. Such activities in Namibia, and also in South Africa, constitute a major obstacle to the achievement of independence by the Namibian people and lie behind the reluctance of the authors of the United Nations plan for Namibia to proceed with its implementation.

The Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Mission reaffirm that the struggle of the Namibian people is for self-determination and against colonialism and illegal occupation. They denounce attempts by South Africa and its allies to characterize that struggle as part of either East-West confrontation or of international terrorism, thus distorting and undermining the nature and purpose of the struggle of the Namibian people.

The Mission expressed its gratitude for the firm and consistent position taken by the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam with respect to the efforts of the Council in support of genuine independence for the Namibian people and expressed its sincere thanks to the Government and people of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for the warm welcome extended to it and for their generous hospitality.

SINO-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS IN FEUDAL TIMES

THE resounding victory of the Vietnamese army and people under the command of National Hero Ngo Quyen on Bach Dang river in late 938 put an end to more than one thousand years of Chinese domination. A long period of national independence of the Vietnamese people subsequently began.

From the 10th century to late in the 19th century, the successive feudal dynasties in China, viz. Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing, all pursued the same policy with regard to Vietnam, a policy of expansionism and hegemonism.

Under none of them was Vietnam spared from aggression, and before actually launching their aggressions, all of them resorted to diplomatic ploys aimed at intimidating Vietnam into submission without having to resort to military force.

Policy of the Song

After reunifying the country dismembered by regional warlords, Dinh Bo Linh proclaimed himself emperor in 968 under the name of Dinh Tien Hoang. Two years later he renamed the country Dai Co Viet and breaking with a long tradition which required a vassal country to adopt the calendar of the reigning Chinese emperor, he initiated a new calendar of his own reign under the name of "Thai Binh" (Great Peace) which was an expression of the strong independent will of the Vietnamese people and also their firm rejection of the hegemony of the northern emperors.

In 979 Dinh Tien Hoang was assassinated together with his eldest son, Dinh Lien, and an acute court crisis ensued. A younger son of his, Prince Dinh Toan then only six years old, was enthroned as his successor. This sparked off a spate of subversive and annexationist intrigues from the hostile forces inside and outside the country.

By now in China the Song overlords had unified the whole country thus becoming the biggest feudal nation in Asia at that time. Little wonder they considered themselves the Celestial Empire with the right

to rule over all neighbouring countries.

Detecting signs of the weakening of the Dinh dynasty in Vietnam, the Chinese governor of Guangxi province bordering with Vietnam, sent a petition to the Chinese Emperor saying among other things: "The king of An Nam has been murdered. We may seize this occasion to conquer that country. We should not lose this opportunity..." A high Song official also said: "An Nam is being torn by internecine fight. That's the will of Heaven. Now if we attack them by surprise, it would be like a thunderbolt striking even before they could stop up their ears..." Subscribing to this suggestion, the Chinese Emperor put the governor in command of an invasion army to attack Vietnam by land and by sea.

Before the invasion army crossed the border, the Song Emperor, however, sent an envoy to take a message to Hoa Lu, then capital of Vietnam (now Ha Nam Ninh province). The message said: "China's relations with her subordinate countries are like those of a human body to the four limbs. When to stretch or contract the limbs is decided by the heart. If the blood stops flowing in an arm or leg we must administer drugs and when this proves ineffective we must use acupuncture until the disease is completely cured. The same applies to the ruler of the world... Now, all lands and seas in our empire already enjoy peace except your country which is too far off, comparable to a toe or finger of the body. But who can help feeling pain when a toe or finger is hurt? Therefore, I need to throw light on your ignorant mind so that you may understand my saintly teaching. Are you willing to listen? Now, the annual well-wishing ceremony is drawing near, I wish you would come to pay your tribute so that I may enjoy good health and spare you from the humiliation of being reprimanded like a child with your face turned to the wall. If you don't obey I may have to chop you in to pieces and raze your country to the ground. What could you do then even if you repent? Do you want to shed your dirty clothes and wear a dragon-embroidered tunic?

Don't make yourself a criminal. I am preparing chariots, soldiers and drums. If you submit I'll spare your life. If you disobey, I'm determined to punish you. Whether to obey or not, to meet with fortune or misfortune, is up to you to decide."

The ultimatum reached Hoa Lu after the queen mother Duong Van Nga had of her own will abdicated the throne of her infant son Dinh Toan to the army commander-in-chief Le Hoan who assumed office with full support from the people and army. Thus began the Former Le Dynasty.

Soon after his coronation Le Hoan took command of the army to resist the Song aggressors. Within a month he had wiped out all the land forces of the Song at Chi Lang pass, put to rout their naval forces on the Bach Dang and Red rivers and captured the Chinese governor.

After the victory, Le Hoan, however, did not turn his back on the aggressors but maintained good neighbourly relations with the Song emperor. His foreign policy was firmness in principle but flexibility in tactics.

In 1009 the Le were succeeded by the Ly dynasty inaugurated by Ly Cong Uan. This period saw important achievements in all fields of national construction: political, economic and cultural. In 1054 the Ly king changed the name of the country to Dai Viet.

By now the Song in China were threatened by invasion by their neighbours from the North. In the country, class antagonisms became more and more acute and peasant revolts broke out in several places. To save the situation the Song emperor and his chief minister had to carry out some reforms which, however, only increased resistance from the opposition parties. It was in this context that the Song decided on a military venture in the hope of placating domestic discontent. They thought that a resounding victory in a punitive expedition against Dai Viet (Vietnam) would enhance the Song's prestige, put the lid on the popular movement and would also serve as a warning to their northern neighbours.

In 1072 King Ly Thanh Ton died, to be succeeded by Prince Can Duc, then only six years old. This was seen by the Song as a golden opportunity to invade Dai Viet. They made active preparations for war.

But all these activities were closely watched by the Ly. In 1075, Ly Thuong Kiet, a talented general of Dai Viet, made a pre-emptive strike at the staging base of the Song. He then moved back his army to form a defensive line on the southern bank of Cau river, now north of Hanoi.

In January 1077, the main thrust of the Song invasion army was stopped at the northern bank of Cau river. Following many battles, in February 1077 the Song had to withdraw to China after accepting the terms of peace set by Ly Thuong Kiet.

Policy of the Yuan

When Khublai Khan occupied China, the feudal class of the Han quickly surrendered to the invaders and collaborated with them in implementing a policy of expansion against neighbouring countries.

In Dai Viet, the Tran dynasty which had succeeded to the Ly in 1226 continued the national construction work started by the former.

In 1252 in his southern drive Khublai Khan occupied Dai Ly which is present-day Yunnan. Then he sent an emissary to Thang Long (Hanoi) to urge that King Tran Thai Ton give his army access route to conquer the southern Tong. But Tran Nhan Ton refused, knowing that to open that way to the Yuan army would also mean to surrender Dai Viet to its occupation. He not only rejected the Yuan request but also sent his army to help the southern Song put down the revolts in Guangxi leaving them a free hand in dealing with the Khublai aggressors in the North.

Having failed to conquer Vietnam by diplomatic tricks, in 1258 Khublai sent a 30,000 strong invasion army to Dai Viet. But this, too, ended in complete failure.

From 1261 to 1275 Khublai sent emissaries many times to Thang Long to demand submission on the part of the Tran king. In March 1275 he sent a message which said in part: "According to the rules set down by our ances-

tors, the king of a vassal country must personally come to the imperial palace to pay his respects. He must also send his close relatives as hostages, report on the population head-count, pay land tax recruit soldiers for the imperial army and accept an imperial governor. Yet for these 15 years you have not once come here to pay your respects to the Celestial Emperor and also have not fulfilled any of the obligations mentioned above. Your triennial tribute cannot compensate for these grave lèse-majestés. I have tolerated you for too long in the hope you would one day see your crimes. Now I send my emissary to demand that you immediately come to the imperial capital to pay your respects. If for some reason you cannot come you must order your brother or son to come in your stead." Again the Tran rejected these demands.

By 1279 Khublai had completed his conquest of the southern Song, thus extending his rule all over the Chinese territory. The Yuan reached the apex of its power.

To ease the Viet-Yuan relations in 1281 Tran Nhan Ton sent one of his uncles, Tran Di Ai, to Beijing. Khublai made Tran Di Ai king of An Nam with a very insidious plan of annexation. A high mandarin of the Yuan was ordered to escort Tran Di Ai back to Dai Viet and crown him king in place of Tran Nhan Ton. The mandarin took along an ultimatum from Khublai to the Tran king. It says in part: "You have always found one excuse or another to refuse coming when I sent emissaries to order you here. I intended to send a punitive army but out of consideration for your long allegiance I finally decided against it. Now as you said you cannot come because of illness, I allow you to retire and look after your health. In the meantime, I have decided to make Tran Di Ai king of An Nam to rule over your subjects. Don't make your court and people panic, instead call on them to continue their normal business. In the event of any treacherous rebellion of your people I will send a big army to massacre all of you, and you alone will have to bear all responsibility. I send this message for you to inform your court and people of my decision."

But Tran Di Ai was intercepted by the people and army of Dai Viet as soon as he crossed the border. Frightened, he fled back to China.

However, Tran Nhan Ton politely welcomed the Yuan emissary to Thang Long where he was given red-carpet treatment even though his attitude was very arrogant. After some time in Thang Long he returned empty-handed to China. The Tran King was very polite but also very firm in rejecting the impertinent and absurd demands of the Chinese emperor.

In late 1283, the Yuan emperor again asked the Tran King to provide food and soldiers for an expedition to invade Champa. The Tran not only refused to comply but also sent its naval fleet to help Champa resist the common enemy.

By now the Viet-Yuan relations had reached breaking point. In early 1285 under the command of Tuo Huan the Yuan launched a large-scale invasion against Dai Viet. The whole nation of Dai Viet rose up to fight. After six years of hard but very courageous resistance, the Dai Viet people finally put to rout the 600,000-strong invasion army.

In 1286 the Yuan emperor sent his emissary to Thang Long with a message which said: "One of your close associates, Tran Ich Tac, fearing for his country's fate and the life of its inhabitants, has repeatedly but vainly tried to persuade you to come to our Court to pay your respects. Finally he came on his own initiative to bring his own submission to the Celestial Empire. Moved by his loyalty I have crowned him King of An Nam. Now I order prince Tuo Huan to head a punitive army to pacify your country."

Thus, the Yuan invaded Vietnam for the third time. It ended with the resounding victory of the Vietnamese army on Bach Dang river on April 9, 1288 which saw the destruction of all 500 war vessels of the invading army. The Yuan general Wu ma We was captured and Tuo Huan fled back to China in humiliation.

In 1289 and again in 1292 the Yuan emperor sent his emissaries to Thang Long to demand that King Tran Nhan Ton personally go to the Court to pay his respects to the emperor but on both occasions the emissaries met with a flat refusal.

Policy of the Ming

In 1400 Ho Quy Ly overthrew the Tran dynasty and founded the Ho dynasty.

In 1406 the Ming sent Chinese troops against Dai Viet. To deceive the Vietnamese people they spread the news that they were entering Dai Viet to overthrow the Ho usurpers and return the throne to the Tran family. A number of Vietnamese scholars, blinded by the Confucian precept of unconditional loyalty to the king, offered to cooperate with the aggressors. Within eight months, the Ming troops succeeded in crushing the resistance and captured Ho Quy Ly and his son and took them to China.

Then, the intent of the Ming was revealed in full to the people of Dai Viet. Not only did they refuse to return the throne to the Tran descendants but ordered the round-up and massacre of all the Tran family. In April 1407 the Ming Emperor decreed the renaming of Dai Viet as Giao Chi and made it a province of China. This was followed by unrestrained looting of property of the Vietnamese population by the occupation army. Before the invasion, on August 17, 1406 the Ming emperor decreed the following to his general: "After entering An Nam you must burn all books save the Buddhist scriptures, and all printing plates, all other papers... You must spare only those steles with Chinese inscriptions left from the past and must destroy all the other steles erected by the Annamese, not leaving a single character".

However, this insidious scheme of the Chinese aggressors could dupe only a small faction among the scholars. The bulk of the population had seen through the wicked intention of the invaders. Rebellions against the occupationists broke out and soon took on national dimensions. In 1419, Le Loi and his aide, Nguyen Trai, launched the great movement of insurrection against the Ming. After nearly ten years of arduous fighting the Lam Son insurgents finally defeated the Ming aggressors and regained national independence and sovereignty. This period of independence lasted until the end of the 18th century.

Policy of the Qing

The Qing feudal dynasty was founded in 1644 in Manchuria. Assisted by the Chinese feudalists of the Han nationality, the Qing emperors sent one expedition after another to annex Sinkiang, Inner Mongolia, Formosa and Nepal to form a vast empire.

At the time of Qian Long's reign in China, in Vietnam the Tay Son peasant uprising defeated the feudal Nguyen overlords in the South and the Trinh in the North, then overthrew the court of Le Chieu Thong, the last king of the Le dynasty.

As Qian Long was contemplating an invasion of Vietnam to serve as a springboard to annex other countries in Southeast Asia, word came that the mother of the Vietnamese king Le Chieu Thong and her suite were on the way to China to seek assistance in the face of the onslaught of the Tay Son army. Qian Long ordered his subordinates to "make the best arrangements for her Ky and her followers, whatever the cost the State Treasury may have to bear."

Thus, under the pretence of coming to the rescue of King Le Chieu Thong, in August 1788 a big army of the Qing under the command of Cun Shiyi crossed the Vietnamese border. Qian Long personally set out the strategic guidelines for Cun Shiyi aimed at making the most of the antagonisms between the Tay Son headed by the peasant leader Nguyen Hue, and the Le court. He decreed: "First, you must inform the Tran loyalists now seeking refuge in China of our imminent expedition so that they may gather their forces and return to their countries for a confrontation with Nguyen Hue. We'll wait for the outcome. If the population of An Nam still love the Le, then we shall move in to give the loyalist a hand. In this event Nguyen Hue will surely have to step down. That would be the best way. But if the people are divided, one half follows this party and the other half that party, Nguyen Hue surely will refuse to retreat. Then we shall serve him the ultimatum and see what his response will be. In the meantime, our navy will cross the sea and land at Thuan Hoa and Quang Nam while our land forces will move down from the North. Caught in a pincers movement Nguyen Hue will have to surrender. Then we will dispense favours to both sides. We will give Nguyen Hue the territory from Quang Nam southward and to the heir prince of the Le the territory from Hoan and Ai provinces northward. We'll station our big army to control both of them."

This was a very perfidious scheme aimed at permanently dividing Vietnam into two hostile regions, North and South, which,

however, would have to carry out all the orders of the Celestial Court.

News of the Qing troops' entry into Thang Long without meeting any resistance quickly reached Beijing. But only 50 days later Qian Long received the horrifying news: the entire Chinese army had been decimated and put to rout by Nguyen Hue during a lightning campaign in the early days of the lunar year of 1789.

This was the first defeat experienced by Qian Long throughout 61 years of his reign and in the ten military campaigns he conducted against neighbouring countries. In his "Records on My Ten Expeditions" written in 1792 Qian Long himself admitted that the 1789 defeat was extremely humiliating for his court.

Immediately after this debacle, Qian Long formed another army comprising 500,000 men to prepare for a punitive expedition against Vietnam, to save the face of the Celestial Court which was considered by any Chinese emperor as crucial for the survival of an empire. However, both Qian Long and the commander-in-chief of the invasion army, did not put high hopes in this second expedition because intelligence reports from Vietnam all mentioned a high morale and preparation among the Vietnamese army and people. The defeated general Cun Shiyi also counselled reconciliation: "With regard to Nguyen Hue the best way for us is to appease him."

Qian Long was in a dilemma. If he listened to the advice of his generals and called off the expedition, he could avoid another defeat. But then, what would become of the prestige of the celestial empire? It was in this state of mind that Qian Long received a report that Nguyen Hue was asking to renew his relationship with China and his emissary was already at the Nam Quan border gate waiting for permission to enter China. Qian Long could not have been happier. He called off the expedition and recognised the Tay Son regime on condition that in 1790 when he celebrated his 80th birthday Nguyen Hue would come in person to Beijing to pay his tribute to the Celestial Emperor.

Early in 1790, Nguyen Hue, who by then had been enthroned as Emperor Quang Trung in Vietnam, sent one of his nephews

AFGHANISTAN

is a Sovereign State

TOGETHER with the clamorous campaign on the "problem of Kampuchea", the "problem of Afghanistan" has also been brought onto the stage by international reactionary forces, especially the US imperialists and the Chinese expansionists. From the forum of the "International Conference on Kampuchea" in New York, at the conference of the EEC, and the summit of seven largest capitalist countries in Ottawa, the Afghan situation was spoken about with words of pathos; special statements and resolutions concerning

named Pham Cong Tri to impersonate him as the king of An Nam and head a 150-men delegation to Beijing. The delegation was accorded a royal welcome. A Vietnamese history book noted:

"Never before in the history of our tributary trips to China have our emissaries been accorded such amazing and glorious treatment." It was recorded both in the National History Institute of Vietnam and in the Chinese history books that everyone except Qian Long knew that the Nguyen Hue who went to China in 1790 was only an impersonator. However this was almost certainly not the case. Qian Long, through his intelligence agents, must have known but in order to save face, had to feign ignorance and accept Pham Cong Tri as the real Nguyen Hue.

In the last years of Qian Long's reign, the Qing dynasty deteriorated rapidly as a result of rebellions, rampant sea piracy, and corruption of the mandarins. At the turn of the century, Western capitalism began to penetrate China. Following successive military setbacks at the hands of the British in 1840 and the French and British in 1860 the Qing emperor had to sign a series of unequal treaties with them.

(Continued on p. 31)

this country were adopted. But Afghanistan is not an ownerless country. The Afghan people, whose unique and legitimate representative is the State of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, have outspokenly rejected all allegations distorting their country's situation and exposed the schemes of gross interference into the internal affairs of Afghanistan. They have resolutely affirmed that nobody has the right to discuss and decide on problems concerning Afghanistan without the consent and participation of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

Gangsters cannot play the role of saints! Over the last few months, the US imperialists and Beijing expansionists and hegemons have increased their aid to mercenaries and reactionary forces to step up their work of sabotage against the DRA. The US openly declares its support for the armed aggression against Afghanistan and considers the interference into this country's internal affairs as its State policy. Washington is increasing its military aid to the Pakistani Government. The US has supplied the Pakistani armed forces with 4 squadrons of F.16, nearly 500 improved M.60 tanks, a number of armoured cars, from 500 to 600 pieces of artillery, thousands of anti-tank missiles, from 30 to 50 helicopters, many modern electronic devices and so on. All this war equipment worth about 3 billion US dollars will be brought into Pakistan over five years. Formerly, from 1946 to 1980, the US gave this country 4 billion and 800 million dollars in military and economic aid, a sum bigger than the total amount of money given to Turkey and South Korea during the same period. America military sources revealed that, in its turn, Pakistan allowed the US to stealthily send anti-aircraft and anti-tank missiles for Afghan rebels, in Afghanistan across the Pakistan border. Recently, the Reagan Administration decided to give another 21 million

dollars to the Afghan reactionaries taking refuge in Pakistan. So, the US imperialists' aid for the Afghan rebels increases to 81 million dollars this year. In collusion with the US, China, Egypt and Saudi Arabia also give their money to reactionaries who use it to buy weapons to carry out subversive and sabotage activities in Afghanistan. The Chinese expansionists supplied them with many anti-tank and anti aircraft guns. At the instigation of the US and China, the Pakistani armed forces have recently deployed many divisions and tens of battalions along the border with Afghanistan, creating dangerous tension there.

The US imperialists and the Chinese expansionists are revealing themselves as the instigators in opposing the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. They are waging an "undeclared war" against this country. The Afghan Government has time and again repeated its standpoint put forward in the May 14, 1980 declaration, stressing that it is the best way to solve problems concerning the Afghan situation. The Soviet proposals put forward by president L.I. Brezhnev on his visit to India and at the 26th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, are initiatives full of goodwill, indicating a realistic, fair and reasonable way of building peace and stability in the Persian Gulf. The standpoint of the Soviet Union and the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan enjoy the sympathy and support of world public opinion. The schemes nurtured by international reactionary forces to reverse the situation in Afghanistan are intolerable and futile. The foundation of the National patriotic Front testifies that the Afghan people, united as one, support unconditionally all the policies of the People's Democratic Party and of their Government and are determined to take the road they have chosen: the road of the April Revolution. 'No power on earth, no scheme of imperialism and expansionism, no imperialist allegation and slander can divert the Afghan people from the road they have chosen', the statement of the Foreign Ministry of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan affirmed.

NHAN DAN, August 5, 1981

MEETING THAI UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS AND STUDENTS

I did not go to Thailand in search of exotism: the rice fields that mirror the sun, the bamboo groves, the coconut palm, this Southeast Asian landscape is quite familiar to me. So is the scene of bustling market places, or villages, for if some Vietnamese were among the crowd I could not tell them apart from the native population.

The Departments of Economic and Political Sciences of Chulalongkorn (Bangkok) and Chiang Mai universities had no intention of inviting me as a tourist. For between those Thai universities and myself, who went to Thailand as a delegate, so to speak, of Vietnamese intellectuals, what is important is to renew contact and better understand each other. Thailand and Vietnam are almost two neighbouring countries. However, between Thai and Vietnamese intellectuals there has been as yet no contact. While the geographical framework, or to use a fashionable term, the ecology of Southeast Asia is shared, history has separated us and each people has followed their own way of development.

One hundred years of French colonialization, followed by thirty years of war have separated the Indochinese countries from their Southeast Asian neighbours. Imperialist forces have dug a deep ditch between these two groups of nations, and, worse still, at various times have pitted Thailand against Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea. But it is clear that the great majority of Thai intellectuals has no responsibility in this unfriendly policy. They are also victims of the US strangle hold over their country and of the Chinese control over their national economy, and many of them have suffered from repression, some even sacrificing their lives because they stood for changes in the country's socio-political structure.

Today history compels the Vietnamese and Thai peoples to make contacts, establish ties, and promote dialogue. It is enough to follow events to know that peace and stability in Southeast Asia depend to a large extent on Thailand-Vietnam relations. Diplomatic and commercial relations are not enough. There must be contacts between peoples and mutual

understanding of the realities of each country, of the profound aspirations and the cultural peculiarities of each side. On that plane, meetings between intellectuals of the two countries can play a great role.

Direct contacts are all the more necessary since, as yet, each side has known the other only through the channel of information provided by Western agencies (AP, UPI, Reuter, AFP, BBC, VOA), or through books written in Europe and America. And what is worse is that Thai intellectuals have studied revolutionary problems only through Beijing publications.

What was most moving for me, whether through the lectures given to college students or through exchanges with Bangkok and Chiang Mai professors, was the desire to get first-hand information about a country so near geographically, but seemingly so far away by virtue of its historical evolution. Though I was bombarded with questions, I could see that the audience always paid great attention and showed an understanding attitude. I can even say that I could detect feelings of great friendship among some.

Why are Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea? What have been the great stages of the Vietnamese revolution? What has been the attitude of Vietnamese intellectuals towards the revolutionary movement? What is the balance-sheet of agricultural cooperation? What headway has scientific development made? And so on. Those general questions alternated with more precise questions on archaeological discoveries, on the history of feudalism and other fields in social and natural sciences. I think that the time has come for fruitful meetings between the two countries' specialists of various sciences to discuss numerous problems.

At the time when the Beijing and Washington leaders try to fight the Vietnamese till the last Thai, meetings between intellectuals of the two countries would certainly contribute to easing the tension and paving the way to peaceful solutions.

July 1981

NGUYEN KHAC VIEN

Vietnam lacks agricultural land, particularly for rice-growing. Therefore on the existing area we must invest with an eye to intensive farming and crop multiplication; meanwhile the foremost task of land reclamation in the years to come is the opening up of more land to grow rice.

The Mekong delta is the key area of food production for the whole country which we must exploit in the coming five years to meet a great part of our requirements not only in food and foodstuffs for our people but also for export and raw materials for industry.

Potentialities and the first achievements

Compared with the Red River delta, the Mekong delta is more than twice larger and has three times as much agricultural land. Its rice area alone amounts to 2.24 million hectares, or 48% of that of the whole country. Here, much waste land can be turned to agricultural production, among which hundreds of thousands of hectares to rice-growing.

The Mekong delta is provided with the most favourable natural factors (See *Vietnam Courier* No 6-1981) to build a rich, diversified and stable agricultural structure. According to plan, we can in the long run obtain millions of tonnes of food, about 10 million pigs, tens of millions of ducks, hundreds of thousands of tonnes of shrimp and fish, and hundreds of thousands of tonnes of agricultural products like soya, jute, sugar cane. Great potentialities also exist to develop forestry, industry and the export market.

However, there are also many difficulties. This is a large area, exploited on an extensive scale and torn by more than thirty years of war. At present, production still bears many spontaneous characteristics and a large area is still acid, or alkaline, salted or submerged. Little has been done so far to combat these characteristics or the threat from flooding. As for water conservancy big canals are few and far-between, and a system of small canals has yet to be built. Field-transformation is only just beginning and still awaits a programme and plans for large-scale production. At the moment, as we have not yet ascertained the area and the soil of each plot, field-management is still lax, land-use is not very efficient and the infrastructure (granaries, drying yards, sheds etc.) is greatly lacking.

AGRICULTURAL EXPLOITATION OF THE MEKONG DELTA (1981 - 1985)

NGUYEN NGOC TRIU
Minister of Agriculture

Very little has yet been done in the agricultural sector as regards electricity, engineering, processing of agricultural products, building materials, communication and transport. The transformation of agriculture is still at its first stage with only 6% of the area collectivized. The agricultural population accounts for 80% of the total population and agricultural workers 74% of the total labour force, but each agricultural worker contributes only 70-100 workdays a year, not to mention the fact that labour is unevenly distributed and mostly concentrated along rivers, roads and canals. The district and grassroot levels which have an important role to play are still very weak in many aspects.

Among the above-mentioned shortcomings, some can be rapidly overcome such as field-management and the building of small and medium projects, but others such as the homogeneous agro-industrial and socio-cultural structure, the building of big projects will require a longer time and need to be gradually resolved. One important thing we must stress is that although we cannot remove all the hindrances in the present circumstances, we are able to develop agricultural production rapidly while building up the countryside of the Mekong delta.

Over the past five years, in spite of their shortcomings in guiding agricultural development - the failure to use land, water and labour effectively, the subjective and scattered character of programmes and plans, the inadequate use of the existing conditions for appropriate forms of intensive farming, crop multiplication and acreage expansion, the undue attention to industrial and food crops, the disregard for stock-breeding, -nevertheless the people in the Mekong delta have striven

to take agriculture a big step forward through the multiplication of crops, the reclamation of land and the increase of paddy yield by more than one million tonnes as compared with 1975. That is an important achievement. What is more important, however, is that through the practice of production we have drawn experiences in many fields such as the laying of crops, plants and seeds, the defining of the production cycle, the realization of intensive farming, crop multiplication and land reclamation. In many places successes have been scored in crop multiplication and intensive farming thanks to a clever use of the favourable conditions of weather, climate and particularly water in the rainy season, the appropriate laying of seeds and crops, the rational exploitation of water, the extensive use of new short growth rice strains with high yield... In many places two or three crops have been grown instead of one as in the past, and the area expanded for winter-spring rice and summer-autumn rice, thus obtaining 4-5 tonnes per hectare for one crop. Soya has developed fairly well in many places as have other industrial and subsidiary crops. The building of State farms specializing in rice-growing has been successful. So have the raising of pigs to get manure, the use of dung, garbage and green fertilizer. The material and technical base in agriculture has been strengthened. The level and ability of managerial organization to guide agriculture in the district and the grassroots has been raised. The policies to encourage production have begun to bear fruit.

These are the concrete results of our great potentialities. Therefore, if we know how to bring these potentialities into full play we can exploit them more rapidly, thoroughly and efficiently.

Orientation of agricultural development in the coming five years.

In the long run we must build the Mekong delta up into a multi-faceted developing agro-industrial area while building a new, socialist countryside.

For the 1981-1985 five-year plan the Government Council has decided that "In agricultural production we must provide adequate guidance and investment to exploit the great potentialities of the Mekong delta and make it the key area for food and foodstuffs in the whole country."

In implementation of this directive, the exploitation of the Mekong delta in the years to come must fulfil the following main tasks:

1. To concentrate on the production of foods and foodstuffs, rice in the first place, so as to contribute to solving, in the main, the food problem for the whole country.
2. To vigorously develop agricultural products and raw materials for industry, with an eye to some major plants: soya, jute, sugar-cane, pine-apple, banana..., to expand subsidiary crops and boost the raising of ducks, pigs, fish...
3. To strengthen the material and technical base in agriculture to serve the immediate tasks while preparing conditions for a vigorous development in the years to come.
4. To complete the socialist transformation of agriculture with appropriate forms, consolidate the existing State farms and build new ones.
5. To develop production in conjunction with the people's life, to develop culture, to gradually



At the agricultural technical centre of the Mekong Delta

Photo: TRAN THANH CANH

improve public amenities, and to build a new countryside.

Following the above-mentioned orientation therefore, we must look after both farming and stock-breeding, efficiently carry out intensive farming, crop multiplication and land reclamation, develop vigorously and all-sidedly agriculture in the Mekong delta. This is a most important target of the 1981-1985 five-year plan as regards agricultural development for the whole country.

The exploitation of the Mekong delta requires taking fundamental measures concerning the programmes and plans of development - the building of the material and technical base to serve production, the transformation of agriculture and the building of the district into an agro-industrial unit, the redistribution of labour, and the raising of labour productivity, the policies, the redeployment of cadres... Here are the main problems:

Firstly, to diligently work out programmes and plans for the

development of agriculture and forestry. We must revise the programme for each district and province while drawing up five-year and annual plans. We must make concrete programmes for each small area and production base, and, on this basis, reorganize production bases, the structure of plants, the rotation of crops, intensive farming, crop multiplication, stock-breeding, plant and animal strains. The pace of development for each area has to be set in order to link stock-breeding to farming, agriculture to industry, communications and transport, distribution and circulation, cultural and social development. In working out programmes, beside the solving of urgent economic requirements, we must seek to preserve our natural resources and ecological balance. We must manage and use the land according to a plan, and put an end to its wasteful use.

Secondly, to strictly implement technical measures to serve production. In the years to come, we must first of all make full use of the economic and natural conditions in this area while judiciously

investing material and technical means to boost intensive farming, crop multiplication and acreage expansion, advancing agricultural production, particularly of more rice and soya. As regards water conservancy, together with surveying, designing and building major works, we must profit by favourable natural conditions to erect small and medium works so as to serve irrigation, drainage, keep fresh water, and combat saltiness, acidity, alkalinity, floods...

We must pay due attention to researching and managing seeds propagating the five rice strains recognized as the best, highly productive, pest-resistant, inured to alkalis, salt and water. Care should be taken to look for a variety of floating rice. We must have a plan of cross-breeding and selection to rapidly obtain good strains of plants and animals.

Regarding fertilizers, experience has shown that dung is important because stock-breeding has great potential in the delta. Besides, we must make full use of other kinds of manures, such as green fertilizer, silt, stubble ploughed up and buried in the soil...

Regarding engineering and agricultural mechanization, there are a good many agricultural machines here. Therefore we must count and sort them so as to know the degree of mechanization in each place and take measures to use them efficiently. Together with boasting mechanization we must increase the herd of draught buffaloes and oxen to plough all the cultivated acreage.

Scientific and technical research must be harnessed to rapidly apply technical achievements in production together with the practical experience of the people.

Thirdly, to set great store by the building of the infrastructure, communications and transport, the network of distribution and circulation in the service of agriculture. Those are most important links bearing directly on production. We must draw up a programme and gradually build a system of communications and

transport stretching over the area and linked to major economic centres, concentrating particularly on the system of roads and ports with their loading and unloading and storage facilities. The system for the purchase of agricultural products, the supply of materials to production and construction of consumer goods to the people, especially in remote places and new economic zones, has to be improved. The processing of agricultural products and foodstuffs for export while importing more materials and equipment for agriculture needs to be studied. The production of building materials for the construction of production bases, amenities and houses for the people needs to be stepped up. A plan to boost the electricity network to efficiently serve production should be drawn up.

Fourthly, to make a step forward in the redistribution of labour and raising of productivity. In the immediate future, we must use labour on the spot by redeploying manpower in the area with a set target of 200 workdays a year; at the same time, we must devise a plan to bring in labour for State farms and areas lacking in manpower.

Fifthly, to satisfactorily implement the socialist transformation of agriculture in an active and steady way, strive to achieve cooperativization in the Mekong delta within a relatively short period with production groups as the main form at present. At the same time, we must pay due attention to defining regulations for the management of production groups and cooperatives, raising their management level, and consolidating and promoting their role.

While giving guidance to the development of production and to the socialist transformation of agriculture, we should not lose sight of the building of a new, socialist countryside. The programme of building the new countryside, in the first place its demographic aspect, must conform to the programme of production. We must use a system of two-way exchange to supply building materials to the people and guide the

Vietnam Advances

FIVE YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT IN PHU KHANH

DUE to its natural conditions, Phu Khanh province has a great possibility for developing agriculture, fishing, forestry and building materials. To meet these requirements, it needs a comprehensive network of communications and transport. However, before liberation, it had only 410 kilometres of roads, or 0.6 metre per hectare of farmland. All the communes in the highland and half in the plain had no motor roads while all the roads linking the plain to the mountain regions were destroyed beyond repair. Traffic was greatly hampered, particularly in the borderland, agricultural regions and areas inhabited by ethnic minorities.

After liberation, together with healing the wounds of the war, Phu Khanh is keen on developing its network of rural roads, regarding it as one of the principal means of economic development. The policy of the province is to urgently update the existing network of communication and transport, to develop the rudimentary

and improved means of transport; to rationally redistribute the forces of transportation in order to meet the requirement of transport of goods and passengers, to build and repair the roads linking various provinces. This will link the mountain regions and new economic areas, the hamlets and communes and the roads leading to the fields in order to "release the shoulders," that is to suppress the means of transport using shoulder pole and two baskets which is still fairly wide-spread.

In the last five years, Phu Khanh has built a new network of rural communications according to the principle of "utilizing mainly the labour of the local population, the materials found on the spot and simple techniques." In 1976-1977, Roads No.1, No.3, No.6, No.7 connecting Phu Khanh with various provinces and the road to Phu Lam, destroyed during the war, were restored. The province also built new roads leading to former revolutionary bases, to

(Continued on p. 27)

latter in building houses according to plan. We must have a plan of construction to gradually build public works such as hospitals, schools, crèches, kindergartens, cultural centres, not to mention the three basic works of rural hygiene: toilets, bathrooms, and wells. Due attention must be paid to developing cultural and educational facilities, literature and the arts, gradually giving the people a better life, particularly in the newly-opened areas which are beset with many difficulties.

Lastly, to satisfactorily solve the problem of organization and cadres, the problem of policies and building the district into an agro-industrial unit. These are most decisive links. Together with form-

ing, fostering and using satisfactorily existing cadres, we must rapidly strengthen their ranks in both quality and number to fulfil the new tasks. We must set great store by, and strengthen, the district and grassroot levels, satisfactorily implement the existing policies and at the same time complement them with new policies to encourage production in this area.

In following the above-mentioned orientations and implementing the aforesaid tasks and measures, the plan to develop agriculture in the Mekong delta between 1981 and 1985 will certainly be fulfilled and bring about a decisive turn in the exploitation of this prime agricultural area of the whole country.

SIX AGRICULTURAL REGIONS IN THE MEKONG DELTA

IN the present soil and water conditions, the Mekong river delta is divided into six agricultural regions to facilitate cultivation of crops and animal husbandry, and to develop the strengths and overcome the weaknesses of each region.

Region I: Having fresh water all the year round

This lies between the Tien (Anterior) River and the Hau (Posterior) River, the banks of which are most fertile and offer great irrigation facilities. There the peasants have rich experience in the growing of rice, fruit trees, mulberry, and the rearing of pigs and fish. It possesses quite good material and technical bases such as small mechanical equipment, high tension lines, favourable conditions for communications and transport.

In recent years, it has become a high yield rice producing area which can obtain annually 8 - 10

tonnes of rice per hectare. It is provided with a good system of multiplication of new strains, a plant protection station, and an efficient veterinary and engineering network. It is the first region to carry out agricultural transformation. In 1980, it began to grow soya on ricefields. This region can go in for intensive culture to increase rice production on almost all its land and crop rotation of rice and soya, green bean, black bean, jute, maize, sorghum, sweet potato; the rearing of pigs, ducks and fish has also developed rapidly.

This region is most favourable for the growing of soya, a crop having an economic importance second only to rice. Soya can be grown there extensively after the harvest of floating rice, in one or two crops in rotation with rice on high lying lands along river banks; two rice crops and one soya crop can be grown in high-yield ricefields which are late in being submerged by water.

Trees producing fruit for export, mainly coconuts and bananas, sugar canes, mulberry and water melon can be grown on islands and along the river banks in this region.

Region II: Saline soil

The coastal regions of the provinces of Long An, Tien Giang, Ben Tre, Cuu Long and Hau Giang

and of the districts of Vinh Loi Gia Rai, Phuoc Long (Minh Hai province) are submerged by saline water every year, but they are rich in alluvial soil. Almost all these regions grow only one rice crop a year, but owing to the use of high-yield rice strains and the low density of the population who farm 4,000 square metres of land each, they are the main rice-growing areas in the Mekong delta. The trend of development of these regions is intensive farming of one crop of 10th lunar-month rice. By using short-growth strains of high yield to avoid the invasion of saline water, and raising the percentage of nitrogen and phosphorous fertilizers, a yield of 4-4.6 tons per hectare can be obtained over a large area. Thanks to an early harvest and the rains falling at the end of the wet season and additional irrigation, it is possible to also grow beans, and sweet potatoes. Attention will be paid to the growing of rice strains particular to the region destined for export, and the development of products of the coastal areas such as coconut, jute, ducks, fish, shrimps

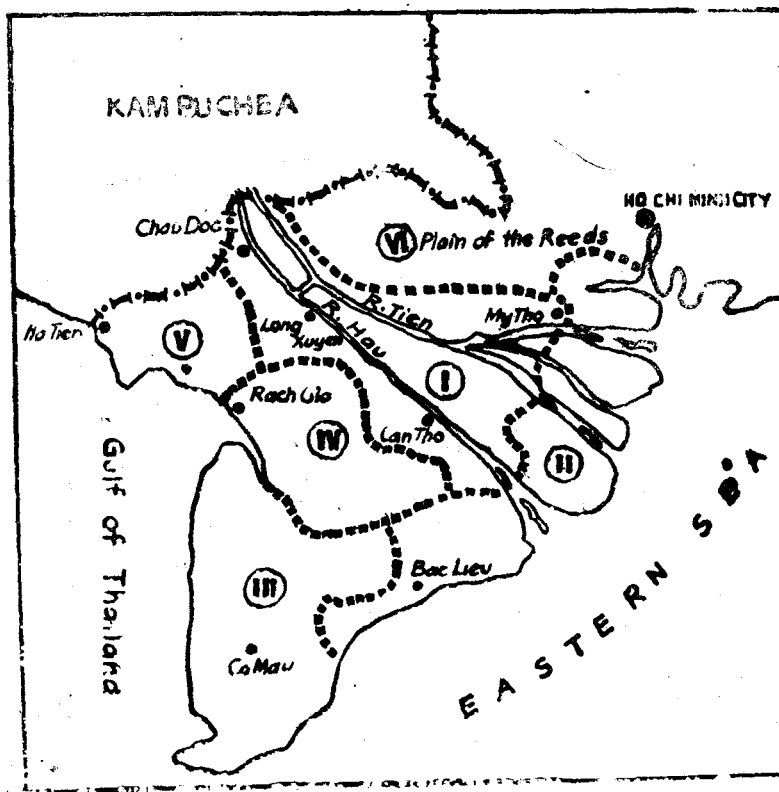
Region III: Acid-saline soil

Between the Cai Lon river and Ganh Hao river in the districts of An Bien and Vinh Thuan (Kien Giang province) and Hong Dan district, Ca Mau town to the south of Minh Hai province, is a region of saline and aluminous soil. It is rich in organic substances and receives an abundant rainfall (2,100 - 2,500 mm per year), and has many forests and vast virgin lands for clearing.

It is an important region of intensive cultivation of one 10th-lunar month rice crop, in which farming methods similar to those in Region II are used, and canals are dug to wash alum. Besides, it is a rich ecological region which needs to be protected, studied and developed: the coastal region of mangroves "teeming with fish and shrimps", the region of "cajuputs" (U Minh forest), the region abounding with birds, and products of fresh water, saline water and brackish water, the region of "rice, beans and vegetables" rich in organic substances.

Region IV: Slightly alkaline soil

The area from the Cai Lon river to the Rach Gia - Long Xuyen canal in the provinces of Hau Giang and Kien Giang is a vast low-lying land of slightly alkaline soil containing abundant organic substances; it has large farming potentialities but its exploitation is hampered by floods. The



FIVE YEARS OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEKONG DELTA

THE peasants of the Mekong delta and southern Vietnam in general — victims of the perfidious policy of concentrating the population in strategic hamlets pursued by the US-puppet regime — lived a most desperate life. They were forced to leave their native villages to live concentrated like prisoners; their movement was put under tight control. Penned up in these artificially created centres, they had to go every day to receive their ration of rice from the puppet administration.

After liberation, they were enabled by the revolutionary government to return to their native villages. They rebuilt their houses and rearranged their fields to restore production.

In clearing the bombs and shells left by the enemy, many of them were killed, but they did not flinch from their task of rebuilding their communities.

They have been encouraged by the population of the whole country who gave them staunch support. From the North, they received draught animals and tractors, farm implements and seeds. A great number of scientific workers and technicians also came from the

North to help the South, particularly the Mekong delta area. Agricultural schools, from grass-roots level to higher education, have been opened to train local cadres so that they can directly serve their native land. An extensive network of farms, research centres, managerial offices, stations for the repair of farm tools and production of seeds has been built and already given good results.

In the last five years, the peasants in the South, particularly in the Mekong delta, have made astonishing progress. Giving up their habit of growing only one rice crop per year, the peasants in the Mekong delta now grow two main crops: the winter-spring and the summer-autumn crops.

From 189,000 hectares in 1976,

the winter-spring rice crop in the Mekong delta covered an area of 427,000 hectares in 1980, and gave a total output of 1,107,000 tonnes.

Thus, in five years only, with the method of intensive culture and multiplication of crops, the Mekong delta produced 2.2 million tonnes of rice more.

With the addition of the crop of the 10th lunar-month rice grown on 1,400,000 hectares totalling an output of 3,118,000 tonnes in 1980, the Mekong delta produced a total of 5,320,000 tonnes of rice, amounting to half of the output produced by the whole country.

To grow two additional crops in winter-spring and summer-autumn, the peasants in the Mekong delta have to work zealously, overcome great difficulties and build up their experience in agricultural production. They have constructed thousands of kilometres of sea-dykes to retain fresh water, thousands of kilometres of ditches and canals to drain aluminous water in order to turn hundreds of thousands of hectares of waste land into ricefields. A striking example is given by 20,000 peasants in Long Phu district, Hau Giang province, who on September 21, 1975 began to embank 37 kilometres of sea-dykes, to turn 4,000 hectares of waste land into cropland and transform 5,000 hectares of one-crop fields into two-crop fields thus raising the yearly rice output from 59,000 to 100,000 tonnes.

Such mobilization by the Long Phu inhabitants has paved the way for a wide-spread irrigation work movement in the Mekong delta. Thanks to this movement nearly 500,000 hectares of ricefields left fallow as the result of the enemy's policy of penning up the inhabitants have come under cultivation again.

With the discovery of a rice strain of short-growing time, high yield and resistant to insects made by the universities and agricultural research centres in the South, the farmers in the Mekong delta can now hold in check and eventually eradicate the havoc wrought by

flood water is not deep (0.5 — 1.5 metres) but it abates slowly. That is why the local population is in the habit of growing two crops of long-growth floating rice. This region is abundant in rice but the yield is low. To exploit this region it is necessary to dig irrigation canals to draw alluvial water from the Posterior river and prevent flood water from overflowing Cai San road. The completion of this work will make it possible to shift the growing of floating rice to that of transplanted short growth rice. Besides, jute, sweet potato, sugar cane and coconut trees can be planted.

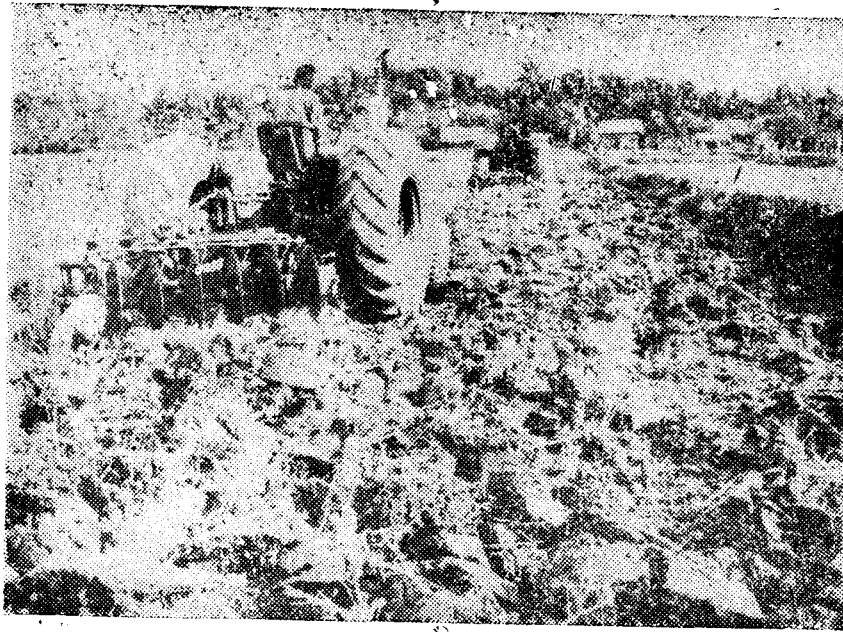
Region V: Waterlogged alkaline soil of the Long Xuyen quadrangle

The characteristic of this region is aluminous soil submerged in the flood season and alkaline in the coastal region. Its development consists in speeding up land clearing in the area from Vinh Te canal to Cai Son and setting up a

large state farm. The work begins with the growing of floating rice which will be shifted to the growing of the 10th lunar-month rice and multiplication of crop as soon as the irrigation network develops.

Region VI: Thap Muot Plain and environments

Its soil contains rich organic substances, but farming is hindered by heavy flood and aluminous water. Most of the region grows floating rice (with selected seeds); it will develop with the multiplication of rice crops grown along the banks of rivers and canals with the building of irrigation works to draw fresh water and wash alum. After the harvest of floating rice, it is possible to grow a soya crop or a winter-spring rice crop in rotation with jute. The newly exploited lands can grow sugar cane, cassava roots, pine-apples. The "cajuput" forests must be protected and replanted in areas not yet prepared for rice growing.



Ploughing for the Summer-Autumn vice crop.

Photo: NGO VAN KHIET

brown planthoppers, a dangerous pest which, some years before, was believed to be without antidote.

Many regions have made a judicious choice of the plants and growing time, making the best use of land, climate and labour force in order to obtain an ever greater quantity of foods and agricultural products.

The agricultural transformation which began in the Mekong delta after liberation has now been stepped up and has yielded initial results. Today, there are in the Mekong delta 180 agricultural co-operatives, 4,000 production collectives and about 30,000 solidarity production teams. A solid base has already been laid and agricultural co-operation has been completed in the main in 30 out of 1,408 communes and 200 out of 9,289 hamlets, in the form of production collectives. Eight out of 101 districts have a good movement of collective work: for example Long Phu (Hau Giang province), Vinh Long town, Vung Liem (Cuu Long province), Chau Thanh (Ben Tre province), Ben Thu (Long An province). Topping the list is Long Phu district which is good at production and is the first to have an irrigation work movement; it is renowned for having a strong and widespread movement of agricultural co-operation, with 162 pro-

duction collectives growing two or three crops a year; since their consolidation in 1978, none of them have been dissolved. Also at Long Phu there exist many high-yield ricefields of the production collectives which harvest 4.5 or 6 tonnes per hectare per crop. This is the result of the assistance given by the state, but mainly by the efforts of these collectives.

The redistribution of land in the Mekong delta has been rationally carried out according to a flexible policy, in which the peasants help one another and coordinate with the transformation of agriculture and re-organization of production. Thanks to this policy, those who had little or no land now have their plot to till.

The results obtained from agriculture in the Mekong delta have led to tremendous successes: the peasants have harvested six bumper crops, they have improved their life a step further and provided a bigger supply of food for the country.

At the beginning of the third five-year plan (1981-1985), the peasants in the Mekong delta, elated at the successes they have recently scored, are carrying out a large scale and comprehensive programme of production with the plan of division into six main agricultural regions.

VAN SON

AGRICULTURAL production in the immense, flat and fertile plain in the South, particularly the Mekong delta, has been greatly facilitated by the widespread use of mechanization to compensate for the small number of farmers.

Formerly in the South, peasants were in the habit of burning the rice stalks left over after the harvest and waiting for the rain to sow the seeds, thus the crop yield was only about one tonne per hectare.

Using rudimentary means, a farm hand can cultivate (by sowing) only two or three *cong* (one *cong* equals one hundred square metres) at the most; but he can work hundreds of *cong* per season with machines. Thanks to the use of machines, the newly cleared lands are more deeply ploughed and their fertility improved, the planting is more timely and favourable for the multiplication of crops.

In 1975, there were in the South 9,577 big tractors and 15,543 small tractors, totalling 1.5 million H.P., together with thirty thousand other agricultural machines. The skilled workers numbered ten of thousands. This mechanical force was sufficient to do 70% of the tilling work and 95% of the threshing and transportation work.

Under the old regime, these machines belonged to private owners, 15% of whom (rich peasants and rural capitalists) possessed more than half the number of agricultural machines, particularly the big ones. The remaining were middle peasants. One per cent of machine owners were technicians who lived by hiring out their machines as they had no land to till.

Formerly the machine owners received ten *gia* (one *gia* equals 20 kilograms) of rice for the tilling of one hectare of land.

After liberation, favourable conditions have been created by the rural authorities for the tractor owners to put their machines at the service of production. Some of them have enthusiastically responded to the call, but others, on the pretext of lack of fuel, raised their hiring price and refused to fulfil the plan of production. They always seek to

TRANSFORMATION OF PRIVATE AGRICULTURAL MECHANICAL FORCES IN THE MEKONG DELTA

feather their own nests with their machines rather than satisfy the requirements of production.

Were there no socialist transformation and no control of mechanical force, it would not be possible to develop agricultural production and to complete the cooperativization of agriculture.

That is why, in mid-1977, the Government Council issued a decree on the transformation of private agricultural mechanical forces in the South. This transformation is carried out simultaneously with the consolidation of the system of State-owned tractors.

At present, in the provinces of Dong Nai, Song Be, Tay Ninh, in Ho Chi Minh City and nine provinces in the Mekong delta there are 313 agricultural machine collectives possessing 3,200 tractors of all kinds, representing 80% of the agricultural mechanical forces of private owners who have joined those collectives. The experiments conducted on some testing grounds have made it possible to draw valuable experiences and correct many mistakes. There have been no major signs of sabotage or dispersion of machines. After two years of operation, the collectives have gradually been consolidated and work efficiently. Workers in 95 tractor collectives have each earned 20 - 30 *dong* per workday, or four or five times as much as a private driver.

So, the mode of capitalist hiring of agricultural machines has basically been abolished. There is no case of dispute of customers between two tractor owners and no case of exorbitant hiring prices imposed on the peasants. The vanguard tractor collectives begin to manage their capitals, materials and plans of production well.

In 1980, the area tilled by tractor collectives and private tractor owners in the former Nam Bo provinces trebled that tilled by State enterprises and accounted for nearly 70% of the area tilled mechanically in the whole region.

Apart from these strong points, in the past two years, the transformation of private agricultural mechanical forces in the South has experienced many shortcomings. In many regions, the local authorities have left the tractor collectives to dissolve freely or loosened their socialist control over them, so much so that these units which nominally work collectively really care for their private interests.

There is an acute shortage of able managerial cadres. The management is still bound by red tape and creates unnecessary difficulties for the activities of the collectives.

On the other hand, the handling of fuel leaves much to be desired and causes impediment to the operation of the collectives. In

many regions, the local authorities have sold fuel directly to the peasants who supply it to the tractors when the latter work in their fields. But many peasants' families lack fuel containers and the various lubricants are mixed up and their quality is spoiled; the tractors are thus damaged. Some ricefield owners sell the fuel allotted to them at a cheap price on the free market for profits and sow their seeds without preparing the soil (that is without hiring tractors as they have no more fuel left).

With regard to small tractors, they must be handed to the production collectives; but the local authorities only paid attention to the collectivization of land and set little store by these important agricultural machines; as a result great difficulties have been created for the production collectives by the tractor owners. This state of things is being rectified.

Recently, some opinions have held that, theoretically speaking, most of the tractors in the South are worn out; so let them gradually disappear and be replaced by State-owned tractors. In practice, investigations have shown that theoretically many tractors are out of use but they have been working efficiently for the past seven or eight years as they have been kept in good repair. It is essential that the State work out a correct policy, adequately supply accessories and spare parts to the agricultural machines in operation and give technical assistance to the local authorities so that they can fend for themselves with these machines.

We have sufficient technical means to meet 70% of our requirements in accessories of agricultural machines, but our forces are scattered and lack a managerial organ to look after them.

The experience gathered in the past two years has shown that the proper size of a tractor collective is from 15 to 20 tractors operating in the scope of one or two communes; that the weak collectives should be strengthened to become strong, and where the tractor collectives do not exist the local authorities should create them so that they can work effectively for production.

TRAN QUOC KHAI

VIETNAM has a great variety of birds. When winter comes in the North, besides the native inhabitants, there are many species of birds immigrating from northern countries. Southern Vietnam, particularly the area of the Mekong delta, is the habitat of a great number of birds of various kinds. They generally settle for reproduction in definite places called "birds' fields".

The Mekong delta boasts nearly 30 of these fields both big and small located in many provinces: Tien Giang, Ben Tre, Cuu Long, Dong Thap, Hau Giang, An Giang, Kien Giang. Minh Hai province alone has ten fields. Each of these fields has a particular form and size. Some of them exist in the precincts of pagodas as large as several hectares, others are set up in the orchards abandoned after the war. Some of them, which have been in existence for a long time, cover hundreds of hectares such as the ones in Ngoc Hieu district, Minh Hai province, or in the U Minh cajuput forest.

BIRD'S FIELDS IN THE MEKONG DELTA

After a preliminary investigation of five birds' fields in Ben Tre and Minh Hai provinces, the birds have been divided into 60 species belonging to 11 families from seven groups: 30 species living on creepers and belonging to ten families and four groups; ten species living on frogs and belonging to four families and three groups. The fields in Ngoc Hieu district and U Minh forest are those which have the largest species of birds (50). The one which has the smallest species is Cu Lao Dat, in An Hiep commune, Ben Tre province (15).

Every morning, the birds leave their sanctuaries in search of food and return there in the afternoon. There are also many species which come there in great number only for reproduction.

In the Mekong delta, the birds, which have a great economic value, lay their eggs in the wet season. In that season, they begin to build their nests. Usually in the nesting season, at least from three to five species of birds build their

nests, lay and hatch their eggs. Investigations made have revealed that each field has between 3,000 and 100,000 birds. As to the number of each species, it varies from several dozen to several thousands and even tens of thousands.

Every year, each field supplies a considerable number of fledgelings. In the second half of November 1978, thousands of these young birds were caught in Ngoc Hieu field. In Vinh Thanh field, Vinh Loi district, Minh Hai province, in the last five months of 1978, nearly 20,000 fledgelings were captured. However, at present there are many people in the surrounding areas who come there to fell trees and catch birds and their eggs. This is one of the reasons for the decrease in the number of birds and birds' fields in the Mekong delta. The birds' fields which have so far disappeared are Giong Rieng (Hau Giang province), Go Quan (Kien Giang province), Tra Cu (Cuu Long province). The 120-hectare field at Ngoc Hien inhabited by hundreds of thousands

of birds is also threatened with disappearance.

The U Minh birds' field is swarming with tigers, deer, wild boars, wild dogs, monkeys, boa constrictors, snakes and tortoises. At Cu Lao Dat and Ngoc Hieu, there are respectively 10,000 and 3,000 flying mammals (locally called bat-birds), each of which gives about 0.2 kilogram of meat.

In the two wars of resistance against the French and Americans, the birds' fields in the Mekong delta were the bases of the revolutionary forces who there set up their offices, barracks and stores, and also their permanent source of supply of meat and eggs.

Today, after the liberation of the South, the Vietnamese State has entrusted the local authorities with the task of protecting and taking care of these birds' fields, mapping out long-term plans for their exploitation and arranging some of them (such as the one at Vinh Loi) to turn them into centres for research and tourism.

GENETICS, as a key science, is receiving great attention in Vietnam. For a long time, however, it made very little progress, as did selection in particular, as a result of the adverse influence of Lyshenko's "organism and environment" theory which was officially discarded in the Soviet Union in 1964 as unscientific and opportunistic. Professor Luong Dinh Cua, an outstanding Vietnamese agronomist, was the first in Vietnam to see the danger of Lyshenko's theory, and he made great efforts to lay the groundwork for scientific selection in Vietnam.

Modern genetics was introduced into Vietnam in the early sixties by many native geneticists, among them Phan Phai who, at an important conference held by the State Commission of Sciences and Technology in Hanoi in August 1964, gave a full account of the harmful influence as well as the 'collapse of Lyshenko's theory.

Four years later, in the spring of 1968, Phan Phai went to Moscow where he studied, as a post-graduate, at the General Genetics Institute under the USSR Academy of Sciences. His research subject, though very difficult, held great promise. It concerned experimental mutation.

Hitherto it had been the practice to subject dry seeds to radiation or chemical treatment to cause transmissible chromosomal mutation. Phan Phai then advanced quite a novel method by causing mutation at a much earlier pre-embryonic stage, when an organism consists of from one to eight cells only. His explanation: mutation induced at this stage can be more fundamental than that brought about when an organism has matured (a dry seed is a mature organism, complete with leaves, roots and stem, in a dormant state). Fertilization, after all, is the union of two sets of genes from parents which are not yet stable. If such a union can be affected by mutagens, however slightly, a series of gene mutations will ensue, leading to profound changes in a number of organs of the living body.

Phan Phai's bold idea raised some doubt in one of his teachers, Doctor Andreyev. "You'll stay in Moscow for only three years, and what you plan to do is time-consuming," the Soviet scientist told him. "What about some more suitable subject matter? Anyway, give me a draft of your project in a week's time and we'll see."

PHAN PHAI:

A Major Breakthrough in Genetics



Phan Phai talking with peasants.

Photo: HO XUAN HA

A week later Andreyev was listening to Phan Phai's project, sitting in an armchair. Then, abruptly, he stood up and placed a hand on Phai's shoulder.

"You want to be a pathfinder in science, don't you?" he asked.

"Do you think I'm being too adventurous?" Phai replied questioningly.

"That's what I mean. But isn't there an adventurer in every scientist?" Andreyev conceded.

Phan Phai's theory necessitated a new technique, and thanks to the assistance of his teachers and his colleagues he succeeded in establishing some thirty formulas. He experimented with a medicinal herb of the *Nigella* family, but the first-generation plants in the test plot did not show any marked differences.

In the second generation Phan Phai grew more than eighty

thousand plants, hoping that with such a great number he would be able to discover something. And he was greatly surprised, indeed. Very strange flowers began to appear. In some, stamens had been turned into pistils, in others all the parts became leaves, and still in others they were all petals. A mutated flower would have up to 700 petals, whereas an ordinary one had only five, like a five-branched star. In many, the number of nectar glands had increased from eight or ten to 807.

Unable to explain these mysteries, Phan Phai turned to Andreyev for help. It was a sunny summer afternoon, and the two were picking their way among the experimental plot, stopping to examine a flower every now and then.

"Eureka!" Andreyev exclaimed excitedly and, flinging his arms around his student's shoulder, he enthused, "We've got it!"

Later Andreyev explained to Phan Phai the importance of the discovery. The turning of stamens into pistils, which more than doubles the number of seeds, may be a possibility to control the development of the female characteristic in plants for an increase in seeds output. Moreover, all the parts of a flower may be turned into nectar glands, increasing their number from an ordinary eight or ten up to almost 1,000. Wonderful changes, indeed.

For years scientists had tried to explain the existence of flowers, but had failed to produce any practical proof to back their reasonings. Phan Phai, by turning petals, pistils and stamens into leaves, discovered the origin of flowers in the leaves themselves, making a major contribution to the theory of evolution.

The "Phan Phai Method" which is aimed at destroying the union of highly complex gene sets controlling reproductive organs in order to bring about profound mutations, has resulted in over 100 mutation forms unobtainable in any experiments with dry seeds. It has been successfully applied not only to the *Nigella* herb, but also to subjects of very high genetic complexities such as paddy, maize, soya, etc.

The revolutionary method has aroused great interest in universities in the Soviet Union, in Budapest, Prague, Berlin, Brussels, Rome, Milan, and others. It was reported simultaneously in New York and Heidelberg by HEREDITY and the International Journal of Genetics, which described Phan Phai as one of the three best geneticists in the world in 1978.

Also in 1978 Phan Phai was awarded the Vavilov Prize (only one such prize is given every year), and his two reports to the 14th International Genetics Conference held in Moscow that same year, and which were heard by representatives of 95 countries, were given a big ovation. Then, at the 12th International Conference on Botany in Leningrad, Phan

(Continued on p. 27)

CULTURAL LIFE IN KIM NGOC COMMUNE

THANKS to rural electrification, the cultural life of the people of Kim Ngoc commune, Bac Quang district, Ha Tuyen province has been improved. The commune has more than one thousand inhabitants belonging to different ethnic groups: the Tay, the Dao, the Hmong, the Nung and the Viet. A public address system was built out of the commune's social welfare fund. This system relays the Voice of Vietnam radio broadcasts and diffuses the news of the commune's propaganda team. It is also used to guide production and propagate scientific and technical information.

Last year, the commune's 200-seat meeting hall was repaired and made suitable for film-shows. Every month the provincial film projection teams are invited to come and show documentary films, newsreels, and feature films. These are shown a dozen times for the people of the commune and of the neighbouring areas.

The commune also has its own art troupe consisting of young artistes who compose their own songs, dances, and plays. Most of these items are created from elements of the *then* and *cot* folk songs. In 1979, the troupe participated in the popular art festival of the province and was awarded a second prize. To create favourable conditions for the activities of the troupe during its rehearsals and performances, the co-operative gives the artistes reasonable work-points.

Only by comparison with the past can we appreciate the present life of the people of Kim Ngoc commune.

Like other communes in the mountain area, the people of Kim Ngoc practised backward customs in funeral, marriage, superstition, etc.

According to their customs, if someone died, his body had to be laid for three days in the house before being buried. During the funeral ceremony all the children of the dead person had to put on belts made from banana tree bark, and wear straw turbans. Those who attended the funeral had to present large sums of money and if someone in the family was ill, they did not pay attention to seeking medical treatment but used to kill chickens and pigs, and invited sorcerers and wizards for their incantations in the hope of curing the illness. Time and money were squandered on wedding parties too: drinking bout lasted from two to three days or even a week. Polygamy and alcoholism were rife.

But during the past four years, thanks to the activities of the Committee of the commune, all these backward customs and habits have been gradually eliminated. Betrothal registers and weddings are organized at the office of the Commune People's Committee. They are still ceremonious but much simpler and more cheerful. The funeral has been simplified, and the dead are now buried in the commune's cemetery. Preventive hygiene is in progress. Pigsties, cow and buffalo stables are moved far away from dwelling houses. Each family has its own bathroom and double septic tank. The paths in the commune have been improved. So, thanks to this, no epidemics have broken out in the commune in the past three years.

A health station, a 1st and 2nd level general education school and 7 crèches were built with the contribution of the people of the commune. Thus a new way of life has taken shape in this remote mountain commune.

NGUYEN DUC SON

BETWEEN 1971-1973 the Cultural, Scientific and Educational Organisation of the United Nations (UNESCO) organised a mission concerned with the preservation of monuments at Hue. M.W. Brown Morton, who is an architect and expert from UNESCO and the International Centre for the Conservation of Monuments (Rome), had, in his report, put forward proposals and recommendations for undertaking the necessary work (1), but the Saigon puppet government, sucked into the neo-colonialist anti-revolutionary war, was never able to set in motion a suitable conservation policy for Hue and M.W. Brown Morton's conclusions were pigeonholed.

Since the reunification of the country the aims of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's cultural policy have been rigorously applied with regard to Hue, and the Vietnamese authorities have always considered the national cultural heritage, and in particular the preservation of historical monuments as an integral part of the country's reconstruction and the cultural rebirth of the nation.

In May 1977, at the invitation of the Vietnamese government, a UNESCO delegation headed by the Director General Aimadou Malhiar M'Dow visited Vietnam and the two parties signed a memorandum regarding co-operation in the cultural, scientific and educational fields.

In October of that same year, Vietnam became a member of the UN and the General Assembly adopted resolution 32/3 on international aid for the reconstruction of Vietnam. Immediately after the adoption of this important resolution by UNO, the UNESCO General Conference in its turn, adopted resolution 7/13 which underlined that within its brief UNESCO is able to contribute an appropriate part of international aid to the Vietnamese people. The Conference called on all peoples and governments of the UN member states to widen their efforts and increase their contributions whether bilaterally or multilaterally to help the Vietnamese people in the reconstruction of their country, particularly in the areas with which UNESCO is concerned. The Conference also authorised its Director General to undertake a long-term mobilisation of the organisations resources and efforts

VIETNAM'S ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE AT HUÉ AND THE PROSPECTS FOR INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION BETWEEN VIETNAM AND UNESCO

in order to achieve these objectives (2).

This important resolution was followed up by various actions.

1978 : The monuments at Hué — one of 8 international projects.

In autumn '78, the 20th meeting of UNESCO's General Conference considered in resolution 4/7/6/6 the importance for human history and civilisation of the cultural heritage constituted by various historical monuments and sites. Well aware of the need for a programme which would guarantee their protection, preservation and restoration the Director General of UNESCO was authorised to promote 8 projects:

1. The architectural complex of San Francisco de Lima (Peru)
2. Sans-Soucis, La Ferrière and the site of des Ramiers (Haïti)
3. Monuments and historical sites in Malta
4. The Jesuit mission houses for the Guarani (Indian tribes of Central South America).
5. The architectural heritage of Gorée Island (Senegal)
6. *Monuments at Hué (Vietnam)*
7. Monuments and sites in the cultural triangle of Sri Lanka
8. Sites at Chinguitti, Tichitt and Oualata (Mauritania)

The Conference also authorised the Director General to undertake, in collaboration with the governments concerned, the necessary technical investigation for a detailed plan of action for each project with an international campaign of support to carry it out (3).

Another important resolution presented jointly by Vietnam and France was passed at the Plenary of the 20th General Conference. Resolution 20c/DR 232 takes into account: the importance of preserving the cultural heritage of

various countries; the exceptional cultural and architectural value of the city of Hué, the ancient capital of Vietnam, with its monuments and sites of renown, the efforts of the government of the SRV to restore a city seriously damaged by war and bad weather. The Director General is therein instructed to launch an international campaign to restore, preserve and give due attention to the ancient imperial city of Hué and its monuments (4).

So, Hué, a cultural and tourist centre of the SRV and a former historical capital, is in the international limelight and Vietnam's architectural heritage at Hué has attracted the attention of several fact-finding missions carried out by UNESCO.

The first of these missions took place in spring 1978 and was an in depth technical study carried out by Pierre Pichard a consultant architect with UNESCO. The second was conducted by Mrs Pirazzoli, a well-known historian of Asian art, in autumn 1978. The third mission in autumn 1979 was carried out by Messrs Stulz and Hardouin, both of UNESCO.

Towards the end of 1978, UNESCO published a technical report of Pierre Pichard entitled "*La conservation des monuments de Hué*" (Conservation of the Hué monuments) (100 pages, 4 diagrams, 21 photographs, 6 appendices).

At the same time, in the information bulletin 12/1979, "The Cultural Heritage of the World" distributed by UNESCO there was an article entitled "International Co-operation to preserve the city of Hué" which presented the Pichard report very enthusiastically (5).

The technical expert on the conservation of Hué is an excellent monograph in 4 sections:

1. Hué and its monuments
2. Policy for conservation
3. Present condition of the monuments
4. Problems of preservation and conservation

In his conclusion Pierre Pichard puts forward suggestions and recommendations for bringing the site to life, town planning and the development of tourism in Hué. He rightly noted that "aware of the numerous assets in the region, the Vietnamese authorities have studied various suggestions which would enable Hué to flourish and they have decided to go all out to make this a major cultural and tourist attraction."

In autumn 1979, a group of Vietnamese researchers under Dr. Le Van Hao, formerly assistant director for Conservation of historic monuments in Binh Tri Thien province and the city of Hué and presently lecturer at the University and Teaching Training College in Hué, presented in UNESCO their "*Essay on the traditional culture and architecture of Hué*" (150 typed pages, 100 photos and drawings).

This piece of collective work, the first attempt at a synthesis of the cultural and architectural heritage of Hué, comprises 3 main parts:

1. Hué: geographical situation and historical tradition
2. Traditional culture in Hué, its origins, formation in the 17th and 18th centuries and development from the end of the 18th to the end of the 19th.
3. A special area of Hué's culture: architecture (a study of the traditional Hué architecture and its characteristics in the 19th century). The conclusion of this study emphasises the appropriateness of Hué as a centre of tourism and culture. (6).

In mid-1980 a group of writers, under Dr Le Van Hao's leadership, produced a new brochure entitled "Hué - a centre of Vietnamese culture and tourism". This was at the request of UNESCO and is intended for the general public to promote the international campaign for the future restoration of Hué's monuments.

This brochure, which is a kind of tourist guide (15 typed pages, 30 photos and 7 drawings) comprises a short geographical and historical introduction, a description of the royal palace and tombs, a brief look at the cultural traditions of Hué in the fields of literature, music, theatre, dance, art and the way of life in Hué (7).

At the end of spring 1981, the UNESCO Public Information Office sent a film crew to Hué - Ms Francine Vande Wiele producer, Mr Vorontzoff, cameraman, and Mr Bernard Galy, sound engineer. The team made a documentary on the safeguarding of the ancient imperial city of Hué and its monuments. During shooting the team were assisted by Dr. Le Van Hao who acted as scenario writer and artistic adviser. What is more the Ministry of Culture, the Vietnamese National Commission for UNESCO, the provincial People's Committee and the cultural bodies of the city, all did their utmost to ensure the success of the filming. This artistic documentary, the result of the friendship between the UNESCO film makers and the cultured people of Vietnam, will be entitled "The privilege of being Hué", a significant title chosen jointly by the producer in agreement with the scenario writer.

1980: International plan of action for the preservation and development of the Hué monuments

In autumn 1980, in its 21st session the UNESCO General Conference unanimously passed an important document: "*The detailed plan of action for the project of preserving, restoring and developing the monuments of Hué (Vietnam)*". (8)

This plan of action comprises an introduction, the background and the plan of action proper (14 pages). In its introduction the UNESCO document confirms that Hué has always held and still holds an important place in Vietnamese culture: "the Perfumed River and the lagoons of Hué, the canal which meanders through the city as well as the style of houses surrounded by luxuriant gardens give Hué a most pleasant rustic

serenity, full of inspiration for artists and writers... Hué has a great number of buildings... concentrated in the (Imperial City) and the Purple Forbidden City... To this vast urban architectural complex the seven tombs of the Nguyen kings must be added. Situated some kilometres to the south of the city of the far bank of the Perfumed River in pastoral scenery and thickly wooded hills the tombs are an architectural entity of great import, with their temples, palaces, surrounding gardens, and fountains".

It is worth remembering, with regard to this subject, that in the book "The Wonders of the World" with an introduction by Jean Cocteau of the Académie Française (9) the tombs of the Nguyen kings at Hué are listed as one of the wonders of the world. UNESCO's choice has a distinguished precedent and their estimation that "the charm of Hué and the history to which it bears witness make it a tourist attraction at both national and international level" is not without reason.

What's more the historic city (including the citadel and the royal palace) and the tombs of Hué "are still the crowning glory of the Vietnamese architectural heritage in spite of the losses sustained during the 1947 fire, the fighting in 1968 and substantial deterioration due to the tropical climate."

The SRV government is determined to safeguard the cultural heritage of the nation of which Hue is the jewel, however it is obvious that the restoration of certain historical buildings and the reconstruction of others which have been destroyed require a long-term and expensive programme which is at the moment beyond the means of the Vietnamese government. Therefore it has been decided to appeal, through UNESCO, to international solidarity. Supposing that this solidarity will be quickly and fully implemented in a programme encompassing all the Hue monuments then it is very likely that the Vietnamese government may meet almost insurmountable difficulties in matching the financial contribution and that the human capabilities at their disposal expertise for the technical absorption of all the outside aid will be insufficient.

UNESCO has estimated that realistically there should be a programme with various stages and a choice of priorities is the first step in adapting to national financial and technical possibilities and those of international aid.

UNESCO plans in the above-mentioned project to help the Vietnamese government to continue and enlarge, as much as possible on their own, the programme begun in 1975 with Vietnamese technicians and resources (7 monuments have already been restored without external help). This project, which is the first phase of a long-term programme, will restore or reconstruct 15 monuments and 2 tombs in the period 1981-86.

However the restoration of monuments is not an end in itself - if after the completion of the work the monuments are once again used for their original purpose or something related then their survival is guaranteed. Above and beyond the restoration, the real aim of the UNESCO project is to *reestablish the cultural importance of Hué by restoring its monuments to their cultural context.*

Such an aim implies an interdisciplinary and global approach which through restoration, preservation, presentation and bringing to life should, at both national and international levels:

a) Contribute to the socio-cultural development of Hue and underline awareness of the cultural identity of the nation through the heritage of Hue,

b) lead to a better understanding of the historical and cultural importance of Hue and a reciprocal appreciation of different civilisation, through the traditional culture of Hue.

With UNESCO as intermediary, the international community will be invited to support the Vietnamese efforts by supplying expertise and equipment, granting training scholarships, and other services which cannot be found on the spot, as well donating cash.

The Vietnamese government will supply management personnel in and the labour force, equipment for the sites, local materials (limwood, tiles, bricks etc) and any other facilities which they have at their disposal. In consultation with UNESCO some volunteer will take part in the research.

The detailed work plan comprises eight points:

1. Objectives of restoration
2. Equipment
3. Expertise
4. Training
5. Finance
6. Cultural activities
7. Promotional activities
8. Carrying out the international campaign.

I - Priority for the restoration of the 17 monuments is in this order:

1. The audience chamber (dien Can Chanh)
2. Anteroom to the left of the audience chamber
3. The court of honour in the audience chamber
4. The promenade of Great Honours
5. The temple dedicated to the Nguyen kings
6. The two storey Hien Lam Cac pavilion
7. The temple dedicated to the parents of King Gia Long
8. The Palace of the Queen-mother
9. The Luong Phung pavilion
10. The galleries of the Queen-mother's palace
11. The King's reading belvedere
12. The temple dedicated to the ancestors of the Nguyen Lords
13. Recovery of the royal gardens
14. Hué museum
15. The King's horseman
16. The tomb of King Minh Mang
17. The tomb of King Tu Duc

II - To carry out the work, the following equipment will have to be brought to Vietnam:

- a) architect's studio equipment
- b) a conservation laboratory and chemical products
- c) building site material
- d) a carpenter's workshop
- e) topographical material
- f) a brick and tile kiln
- g) hydraulic scoop
- h) material for the execution of the project
- i) rare commodities from Asian markets (lacquer, gold etc)

III - Co-operation by highly qualified foreign technicians and experts will require restoration architects, archaeologists, and laboratory specialists to stay in Hué for several months.

IV - Vietnamese specialists, with the help of international scholarships, will be trained abroad - restoration architects, archaeologists, museum curators, art restorers, lab. technicians etc.

V. - The overall budget for the first phase (1981-1986) will be 4 million US dollars. The Vietnamese government will supply 750,000 dollars, leaving 3,250,000 dollars to be found. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will supply 350,000 dollars, the World Food Programme (WFP) 750,000 dollars etc.

VI. - The Hué monuments are an integral part of the city and must not become museum pieces. On the contrary they have an important socio-cultural role to play as well as serving Vietnamese cultural policy. The proposed programme therefore must promote national culture and make it available to everyone, facilitate research work and develop entertainment and tourism. The Hué monuments will have the following functions: theatre, dance, music, festivals and traditional folk gatherings, conferences, exhibitions, museums, libraries and research centres, cultural groups, various clubs, art workshops, display and sale of artisan products, rest-room for tourists, restaurants and traditional tea-rooms etc.

VII. - While the Vietnamese government will undertake a nation-wide publicity campaign to make the public at large aware of the historical and cultural importance of Hué and the above programme, UNESCO will carry out, on an international level, the following activities:

- a) a colour film about Hué
- b) a publication showing the historical, cultural and architectural value of the site
- c) publication of articles in UNESCO periodicals
- d) radio and television interviews
- e) a poster and brochure on Hué
- f) a photographic exhibition at UNESCO headquarters and interested member countries
- g) a seminar at Hué for representatives of the world's press, etc.

VIII. After the official launching of the international solidarity appeal by the Director General of UNESCO (Planned for November 1981 in Hanoi) a circular letter will be sent to all member countries and associates, to non-governmental organisations and scientific institutions concerned to invite them to participate in the campaign. Financial contributions will be paid into a UNESCO account especially set aside for the purpose.

A working group composed of representatives of the Director General of UNESCO and the Vietnamese government, a Vietnamese specialist and an international specialist, will be set up to advise UNESCO and the Vietnamese government on all questions relating to the campaign and the international restoration undertaking.

For its part the Vietnamese government will appoint someone connected with the project to liaise with ministries concerned as well as UNESCO. They will also appoint a technical director to organise and supervise the building sites at Hué.

*

Hué has always enchanted lovers of culture and art as well as tourists with its charming setting - the Perfumed river and pine-forested hills, the grace of its young girls and its delicious food - it has always and will always be a great cultural and tourist centre.

The Vietnamese people are grateful to UNESCO for having chosen Hué, after Venice, Athens, Phylae Borobudur and Nara as yet another attempt in the noble undertaking of preservation and development of the world's cultural and natural heritage - a wide ranging, long and exacting labour but one which brings so much honour to UNESCO.

LE VAN HAO

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SOME NEW DECISIONS ON EDUCATION

AS a step towards carrying out the educational reforms adopted in 1979, in 1981 the Vietnamese Government Council and the Ministry of Education took important decisions conforming with the new requirements. They are the decision to set up *educational councils* at all levels; the decision to include *vocational orientation* in general education schools into the main curriculum with a view to the rational employment of pupils graduating from basic general education and secondary general education schools; the official decision on *the new general education system*.

The task of the educational councils is to make suggestions to corresponding educational organs on education problems and encourage and organize social forces to develop education in the localities in conformity with the directives of the educational reform. The council consists of representatives of local authorities, representatives of educational branches and of local people's organizations, of intellectuals versed in and concerned about education, and representatives of pupils' parents.

Although the vocational orientation in general education schools has been in practice since the second educational reform in 1960, we do not have a regular system or organization and our educational activities are not yet in good order. This time in the educational reform, vocational orientation is included in the curriculum with a view to preparing pupils, after leaving school, to study any skill which is in demand and suitable to their personal capability and aspirations.

Beginning with the 1981-1982 school year an integrated curriculum of vocational orientation for primary schools, secondary schools and a concrete orientation for the schools in the countryside, the cities, and the provincial capitals is defined by the branch of general education.

Due attention is paid to the improvement in teaching sciences, the spirit of teaching general technique and vocational orientation, and to the improvement in teaching and learning technical labour subjects in order to enable pupils not only to grasp theory but also to do practical work. The localities

where schools are, from hamlet to city, district to province, also coordinate with the local educational branch in using graduated students and continuing to improve their capacity and knowledge.

From the beginning of the 1981-1982 school year, the ten year-educational system in the North and the twelve-year-system in the South are transformed into a *twelve-year general education system* which will be applied in the whole country. It will be carried out step by step and will come into force in the whole country in 1983-1984. The Ministry of Education defined the names for these schools and classes of this new system.

From now on, there exist two levels in the educational system:

- *The basic general education level* lasting 8 years, with 8 forms, from the 1st form to the 8th form (including the former first and second level general education of the North).

- *The secondary general education level* lasting 3 years and consisting of 3 forms, from the 10th to the 12th form (including the former third-level general education of the North). Between these two levels there is the intermediary 9th form.

The names of all classes of the former 12-year general education schools in the Southern cities and towns are the same with the names of classes in the new system of educational reform.

Complementary education - this important branch of education is also emphasised in the education reform in order to apply new scientific and technical advances to production and life; Complementary education is officially considered as a permanent branch of education for adults and will require the improvement of the content and curriculum as well as the training of special teachers for this branch.

The 5-year movement of cultural enlightenment begun in 1981 continues after a similar 3-year movement (1978-1980).

The main purpose is to eliminate illiteracy amongst the ethnic minorities in the mountainous provinces, to popularize the first and second-level general education in the provinces of the uplands, plains and cities.

THAI dance dates from time immemorial. Whoever has visited the North-West will remember the *xoe vong* (dance in round), as the ubiquitous entertainment of the Thai people. In the rites of spring-welcoming, harvest-greeting, house-warming, wedding, and even in ordinary festivals, in the houses on stilts, around the fire, after a drinking bout, beatings of drum and gong are heard and people hold hands and perform a *xoe vong*. This dance is very popular among old and young, men and women: everybody knows *xoe* and likes it. *Xoe* comprises an ordinary dancing step in a simple round with the accompaniment of drum, gong and *khen* playing. A new guest can easily join in after looking on for a while. A *xoe* usually lasts at least until midnight and sometimes until morning without anybody giving up. As time wears on the atmosphere grows more hectic. Face to face and hand in hand, everybody wants to show her or his friendliness and enjoy the pleasure felt through their eyes and hands. Shouting, moreover, adds zest to the dance. From the big round, the dancers split up to perform small rounds, with quick steps and repeated kickings without accompanying steps. The most lively moment is when two dancers intertwine with each other, wave their hands over their heads and repeatedly stamp their feet. These are innovations outside the routine performance, "spontaneous" creations inspired by the impassioned intimacy between friends after a long separation. This can also be a token of hospitality when the Thai treat their guests to these innovations.

The Thai dance *xoe vong* is like the Lao dance *lam vong*. Their details may differ but neither draw the line between spectators and actors, between hosts and guests: all those present in the party share the sprightly dance.

BEFORE the August 1945 Revolution, whoever went to the North-West in spring could attend two biggest Thai festivities: *Kin lau no* (eating bamboo shoots and drinking spirits) of the Black Thai, and *Kin pang then* (Worshipping Than) of the White Thai. Both of these

festivals took place in March, late in spring, when the season of *ban* flowers was drawing to a close. On that very occasion there appeared many new dances.

The festivities began with religious rites and ended with dances.

In the festivity "*Eating bamboo shoots and drinking spirits*" there are several dances: *ploughing and sowing, the Devil on the rampage, the God of love, the wizard fighting tigers and evil spirits*... Those dances have a concrete content depicting the people's life and struggle. The movements, although stylized, still

The above-mentioned dances are performed only in religious festivities. The dancers are not professionals but they are selected and trained under the guidance of wizards. Compared with *xoe vong*, the dances in religious festivities are refined, richer in movements, more stylized, but their movements are still related to every activities.

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TAKING pride of place are the dances with instruments: turbans, bells, fans and hats.

of dance with instruments took shape:

- *Dances with turbans*: waving, winding and dancing around turbans and sowing seed.

- *Dances with fans*: opening, turning and looking at fish from behind fans.

- *Dances with bells*: a duo with bells; intertwining steps, and in a crouching position pretending to fall backwards and forwards...

- *Dances with hats*: Phong Tho hats with original movements: proffering them to right and left, whirling them over one's head, turning the hats inside out and back again...

A glimpse of folk culture

Thai dance

imitate everyday activities; ploughing, sowing, rounding up tigers, exorcizing evil spirits. In some cases, the dance deals with fecundity, a concept prevalent in the religious current of all agricultural societies.

To the festivity "*Worshipping Then*" belong such dances as *Flower offering, Tao Lam* (a great Then), *Waving one's turban over one's head, Praying to God Xa, Praying to God Lao, Sweeping withered flowers*. Those are dances performed with turbans which do not depict any concrete activity. Waving their turbans dexterously, the dancers praise the personages they worship: God Then, God Xa, God Lao... who pioneered in reclaiming land, building villages, teaching the people to work and to live. Sweeping withered flowers is always the last item, for it means that spring has ended, flowers wither, the festivity winds up and one sweeps withered flowers to begin again a new year of work.

These dances are appreciated not only at home but also abroad.

According to the artists in Phong Tho (Lai Chau province) these dances were created only a few score years ago. By 1914 in Phong Tho district, Mr Deo Van On gathered together a number of art enthusiasts with the men playing music and the women dancing. At first, they learnt six dances with turbans from the festivity "*Worshipping Then*". On this basis they created new dances: *servng tea, serving tobacco, serving spirits, weaving*... The dance-troupe's première won warm applause and heartfelt support and the news of their ability spread rapidly. The Phong Tho dance-troupe was invited to perform in other districts of the province and also in the neighbouring districts of China. This encouragement spurred designers and actors to create more dances. After each performance they grew in experience and in each tour they learnt local dances. Gradually four kinds

Following in Phong Tho's steps, other places also set up dance-troupes: Muong Lay (Lai Chau province), Quynh Nhai (Son La province)... These troupes learnt Phong Tho dances together with the way to create dances. Not only the White Thai but also the Black Thai formed dance-troupes in Tuan Giao, Son La, Mai Son, Song Ma, Dien Bien... The troupes increased in number and the kinds of dance soon ran into several hundred...

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NOW the dances with instruments have three outstanding models: Phong Tho, Muong Lay and Quynh Nhai.

Phong Tho is the cradle of those dances. The Phong Tho troupe has gone through many ups and downs without, however, losing its particular attraction due to its simplicity, naturalness and brightness. When speaking of Phong Tho today nobody can forget its fine hat dance born in the home of dances with instruments.

Next comes Muong Lay with its hat dance. There are not many kinds of dance here but the performance technique of the Muong Lay troupe is quite streamlined and accomplished. One is entranced

By the winding of the turban, the shaking of the bell, the swaying of the hat and the bobbing of the fan.

After Phong Tho and Muong Lay comes Quynh Nhai. Here the dance-troupe has developed rapidly with many original creations. The greatest credit goes to artist Dieu Chinh Ngau. This organizer, designer and stage-manager has created many outstanding works: dances with turbans like *Turbans of peace, spinning*; dances with bells like *Tay Chien dance, Sanding dance, Sitting dance*; dances with fans like *Looking at fish, a fan for two...* However, his greatest success which has taken much of his time are the dances with fans through which he wants to raise the younger Quynh Nhai troupe to the level of its two elders. His creations *Flinging hats, Turning up hats, Turning down hats, Picking vegetables* and the musical pieces accompanying them have won him wide acclaim.

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IF Thai dance can be compared to a beautiful garden, Phong Tho, Muong Lay and Quynh Nhai are certainly its most precious flowers.

In the course of their formation and development the dances with instruments have outgrown the everyday life dances to become performance dances. They have become professionalized. Regulations have been gradually set for their formations and movements. The actors only innovate to embellish these movements. Also defined are the musical pieces for each kind of dances. One can say that each kind of Thai dance has a *tinh* musical piece accompanying it. Not only the performer but also the spectator is aware of this correspondence.

Turbans, bells, fans and hats used by the Thai people in their everyday life are also used by the artists to create images linked to dance language. Their daily activities: ploughing, sowing, serving tea, catching fish, picking vegetables or flowers, spinning, weaving... also constitute a rich array for the artists to picture and practise upon. However, their main and most precious creation is to bring into fullest play their various instruments. After *turning down fans*, they create *turning up fans*, then *gliding fans*. Coiled turbans linked to swaying motion are indeed pretty, but unfurled turbans hovering around constitute an innovation. With the instruments, the formations also vary. On the basis of a round, one now has coiling and intertwining movements; then the formations shift to horizontal and diagonal lines, which brings about a new effect. Another way of creation is to compose the musical piece at first and to play it before designing an appropriate dance. Only when the music is blended with the dance so as to convey the artist's message can the creation be realised. Through performance, the work is complemented, polished and gradually asserted. Thus there is no limit to the development of dance.

*

DANCE is mainly performed by women. Men take part as guides, designers and musicians. Sometimes men dance, generally after having drunk, when the atmosphere grows hectic or to end the dance. That is to speak of collective dance, dance in round and everyday life dance which are not aimed at expressing a personage's particular characters. However, in whatever kind of dance, the common feature of dance appears most clearly through the cheerful and lively traits and the natural

beauty of women. The brightness, freshness, sweetness and grace of Thai women find a clear expression in the dance. In general, Thai dance does not have big leaps or broad gestures. Most common are small and quick steps, swaying and gliding motions, delicate wavings of hand, turban, bell, fan or hat around one's body.

Bouncing constitutes a prevalent trait of Thai dance. Bouncing up and down is common to every dance. One bounces down slightly to bounce up easily. One also bounces up slightly to avoid a jerky movement which is taboo in Thai dance. To this end, a constant attention is paid to the knees.

The body always acts in a natural and set position. Rare are the movements which deform it: twisting, inclining, felling, bending or coiling it. At most one can sit on one's knees and bend forward or backward — which is however very rare. It can be said that Thai dance is the repeated and streamlined action of small, delicate and elaborate features...

The realities of life — production work and fighting — of the Thai people gave birth to Thai dance. The simple steps in the dance in round, in the dances during the festivities "*Eating bamboo shoots and drinking spirits*" or "*Worshtpping Then*" are forerunners of performance dances later on. Although different in kind, the dance in round, festivity dance and performance dance constitute the three consecutive stages of development of dance among the Thai people in the North-West.

HOANG BICH

PHAN PHAI...

(Continued from p. 19)

Phai was invited by American Professor John Gaston, of the University of California, and the Canadian Professor Dahmen, to visit their countries on a lecture tour. In the Soviet Union, Phan Phai was granted honorary membership of the Association of Genetecists.

Recalling all these honours Phan Phai said none of them had given him as much joy as the moment when, on that memorable afternoon on June 22, 1969 his teacher, Andreyev, realized the importance of his discovery among the row of *Nigella* on Lenin Hill in Moscow. All his later successes, he said, originated from that revealing moment.

Altogether, Phan Phai experimented with fifteen generations of *Nigella* while preparing his doctoral thesis, which was completed in 1978. In their evaluation of the thesis the members of the jury of the USSR Academy of Sciences said it was a monumental, novel project, a considerable contribution to modern genetics and to the theory of evolution. They said his was an original mutation method which by far outstripped other methods in all aspects, and that the rare, valuable mutations he had caused would have a great impact on both theory and practice.

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Phan Phai now devotes himself to applying his method in Vietnam as head of the Genetics Department of the Institute of Sciences in Hanoi. Experiments are being made with maize, paddy and soya at Phuong Thanh, Me Tri and Phu Ninh — three agricultural cooperatives in the suburbs. On

a test plot for maize, ears are seen growing at the tips of the plants: male flowers have mutated into female flowers and have fertilized. In addition, each plant has from two to five more ears at the second leaf from the ground.

Phan Phai's experiments have increased mutation frequency by two times in paddy and 1.5 times in maize and soya. The crops also take less time to ripen (twenty

days less for maize), the grains are bigger, and yields higher (a 15 — 28 per cent increase for maize).

Phan Phai and his colleagues are working out a comprehensive mutation programme for rice, maize and soya, in an effort to advance seed selection which is an urgent task to raise economic efficiency in Vietnam's agriculture.

LE BIEN

FIVE YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT...

(Continued from p. 13)

various districts, communes and new economic zones. In the last five years, apart from repairing and upgrading 1,217 kilometres of roads, Phu Khanh has spent 1.6 million workdays to embank 1.3 million cubic metres of earth and stone in order to build 759.5 kilometres of new roads and 400 bridges and culverts. At present, it has 2,464 kilometres of roads linking various districts in the province including 460 kilometres which join various communes and hamlets to each other, 1,000 kilometres of roads leading to communes, 773 kilometres connecting hamlets, and 231 kilometres of roads built on the dykes of ricefield. Of 165 communes in the province, 161 have motor roads. Of the 33 communes in the highlands, 29 have roads leading to the middle of them. In Phu Khanh the area of farmland has increased quite rapidly: at the end of 1980, it was nearly double the area in the first year after liberation; every hectare of farmland is serviced by 23.8 metres of road on average, or nearly four times what it was before liberation.

Tuy Hoa, the main rice-producing district of Phu Khanh, is also renowned for its movement of transformation and building of rural roads. In the past five years, its inhabitants have contributed nearly one million work-days and

over 34,000 *dong* to buy materials to build 451.5 kilometres of roads, 173 bridges and culverts and to upgrade 321.7 kilometres of existing roads. Many communes in the district have skilfully coordinated the construction of roads with that of irrigation work.

Parallel with the building of the rural road network, Phu Khanh also pays attention to the transformation and development of the transportation force and the repair and construction of vehicles to meet local requirements. At present nearly 9,000 vehicles from the collective and private sectors have been used, totalling 3,600 tonnes of means of transport (including 2,700 animal-drawn vehicles, representing 31.50 % of the total of transportation means).

In the last five years, in the district, the motorized and rudimentary means of conveyance have transported 21 million passengers and over one million tonnes of goods.

While in 1976, the whole province had only 60,000 hectares of farmland, or one tonne of means of transport per 60 hectares, today, the farmland in Phu Khanh reaches 103,000 hectares, or one tonne of means of transport per 29 hectares. In Cam Ranh, Ninh Hoa, and Tuy Hoa districts, rudimentary vehicles are used on a large scale to serve agriculture and the transport of foods.

NGUYEN DINH HANH

A Hunters' Paradise

The Truong Son Range runs through Central Vietnam, from the right bank of the Ca River to the eastern part of southern Vietnam. It curves towards the east and divides into North Truong Son and South Truong Son.

The northern section ends at Hai Van Pass to form the natural border between Vietnam and Laos. The southern section buttresses Tay Nguyen, or the vast Central Highlands.

Going west from the plains one arrives at the country of wild beasts after a few days on foot.

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Wild buffalo, bulls and other horned animals are found in the foothills, where the soil is dry or humid depending on the season, and where streams are thickly lined with bushes. Grey buffalo, brown bulls and deer—brown, spotted, reddish brown or black—come out to graze at day-break and in late afternoon. They are fat and fearless creatures.

The grassland bordering on jungle clearings is the natural habitat of spotted deer—those lean, graceful, shade-loving animals—which can be seen strolling in large groups at sunset, after having eaten their fill, the young light brown or white-spotted, the proud old once with their splendid antlers.

Their nextdoor neighbours are the roedeer which, after moulting come out in large numbers in spring, their coats a splendid brown or dark grey. The buck, even more magnificent with their shining new antlers, roam about for whole months, joining one pack or another, always welcome guests.

At the approach of the rainy season the doe hide themselves in the jungle, and when they come out again each is followed by a young one. The stag also go into hiding to moult. In the autumn the antlers are still soft, but come spring they begin to harden and

branch off. Then the buck majestically step out from the jungle, dazzling in their new attire.

Less spectacular are the common deer. Short-legged, and light brown or dark grey, they cannot be described as graceful or beautiful. They live in bushes and only come out to feed at dusk. At dawn they retreat into their hideouts to sleep. Yet, they are the boldest. They will venture out as far as the newly reclaimed fields to lick at the charred trees and, with their antlers, will hold hunting dogs at bay. They are also good swimmers.

Most gentle are the gazelle. They do not live in groups as the roedeer or singly as the common deer, but in tight-knit families. The male sports a pair of short horns; the female, instead of horns, has two coquettish tufts of hairs. Anxious by nature they will bleat at the least sign of danger—a sudden change in the wind, or a darkening sky.

The dry season brings with it the withering of flowers, with the exception of a few late-blooming orchids which still adorn the denuded jungle with their pink or white sprays. The mountain air becomes cooler. Streams become shallow and flow more gently.



People leave their villages in search of deer antlers. At night they sleep in the open around campfires. The ground is littered with carcasses of de-antlered animals. Smoked meat is stacked on temporary racks.

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Leaving the clearing one goes up the slopes. Halfway, where the jungle thickens, one enters the kingdom of monkeys.

Abruptly the silence of the jungle trail is shattered. One looks up and beholds the impish creatures. Hanging by their long arms they dart from branch to branch or, joining hands, they form a string with which to descend down to the water to have a drink, all the while chattering incessantly.

Days begin rather late in these regions, and while the cliffs glow with the rising sun the lower parts remain in darkness. The jungle is full of noises made by turkey, quail, and gazelle. The dominant note, however, is the ear-splitting chorus set up by the monkeys to greet the coming of dawn.

And they keep chattering, assured of their safety, now that daylight has returned and the lurking dangers of night are but a memory. At a signal from their leader, they gleefully begin their acrobatic stunts.

As afternoon fades into evening the monkeys look around with growing anxiety. After the last drink of the day, they gather in the tree tops.

And as darkness sets in the jungle they try to get a last glimpse of the dying day. They follow the fleeing spots of light as if they were trying to hold them back. But darkness advances inexorably, and the monkeys, frightened, raise a bedlam, filling their air with a sad, mournful sound, quite different from their merry chatter in the morning. There is

no telling which of them will fall grey during the night to the slithering boa or to the velvet-footed leopard.

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Here and there in the monkey country are found vast stretches of bamboo. This is where the bison live.

People who are used to jungle life prefer the quietness of a bamboo forest where, in the permanent rustle of leaves they can discern the soft thuds made by the hooves of the native dwellers, the occasional snap of a branch, and the steady chewing of the cud.

Of all the buffalo species bison are the largest and strongest. They are the most spectacular, too, with their bulky chests, big heads, knobby foreheads, and sharp, curved horns. Their big, hunched shoulders add to the strength of their solid backs.

Bison are of a sparkling brown or dark brown, and are hairy at the neck and belly. Their legs, from the knee down, are covered with white hairs. They have deep blue eyes, which they will lift up at the sky in a pensive mood each time they stop eating. They do not live in herds as other species, but singly or in pairs, and their territories are seldom violated. Theirs is a carefree life which they fiercely defend. Many bear long, deep scars on which hair does not grow again. Others have mangled ears which make them look ugly. But these marks testify to their victories in many bloody battles.

The bamboo country is also the habitat of the quiet, gentle *cheo cheo* (tapir) — the smallest ruminants — which turn to bison for protection. In size, a *cheo cheo* is inferior even to a hare. Its head has a vague resemblance to the head of a roe deer with the absence of antlers. Its eyes are black, its hair a smooth dark brown, its legs lean and graceful.

The *cheo cheo* are perhaps the weakest inhabitants of the jungle. Any carnivorous beasts can prey on them. They are completely defenceless: no horns, no antlers, no paws, not even brawny legs to carry them. Their only weapon is their tusks — if a pair of tusks only

a few centimetres long can be an effective weapon — with which they gnaw at bamboo shoots. In danger, the only thing they can do is to crouch very low and then dart off like a streak.

But thanks to the bison, the *cheo cheo* can live a peaceful life. They feed at night, on shoots and mushrooms. After eating their fill, they quietly return to their burrows which they take care to build as close as possible to the dwellings of their powerful neighbours, without whom they might already have been exterminated.

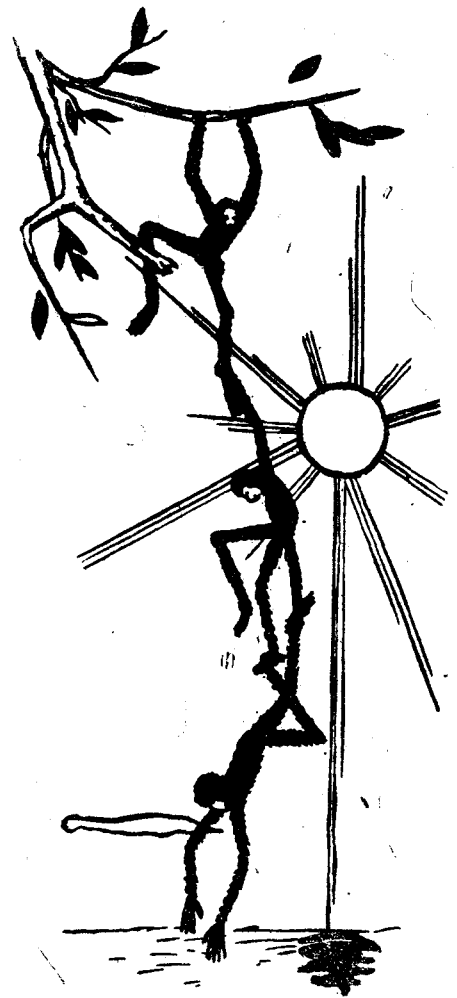
It is generally maintained that jungle life is governed by jungle law, which allows bigger, more ferocious beasts to prey on smaller, weaker ones. That is not, however, the only criterion. Jungle life is collective life in which individual strengths are pooled into collective strength. Buffalo and other fangless or pawless animals live in herds to better protect themselves: the female and the young are always covered by a perimeter formed by the strong male.

Jungle life is also one of interdependence: for protection the *cheo cheo* turn to the bison, animals with unyielding antlers turn to those with sharp, pointed horns.

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From the bison country a few days' journey will take one up to the jungle proper. Here, rock cliffs stand shoulder to shoulder with tree-covered peaks, all perennially shrouded in mist. Here streams never run dry, and the monotony of tall grass is relieved by the bright red colour of wild banana flowers.

One is on the domain of the elephants now. Truong Son elephants go on large herds. A small herd usually consists of two or three families, each with an adult male, two adult females, and three or four young ones. Elephants are big eaters, each needing four or five hundred kilograms of food a day. For this reason they are constantly on the move, day in day out, from the mountains down to the grass country, and up again. They spend the daytime in the shade, splash about in some stream in the afternoon, and feed at night.



Their clear, loud, imperative trumpeting early in the morning and at sunset often cause jungle travellers to pause and look around with apprehension.

Elephants are the most awe-inspiring animals in the jungle. They surpass all other beasts in intelligence and loyalty. They are as attached to their kind as human beings are to one another. When one falls sick, the rest of the pack become distracted. If one is trapped, the others will do everything to free it. They will even go without food to do so, or give up a planned journey.

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When there is no rain and bamboo shoots become scarce the bison will leave their home for

the grass country. As soon as they appear there, the other beasts slink away. The new masters take over and help themselves to the local produce in a lordly way. But, not being of a footloose kind they soon feel homesick, and will hurry back after a few days.

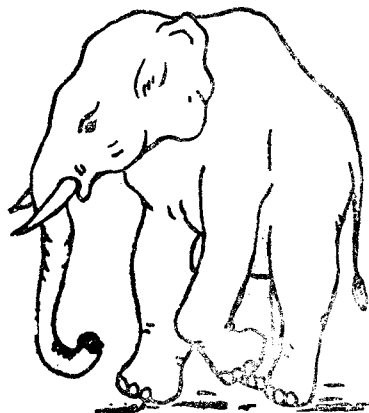
The bison also know to return kindness. When the deer, which have a weakness for bamboo shoots, come to feed in their preserves, they let their guests roam about in complete freedom.

As a rule ruminants prefer a sedentary life. They only venture far from home when food gets scarce, which may happen every two or three years, or at the outbreak of some epidemic.

Nothing can be more devastating than such an epidemic, which can kill scores of animals in a single day. Frightened, the whole jungle population will move out. Such an exodus will be spearheaded by the bison. Next will come the nimble-footed deer, and the slow buffalo will take up the rear.

In silence the evacuees go, and during the difficult journey more will die, of exhaustion and hunger, or killed by other beasts lurking at every turn. Nothing, however, can stop them. When a leader collapses, another male takes his place. At long last they reach safety and begin to procreate, and in a few years the decimated population will grow in size.

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Contrary to beasts of a gentler kind, killers know no distance, and no place is off-limits to them. The tiger are the most dreaded of all.

Truong Son tigers dwell in deep, dark, bushy gorges not far away from pasture lands or from places of human habitation, where domestic animals are always available. The distance is calculated in such a way as would allow them ample time to go out, make a kill, and return to their dens within a night.

The tiger begin their hunt at twilight, not long after other inhabitants of the jungle have girded themselves for the dreaded darkness, the monkeys and the gazelle sounding the alarm, birds hurrying back to their nests, the buffalo grouping themselves in a fortified camp, the deer giving a wide berth to the clearings and seeking safety in the vast grassland. Even the lone bear stop burrowing and are on the defensive, standing on their hindlegs against a tree, bristling.

Having noted the least sound in the jungle the tiger get up, stretch themselves, yawn, and pad out of their dens. They have not gone far yet, but already their presence is felt by the whole jungle.

On they go, in a flowing motion, taking long, well-placed steps, their sharp eyes boring into the night, missing nothing.

In their wake are the ravenous hyenas in quest of spilled blood and leftovers from unfinished carcasses. They keep a respectful distance, cringing, their bellies sagging under them.

Each time their lords stop to take better stock of the situation, the hyenas also come to a standstill. They lift a foreleg and raise their muzzles in anticipation, their tails between their hindlegs, ready to run away. When the killers resume stalking they start anew, keeping their noses close to the ground. Meanwhile, out in the pastures, the buffalo have got up on their feet, their heads low, ready to gore. The deer and gazelle sniff at the air, their nostrils flaring, their feet tapping, poised for flight.

The tiger population on the Truong Son is very large. There



is hardly a gorge or a gully which is not inhabited by one. A tiger, if it has its own way, may kill dozens of cattle and hundreds of deer a year. Luckily, tiger cannot kill at will: Their preys will put up a stiff resistance, and hunters are always on their tracks.

People who cross the Truong Son for the first time may be troubled by the roar of stalking tiger, which rolls through the night air to fill all nooks and crannies. Seasoned trail wanderers, however, prefer this to the more disquieting moments of silence: a tiger roars when it is angered by the escape of a prey, thus betraying its presence and alerting the world to its whereabouts.

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Many explorers have agreed that the Truong Son Range like the primeval forests in Africa and in the Himalayas, ranks among the best in the world for its fauna. No wonder it is called, without exaggeration, a "hunters' paradise".

VU HUNG

THE ONLY WAY...

(Continued from p.5)

greatly changed in favour of revolution and peace. For the first time in history there have emerged on the Indochinese peninsula three independent and sovereign countries closely united and advancing together to socialism. A new situation has set in in Southeast Asia: that of peaceful coexistence between two national systems with differing political and economic social regimes which both need peace and stability to develop.

With their external policy of peace and independence, Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea are promoting their role as active perpetrators of peace and stability in the region.

The practice of revolutionary struggle over the past forty years in Southeast Asia has proved that in our time, that of transition from capitalism to socialism beginning with the Russian October Revolution, and particularly in the post-Vietnam period — when imperialism weakens in every field — any nation however small, which is united under the correct leadership of a true Marxist-Leninist party, closely cooperate with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

and enjoys the support of the progressive forces in the world, can defeat aggressors many times bigger and secure independence and self-mastery for its country. The collusion of the most reactionary, forces in history be they US imperialism or Chinese expansionism or any other reactionary force, cannot reverse the trend of development of history. The future belongs to the forces struggling for peace, national independence and socialism.

April 1981

PHUC CUONG

SINO-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS...

(Continued from p. 9)

Meanwhile, the Vietnamese royal court (now under a new dynasty — the Nguyen) in Hue was completely in the dark about the above developments. Thus, in 1882 when Henri Rivière attacked and occupied Hanoi, King Tu Duc sent his emissary to ask for Chinese help. The same year, Hanoi was occupied for the second time by a small French force. The Chinese governor of Guangdong and Guangxi in a secret report to Beijing wrote: "Vietnam and China share the same border, but now Vietnam is fast weakening and cannot save itself. Why don't we seize this occasion to send our forces to occupy the highland provinces of Vietnam under the pretext of helping it resist French aggression? Then, if things get harder for them we'll move down to occupy also the provinces north of the Red River." Beijing agreed to that plan and sent a big armed force to operate in Bac Ninh and Son Tay provinces respectively north and west of Hanoi.

There is no doubt as to Beijing's intention. Knowing that it could not cope with the Western capital-

ist powers, it nevertheless wanted to seize the moment when the Vietnamese people had to concentrate on resisting the French. Thus, in the 1880's, the Vietnamese people were subject to the double yoke of the French aggressors and the Chinese interventionists.

The French were bogged down in Tonkin. The Chinese forces inflicted ever more serious losses on the French troops. The newly installed government in Paris had to cable the French consul in Tonkin, Patenôtre, ordering him to negotiate with the Chinese representative. Thus the Tien Tsin treaty was signed on April 27, 1885 under the terms of which China recognized France's "protectorate" over Vietnam in return for France's return of Chinese coastal bases which France had occupied, and the lifting of the blockade of Formosa by the French navy.

For its selfish interests China easily surrendered Vietnam to the French colonialists. This was a very heavy blow to the patriotic movement in Vietnam at that time.

Thus the basic policy of the succeeding feudal dynasties in China towards Vietnam may be summed up as follows: to annex Vietnam and, as a prelude to annexation by force, to use intimidation and pressure through diplomatic channels. If the annexation failed, China would save face by saying that it spared Vietnam for humanitarian reasons. As for the Qing court, it adopted a dual policy following its disastrous defeat in Vietnam in 1789: on the one hand, to effect a continual retreat before surrendering unconditionally to the Western imperialist powers. On the other hand, not to lose any opportunity to annex Vietnam under the pretence of sending its troops to help the Vietnamese feudalists resist French aggression! When things turned for the worse it would unhesitatingly decamp, leaving Vietnam at the mercy of the French colonialists.

China's present policy toward Vietnam can best be explained when one compares it to the policy applied by the former emperors of feudal China, and in particular, by the Qing court.

VAN TAN

CHRONOLOGY

(16 July - 15 August 1981)

July

17. In accordance with the decision of the People's Supreme Assembly, Souphanouvong, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, confers the National Golden Order on Le Duan, General Secretary of the C.C. of C.P.V.

20. The SRV Foreign Ministry issues a statement rejecting the "declaration" and "resolution" adopted by the "International Conference on Kampuchea".

- The Council of Ministers gives instruction on new policies concerning child care and education.

22. The Vietnamese feature film "The Wild Field" wins a gold medal at the 12th International Film Festival held in Moscow.

- Signing in Vientiane of an agreement on forestry cooperation between Vietnam and Laos.

23. VNA issues a statement flatly rejecting the slanderous charges of the Thai Army High Command broadcast over Bangkok Radio on July 22 that "Vietnamese troops had shelled and laid mines on Thai territory causing losses to Thailand."

24. Minister of Foreign Affairs Nguyen Co Thach concludes his official visit to the Mongolian People's Republic begun on 20 July 1981.

- The Governments of the SRV and the Republic of Zimbabwe agree to establish diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level between the two countries.

- Signing in Moscow of an agreement on economic and technological co-operation for 1981-1985 between Vietnam and the Soviet Union.

25. The Council of Ministers gives instruction on organising the transfer of labour between different regions in the country.

27. Opening in Hanoi of an exhibition entitled "For Man's Life and Happiness" on the occasion of the International Year of the Disabled.

28. A delegation of the Vietnam Women's Union led by its President, Nguyen Thi Dinh, leaves Hanoi on a friendly visit to the Soviet Union.

30. Signing in Moscow of an agreement on goods exchange and payment for 1981-1985 between Vietnam and the Soviet Union.

- Vietnam's first gas-turbine power plant built in the province of Thai Binh has commissioned its first turbine with a capacity of 17,000 kilowatts.

- Chairman of the Council of Ministers Pham Van Dong sends a message of greeting to the world conference against Atomic and Hydrogen bombs, saying that "The Vietnamese Government and people fully support the struggle and the initiatives against A and H bomb."

August

1. VNA issues a statement flatly rejecting the news broadcast by Radio Beijing which slanderously charged that "Vietnam had dropped chemicals into sources of drinking water in the Kampuchean province of Battambang."

3. The Danish Government sends 750,000 US dollars to Vietnam to buy food for flood-stricken areas.

4. The first national Chemistry conference is held under the auspices of the Vietnam Institute of Sciences, the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Vocational Education and the General Department of Chemistry. The conference aims to exchange results of scientific and technological research achieved during the past years and set the direction and tasks for the coming years.

5. The Institute of Literature, the Institute of Pedagogy and the Teacher-Training College No. 1 organise in Hanoi a Scientific conference on Vietnam's socialist family.

6. A peasant in Vinh Ho commune, Vi Xuyen district, Ha Tuyen province, finds an earthenware jar containing several bronze coins from the Tran, Ho and Le dynasties (13-16 centuries). This will facilitate research on the currency, trade and other historical problems of the epoch.

- VNA issues a statement flatly rejecting the fabrication of a high official of the National Security Council of Thailand which says that Vietnam has counterfeited Thai bank-notes and smuggled them from Laos into Thailand.

- The Vietnamese Association of the Blind inaugurates a Dutch-financed Braille printing workshop on the occasion of the International Year of the Disabled.

8. A conference to review the implementation of the contracted quota system is held in Ha Nam Ninh province from 8 to 12 August. The conference confirms that the application of the system of quota allocations to farmers is a new stage of development in Vietnam's agriculture. Thanks to this system, rice output increased by 220,000 tonnes in the last winter-spring crop compared with the same crop last year.

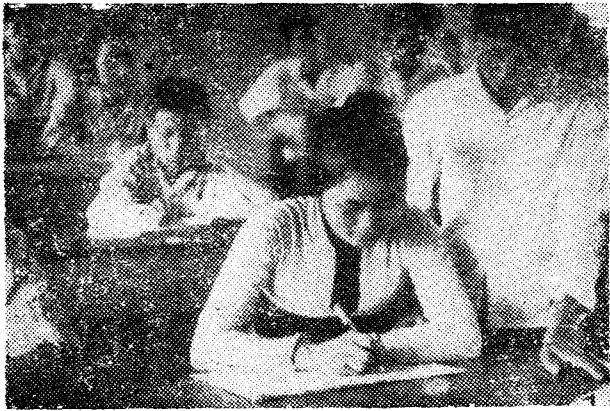
9. Le Tien Manh, a member of the Vietnamese Circus Union, is awarded a prize as the best clown at the First Circus Festival of Socialist countries held in Havana, Cuba.

12. The mission of consultation of UN Council for Namibia led by N.G. Sinclair visits Vietnam from 7 to 12 August.

- The SRV Government resolutely supports the struggle of the Namibia people and protests against South Africa's policy towards Namibia.

- The Council of Ministers gives instruction on promoting family planning for 1981-1985. Some concrete targets to be realized: a couple should have a maximum of two children and the average rate of population growth in the whole country should be reduced to 1.7% (the North: 1.5% and the South: 1.9%).

14. The Vietnam Ministry of Agriculture holds a ceremony to receive 3,700 tonnes of urea fertilizer donated by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).



SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

1. An Adult education course in a mountainous commune (Tan Duc, Ha Tuyen province).

Photo: VU THUY ANH

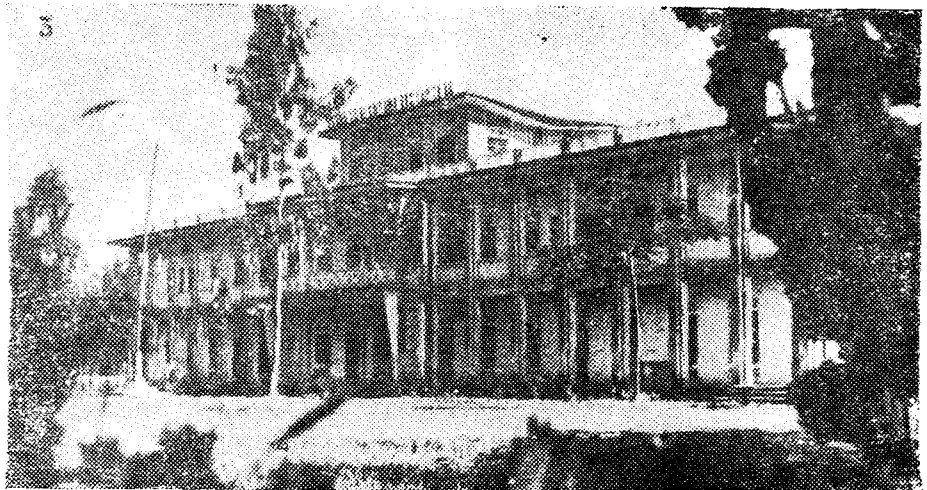


2. An Adult education course in a Central Highland Commune.

Photo: NHU KHUE

3. The general education school of Hai Chau commune (Ha Nam Ninh province).

Photo: VU HUYEN



SCHOOL ACTIVITIES



1. At the Teacher-Training College in Vinh (Nghe-Tinh province).

Photo: QUAN PHUNG

2. Pupils of the Ballet School performing a scene of "Swan Lake".

Photo: TRAN DINH

3. In the Physics Section of the Polytechnical University in Hanoi.

Photo: VU THUY ANH



Vietnam
COURIER

НОВОСТИ
ВЬЕТНАМА

Le Courrier
du Vietnam

El Correo
de Vietnam

Báo đối ngoại **TIN VIỆT NAM**

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

Tòa soạn: 46 TRẦN HUNG ĐẠO, HÀ NỘI

DẤY NÓI: 53998

In tại Hà-Nội

Chỉ số: 12462