

# Vietnam courier



A MONTHLY REVIEW

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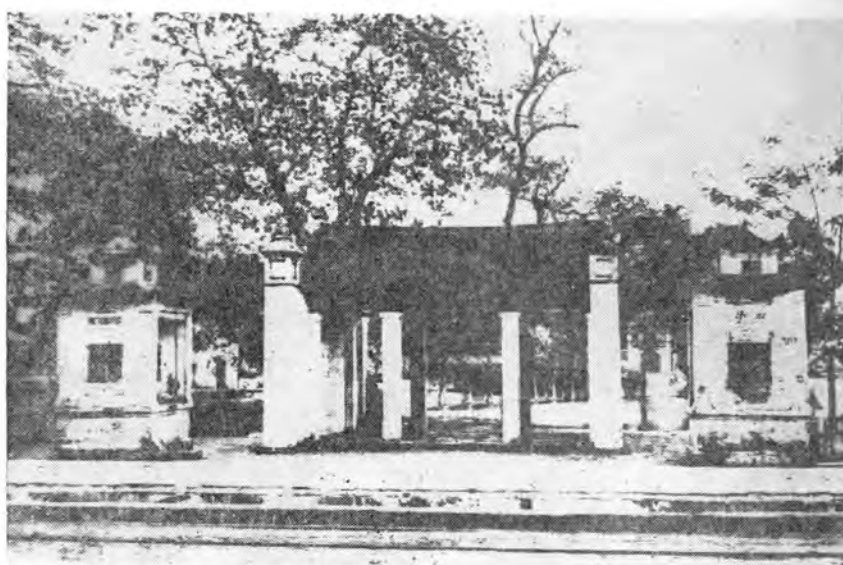
ONE — THOUSAND —  
YEAR — OLD  
HANOI

The portico of Tran Quoc (Defence of the Country) Pagoda, built on an islet in the West Lake, in the 17th century.

Ngoc Son — Ba Kieu Temples built on the edge of Lake Hoan Kiem (Restored Sword), in the 15th century.

Bao Thien tower on the edge of Lake Hoan Kiem, built in the 15th century.

Photos: Courtesy Library of the Social Sciences Institute of Vietnam



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## OUR MONTHLY COMMENT

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### Front Cover:

Khue Van Cac (Pavilion where poems were recited and commented upon) and the stelae of laureates in the Temple of Literature — Quoc Tu Giam built in Hanoi in the 11th century.

Photo: NGUYEN BA KHOAN

**Vietnam  
COURIER**

10 — 1982

On the 10th of October, 1954, five months after the victory of Dien Bien Phu, the Vietnam People's Army took over Hanoi under the clauses of the Geneva Agreements ending the first Indochina war. The army unit which took over Hanoi was Division 308, famous for its feats of arms. Its core was the Capital Regiment, which had been born in Hanoi 8 years before. As the defeated occupation forces quietly withdrew, the victorious troops marched into the capital city amidst wild cheers and thunderous applause, and a forest of gold-starred red flags and azure peace flags. From that day on, the 10th of October became a festive day for the Hanoi population, the festival of liberation and peace.

After celebrating the victory, the Hanoi people buckled down to work. The French Expeditionary Corps had left behind a consumers' city in the full sense of the word, a city whose population had to rely on imports for everything. There was no manufacturing industry, and the traditional handicrafts had been fading away in the face of powerful foreign competitors. The streets were full of groceries, restaurants, cafés, tailor's shops, hairdresser's shops, etc., not to mention night clubs, brothels, gambling houses, cabarets and opium dens. A whole society which had relied on the occupation machinery for its subsistence now felt itself deprived of support. Unemployment affected one-fifth of the population. The colonialist prophets loudly prophesied the imminent decline of Hanoi: how could a parasite live on without a host?

But the people's power was rapidly brought into full play and Hanoi not only did not collapse but built for itself a new infrastructure. After two years of economic and cultural rehabilitation, from 1956 to 1957, the three-year plan for the transformation of private industry and commerce and for agricultural co-operation (1958 — 1960) directed the city's economy to a new road of development. Private workshops were reorganized into joint State-private undertakings or co-operative enterprises. Handicraft co-operatives were born and led to the restoration of traditional crafts. The network of State-run trade came into being and helped speed up the process of bringing rich traders into co-operation with the State Trade and turning middle businessmen into its sale agents. It also formed small traders into trading co-operatives and shops for handicraft production.

Together with economic transformation, Hanoi started an industrialisation program which quickly got off the ground, thanks to important assistance from the socialist countries. A landmark, and also a symbol of this historic effort, was the birth in 1957 of the Hanoi Engineering Plant, at present renamed the Machine-tool Plant No. 1, built with Soviet aid. From then on Vietnam was rid of colonial dependence with regard to the tools necessary for industrial production. Industrial enterprises quickly developed. When the Americans started their air war of destruction against North Vietnam, factories were evacuated to secure zones, where they made great contributions to the war of resistance against US aggression. Hanoi won a veritable Dien Bien Phu victory in the air by shooting down many US B.52 strategic bombers during their Christmas 1972 raids. By 1974, one year before the liberation of South Vietnam, Hanoi already boasted 181 industrial enterprises with 100,000 workers covering various key branches such as mechanical engineering, internal-combustion engines, electric motors, chemicals, etc., not to mention light industry.

In the suburban districts agricultural production had completely changed. Land reform had abolished the centuries-old exploitation of tenants by land-owners. Agricultural co-operatives set up by the working peasantry had evolved to a higher level and made possible the restructuring of the land, the building of a system of irrigation works, the use of new strains of rice, the application of new farming techniques, intensive farming and the rotation of crops, initial mechanization of soil preparation... Many State farms, tractor stations, pumping stations, breeding stations for plants, domestic animals, poultry and fish, etc., had been built and were bringing into full play the role of the socialist State in the development of agricultural co-operation in both crop cultivation and animal breeding. The suburban countryside, freed of the ever-present threat of famine and state of utter poverty caused by colonial rule, had been re-organized into a green belt supplying food and vegetables to the city.

Fundamental changes had also been recorded in the cultural and social fields. Illiteracy, which had kept fifty per cent of the city population in ignorance during the French occupation, had been eliminated. The general education system left behind by the occupation forces and relying mainly on private schools had been transformed and developed. It now attracted all school-age children and helped popularize basic general education. Thousands of secondary general education diplomas were granted every year. The network of kindergartens continually broadened in both city wards and suburban communes. Higher education and secondary vocational education underwent steady development. Complementary education was helping members of the working people raise their cultural standards to university level. Health care which used to be private business, had been reorganized into a wide public network run by the State. It comprised polyclinics and specialized hospitals, health stations and cadres' teams in charge of hygiene and disease prevention, maternity homes, ward clinics, and health-care and maternity facilities at the grassroots. Thanks to a system of cultural houses, clubs, libraries, reading-rooms, cinemas and open-air cinemas, theatres, culture was penetrating into the masses. More than ten scientific research institutes had been set up

and together with them an increasing number of scientists sprung from the working people had been trained.

So, Hanoi has been re-structured. Since South Vietnam's liberation it has been supplying much experience for the re-structuring of former Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City. We can properly assess the efforts, and achievements of the Hanoi people since the 10th of October 1954 only by looking back at their starting point: a parasitic consumers' city, and the background of their progress: continual wars. The few lulls enjoyed by the Hanoi population during those years were only periods of relative peace.

So, Hanoi together with the whole nation had defeated the French and then the American imperialists. However, after 30 years of continual wars, the peace that its people had longed for did not yet come. The "Nanqiao" campaign\* was started by the Beijing rulers among the Hoa community living in its districts and wards. Chinese experts were withdrawn on orders from Beijing, leaving behind unfinished projects inside and outside the city. The Thang Long bridge which was to span the Red River was one of them. Hanoi stood ready to fight the Chinese aggressors in 1979, if they should go beyond the border provinces and repeat the assaults on Thang Long (ancient name for Hanoi) they had made in the past.

Still bearing the scars of two wars for national independence, Hanoi is forced, in the face of the new threat of war from China, to reserve an important part of its manpower and budget for national defence and security. It can do but little in the field of urban improvement, and upgrading living conditions, housing, transport, public entertainment... The population know that the city's streets are still narrow, its roadways still inadequately paved; that many of its houses are old and decrepit, that there is little comfort and space to live in, that electricity and running-water supply leaves much to be desired, that cinemas and stadiums do not yet meet their cultural needs, that there is a shortage of goods in State-run stores. But they fully understand the roots of the matter. There are objective causes, namely the war and the country's under-development, and there are also subjective causes, namely our lack of experience in the management of the economy and society.

Hanoi is taking the lead in correcting the errors pointed out by the 5th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam. It is abolishing the subsidy-based system and putting into practice the contractual system in agricultural and industrial production. It is encouraging the family economy, innovations and inventions by intellectuals and technicians and is trying to overcome negative phenomena in everyday life. For several months now Hanoi has been conducting a persevering drive aimed at boosting production, strengthening labour discipline and social order, as a premise for more vigorous strides forward. Hanoi also knows how to value and bring into play both the fine traditions handed

(Continued on page 12)

\* So-called "Protests against victimization of Chinese residents" and subsequent Beijing-instigated exodus of Hoa people.

# NEW SUCCESSES PROVE THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO OVERCOME PRESENT DIFFICULTIES

(Speech by To Huu, member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Vietnam and Vice Chairman of the Council of Ministers, at the ceremony marking National Day, 2-9-1982)

To Huu reviewed the results obtained in the economic and cultural fields in the past twelve months and pointed to the remaining problems.

## Agriculture

The good rice harvest of autumn 1981 and that of winter-spring 1982—the best so far—open up prospects for the solution of the food problem.

Food and industrial crops—soya, groundnuts, sugar cane, tobacco, tea, jute, rush, mulberry, coconut, rubber...—have developed fairly well. However, the area under subsidiary food crops has declined (maize, potato, cassava). Progress has been recorded in animal husbandry: oxen, buffaloes, pigs and poultry.

For the first time we have been able to cover our own needs in food to a large extent without having to import large quantities of food.

One may conclude from these facts that agriculture will strongly develop in the coming years if the various echelons of the administration and branches of activity concentrate their efforts on this sector of prime importance; if a strong boost is given to agricultural collectivization in the South and the new relations of production are consolidated and perfected throughout the country; if management and economic policies are improved; and if the material and technical bases are strengthened, first of all in the preferential zones.

## Aquatic Products

In the first half of this year, output has increased by 27% compared with the same period last year thanks to changes made in the mechanisms of management and better supply of fuel and equipment. Shrimp fishing and breeding develop throughout the country.

## Forestry

A strong fillip has been given to afforestation. However, much remains to be done in forest protection and management. In the absence of adequate policies, the population is not encouraged to take part in forestry work.

## Industry

In the first half of 1982 production has increased by 20% compared with the same period in 1981 as a result of improved management and reorganization of production.

Electricity: up 6% from planned target;

Coal: fulfilment of planned target;

Engineering and metallurgy: planned targets overfulfilled for production of tractors, pumps, electrical motors, Diesel engines, rolled steel, auto parts, trailers and barges;

Cement: up 27%;

Phosphate fertilizer: target overfulfilled;

Chemicals: overall progress;

Cotton and silk fabrics: up 41%;

Paper: up 28% (writing paper: up 77%);

Ceramics: up 60%;

Current items: up 59%;

Processed food products: up 12%;

Cigarettes: production almost doubled.

Encouraging results have been achieved in small industry and handicrafts especially in Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi and Da Nang, thanks to rational employment of manpower and materials, especially local materials.

Various forms of co-operation and integration between State undertakings, co-operatives, and craftsmen's families under the stewardship of the State sector have operated with a profit. This is a good orientation.

## Capital Construction

Concentration of investment and renovation of management have led to the timely completion of priority projects: the Hoa Binh hydropower project, the Pha Lai thermo-power plant, the oil and gas undertaking in Vung Tau, the Lam Thao phosphate fertilizer plant expansion, the Dau Tieng water control project, the cement works in Bim Son, Hoang Thach and Ha Tien, the coal mines at Cao Son, Mong Duong, Mao Khe, Vang Danh, the textile mills in Nha Trang, Hanoi and Vinh...

Many localities, acting upon the slogan "Parallel efforts by the State and the people", have been able to build schools, kindergartens, hospitals, roads and bridges...

## Transport and Communications

In the first half of 1982, progress has been recorded. At the port of Hai Phong, the volume of imports handled has increased 1.5 times.

However, much remains to be done to improve management and heighten the sense of responsibility and discipline, whose inadequacy has made transport and communications a weak link in the national economy.

### **Distribution and Circulation of Goods**

The State has collected 10% more food grain than last year. Deliveries and sales by the peasants of food and other farms products have been up to the mark. Good progress has also been noted in the delivery of industrial products to the State.

However, the market is still badly managed and prices continue to fluctuate. The State and co-operative sectors of trade are slow to develop. Workers and employees do not receive their food rations in time and in the required amounts. Speculation and contraband are rampant. All this results in great difficulties in the people's life.

The distribution and circulation of goods still retains top priority.

### **Import and Export**

Exports are up 50% in the first half of the year compared with 1981.

Farm products: up 79%

Marine products: up 48%

Forest products: up 200%.

The rate of increase has been fairly important for certain high-value products such as rubber, tea, coffee, tin and timber.

Much effort is still called for and it is to be hoped that the new policies aimed at encouraging export will bear fruit.

### **Socialist Transformation of Relations of Production and Their Consolidation**

In the North farming co-operatives have been consolidated thanks to the application of the contractual system. Most peasants in the coastal provinces of the Centre and in the Central Highlands

have joined co-operatives and production collectives. In Nam Bo (formerly Cochinchina) the accelerated readjustment of cultivated land among the peasantry and the contractual system have both contributed to the consolidation and development of production collectives. However, in industry (in the South) and trade (throughout the country) socialist transformation has slackened more or less. So, in the South where capitalist traders have lingered on, they have indulged in activities which disturb the market while small traders proliferate in the whole country. In the period ahead, we must pay great attention to the socialist transformation of private industry and trade, an important question.

### **Education, Science, Culture, the Arts, Public Health, Social Welfare**

There has been progress in those fields. Science and technique are ever more closely bound to production and life. New talent has appeared in literature and art, and artistic activity develops at the grassroots. The health services have made great efforts to promote traditional medicine and turn to account local medicinal substances. Physical training and sports are becoming a mass movement. Social welfare work goes ever deeper: it has been carried out among war invalids, the families of revolutionary martyrs, physically-handicapped people, and people victimized by the former social regimes.

To Huu concluded:

A survey of the past twelve months with the progress and successes recorded allows us to assert that in the very difficult objective situation at present, it is possible to overcome those difficulties gradually, raise labour productivity, and achieve more successes for socialism if one knows how to concretize the Party policies through judicious plans and regulations, promote the spirit of self-reliance, develop the creative potentials of manual and intellectual workers, and harmonize the converging interests of the State, the collectives, and the workers,

and those of the central administration, the local administrations, and the grassroots.

To Huu added:

Over the past year, as we began to improve management by progressively doing away with the constraints of bureaucratic and subsidy-based management and by stimulating the spirit of initiative of the grassroots units, localities, and branches in planning and financial management, we have brought about a revival of dynamism among collectives and individual workers as well as a greater sense of responsibility. Measures have been adopted to encourage production: contractual system in agriculture, piece-rate in industry, bonuses, adequate policies for import-export and for science and technique, rewards to inventions and discoveries, etc. Those moral and material incentives have given a strong boost to the masses and a powerful impulse to socialist emulation throughout the country.

Then To Huu outlined the objectives pursued both in the immediate future and in the whole of the 1980's in the economic and social fields:

1. To meet the most pressing and essential needs of the people, gradually stabilize then raise their material and cultural living standards; first of all, solve the food problem and better provide for their needs in clothing, study, medicine, housing, travel and transport, etc.

2. To continue to build the material and technical bases of socialism, mainly aiming at the development of agriculture and the production of consumer goods and export commodities, while supplying better equipment to other economic branches and preparing for new steps forward in heavy industry in the next stage.

3. To complete socialist transformation in the southern provinces and perfect the socialist relations of production throughout the country.

4. To meet the demands of national defence and security.

# ENCOURAGING THE FAMILY economy

The family is not only a social cell but also an economic organisation, a producer and consumer unit. In countries where the economy remains one of small-scale production with an autarkical character, the family economy is first of all a production unit, production overshadowing consumption.

In the report on the orientation and tasks of the Five-Year Plan (1981—1985) at the 5th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the policy vis-à-vis the family economy is defined as follows: "It is necessary to guide and assist the family economy in order to ensure that it actually forms a component part of the socialist economy."

The necessity to develop the family economy is beyond question. While production of the State farms and agricultural co-operatives is aimed at meeting the basic demands in food grain and other staple foods of society, the peasants' family economy produces the other necessities, especially animal products, to supplement the social economy. Small industries and handicrafts are mainly conducted in factories and co-operatives but it will be more economical if part of the manufacturing process can be entrusted to the family economy.

To develop the family economy will make it possible to make the most of the land and manpower available and produce more wealth for society, and also to save the State a lot of expense. In the countries of the socialist community, the family economy accounts for 30—50% of the annual gross agricultural out-

put, consisting mainly of potatoes, vegetables, fruit, meat, eggs and milk. In Vietnam, the family economy still accounts for around 50—60% of the income of the members of agricultural co-operatives and 10—20% of the income of a sizable proportion of workers' and public employees' families.

In many localities, pig raising can be developed chiefly through private efforts by individual families. In North Vietnam, members of agricultural co-operatives usually tend a small vegetable plot close to their houses, raises one or more pigs and practise some sideline occupations. In many instances, the income from the family economy outstrips that from the co-operative sector.

The family economy is very diversified, but in the countryside it is essentially a garden economy. Depending on local conditions a family may grow vegetables, subsidiary food crops or mulberry, raise silkworms, grow cotton, timber trees, medicinal plants or bamboo and rattan as raw materials for the manufacture of art and craft products for export. In addition, it usually has a pond dug close to the house. Long experience has taught people how to make the most of such a pond: rearing fish, raising on the pond surface duckweed, which is an important supplement to the pig feed, planting taro and banana trees on the edges of the pond and aromatic herbs beneath the banana trees, trellising gourds over the pond surface... Where space permits a brick kiln may be built or some crude apparatus set up for the production of handicraft articles for export.

In many places, the family economy is combined with the co-operative economy. In stock-breeding for instance, the co-operative sector is responsible for the supply of breeders, fodder and veterinary care, while the families raise the pigs on a contractual basis. This contract system can also be applied in land reclamation, afforestation and in the protection of the forest property of the co-ops or State farms.

The family economy can be developed not only in the countryside but also in the towns. In Ho Chi Minh City, Da Lat and Hue, many families practise gardening. In Hue for instance, private families own around 400 hectares of gardens. In some cases, a garden may bring an annual income of 4,000—5,000 dong to a family.

In the towns the family economy chiefly consists of cottage industries and handicrafts. Individual families may be employed in manufacturing parts of semi-finished products for co-operatives or factories. They may also make a complete simple product. In fact, a wide range of jobs in such areas as textile, clothes making, small engineering, consumer goods, plastic goods, packing materials... may be given to families. As has been demonstrated in many industrialised countries, this form of organisation has proved very economical in terms of State investments as well as floor space without affecting the quality of goods in any way.

Gone are the days when some people held that small-scale production by individual families was at cross purposes with socialist large-scale production and that it represented a danger to the socialist relations of production. This view is indeed a misconception of the nature of the family economy. Socialism does not rule out the family economy; it only abolishes the exploitation of labour. We welcome all forms of the family economy which do not involve the hiring of labour.

(Continued on page 7)

Although it was the midst of summer I gave up the inviting beach at Do Son, and made a beeline for Dang Hai, a commune some 20 kilometres from Haiphong which was making headlines for leading the country's communes in the amount of savings deposited at the bank by its people.

According to the papers, Haiphong was making a lot of money selling flowers, most of them grown by Dang Hai, which was thus likened to Nhat Tan, the biggest flower-producing commune on the outskirts of Hanoi.

"We're Nhat Tan's chief supplier of gladiolus bulbs," said Bui Ngoc Thanh, secretary of the communal Party Committee, not without pride.

Horticulture has long been practised at Dang Hai. During the French occupation, however, the only customers were foreigners — the French community in Haiphong and foreign ships' crews.

Following the return of peace in 1954, gardeners began to export their produce, and Dang Hai became one of the chief suppliers to the Vietnam Flowers Export Company.

Thanh said that flowers from Vietnam sold like hot cakes abroad, because they always appeared in European flower shops in winter when flowers are scarce and hard to come by. Flowers from Dang Hai, he recalled with obvious pride, had contributed to decorating the meeting-hall of the 26th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in Moscow.

To become a successful flower producer Dang Hai has made great efforts, especially in management and in the use of its meagre area. The first step was to de-alumnize the soil by treating it with lime, which, gardeners know

only too well, could do great harm to flowers if not accompanied by the proper amounts of other fertilizers. The second problem was how to make use of the land in the most rational way, since per head area of cultivable land is only 288 square metres, less than the per capita average of 720 sq.m. available in the Red River delta as a whole.

of the Lunar New Year. For gladioli and gerberas gardeners have different timetables. Generally speaking, a plot may be used for five or six successive crops in a year (in the collective sector the main crops are rice, cucumber, beans, cabbage and kohlrabi).

Pigs are another source of income, and every hectare of

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## WEALTH FROM ACID SOIL

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In fact, visitors can see that land here is used to the full. With the exception of one main lane, pathways are just wide enough for people to walk in Indian file. And in place of the thick hedges commonly seen in other places, only thin bamboo fences separate one house from another.

There is no room left for wild vegetation and space is used with great economy. Each plant is grown at the proper place and time. Wedged in between the forty areca-palms in Thanh's garden are thirty-nine lemon trees. Jujube trees are trimmed in spring to allow vegetables to grow around them.

Most gardeners grow tube roses, which do not require great care and are in demand all the year round for ancestral worship. Around November, dahlias are sown, to be sold at the approach

garden can net around 200,000 dong a year for vegetables, flowers and pork. Productivity in private pig-raising is particularly high, and each hectare of land can be made to provide feed for 40 pigs, each weighing around 70 kilograms at the time they're sold.

I asked Thanh how the peasants managed to keep so many animals, and was told that the feed problem had been solved satisfactorily thanks to the system of contracts signed with the State: the latter buys up farm produce and supplies food grain and animal feed.

People know that without assistance from the co-operative and State economic sectors, they would not be able to make ends meet, let alone put money in savings accounts. By the end of last June, their accounts had totalled

2,500,000 *dong*, the biggest amount ever put aside by a single commune. So, private enterprise is never allowed to get in the way of collective production.

The commune has accumulated more wealth as each family earns more money. Gross output value in 1975 was 179,000 *dong*. It increased to more than one million in 1979 and to 8,600,000 *dong* in 1981 of which more than half came from the family economy. The target for this year is 9,000,000.

Brick houses have replaced 60 per cent of the thatched huts, and an average of 50 new houses are built every year. It is expected that the last thatched hut will be dismantled before long.

Thanh spoke about his material situation which, he said, was similar to that of 40 per cent of the commune's population. He had a four-bay house with tiled floor, a three-bay outbuilding, a separate kitchen, and a pigsty. In the backyard there was a well and two cement tanks for rain water. The furniture was of good quality, and the principal room was graced with a refrigerator, a stereo tape-recorder, and a wall-clock.

Thanh said great efforts were being made to improve the cultural life. A cultural house was under construction. The cost, estimated at more than one million *dong*, was split between public and private funds. The house will comprise a recreation room, a reading room, and a film-projection hall. The reading room may also be lent to people for wedding parties.

Thanh also said that an area of about 100 square metres had been marked off to build a rest-home for old people without support,

and that paper, pens and other school equipment were supplied free to children in the first eight years of general education.

Walking around in the commune, I was shown a neat row of one-storey houses, the communal crèche. The place, to my surprise, looked rather deserted. Thanh said that while the crèche had been designed for about 150-200 children, only 50 were being cared for there. "That's not because we have been particularly successful in conducting family planning," Thanh explained. "It was a mistake in initial conception. Instead of one big crèche there should have been many smaller ones scattered about the commune. Mothers don't like to have a long way to go to bring or fetch their children, especially when flowers are requiring constant care."

"Perhaps it was because of the low pay to the nurses and their consequent inadequate work," I ventured.

"No," Thanh protested. "They're paid as much as the best workers in the fields. Moreover, in addition to the Sundays they have two more days off each month, on the first and fifteenth of the lunar month, to go and sell flowers from their private gardens. For their families grow flowers, like all others. In conclusion, I may say that on the whole we've done quite well. We staked our hopes on flowers and we won. For the crèche, as I said, it was simply a faulty design. We'll correct it in time. The point is that it will serve as a lesson, when it comes to planning other matters."

After PHAN QUANG

## ENCOURAGING...

(Continued from page 5)

As a component of the socialist economy, the family economy must be encouraged. The Government should issue detailed policies with regard to the family economy. The existing policies should be formulated in a more systematic manner. For instance:

— In the rural development plan each family must be allocated a plot for gardening compatible with the local conditions.

— Individual families should be given assistance to develop their economies through loans, supply of seeds, breeders, and materials, and technical guidance.

— The products of the family economy which are mainly a supplement to the family income and livelihood should be tax exempted.

If the Government purchases these products, the price should be mutually agreed upon and the sale subjected to only light taxation. To encourage the family economy does not mean in any way to make light of the State economy or collective economy. On the contrary, greater efforts should be made to overcome the present weaknesses in the management of the State and collective economic sectors so that everyone would become more attached to the interests of their factories, offices, and co-operatives, thus enabling the income from the State and collective economies to grow more and more compared with that from the family economy.

To give a strong boost to the State and collective economies while encouraging the development of the family economy is the best way to harmonize the relationships between the individual, the family, and society in the system of socialist collective mastery.

TRUONG SON

Hanoi, capital of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, has an history of nearly one thousand years. It has been successively called Thang Long (City of the Rising Dragon), Dong Do (Eastern Capital), then Hanoi (City on This Side of the River). The city has witnessed many tribulations as well as glories of the Vietnamese people. Perhaps the first ruler who chose this area of land—at that time a small district on the bank of the Red River—to build his capital was Ly Bon, the national hero who led an uprising against the Chinese occupiers and set up the first (but alas, short-lived) dynasty ruling over independent Vietnam, at that time called Van Xuan (544—603). The first citadel built of earth and timber made its appearance during that period.

In the Neolithic and Bronze Ages (about 4,000 years ago) the Viet people lived in the upland region around present-day Viet Tri town (at the junction of the Red River and Lo river). By the first century A.D. however they had moved to the confluence of the Hoang river—a tributary of the Red River—and Thien Duc river. The latter was later widened and deepened to become the present Duong river. There King An Duong built his Co Loa citadel (257—179 B.C.). In A.D. 1010, when Ly Cong Uan, founder of the Ly dynasty (1009—1226) moved his capital from the limestone mountains of Hoa Lu (Ninh Binh) back to the citadel built by Ly Bon, he was in fact continuing his ancestors' drive towards the delta, an enterprise which had begun at the very time of the founding of the country.

According to legend, when the royal boat arrived at the foot of the citadel, the king saw a dragon rising in the sky, and so he decided to call his capital Thang Long (Rising Dragon). This reflected the spirit of sovereignty of the Vietnamese king and his determina-

tion to erase the names given this area by the former Chinese administrators, such as Tong Binh and An nam La thanh; this also expressed the will of the king to establish himself in the central part of the country from which his forces would fan out like a dragon rising amidst the clouds<sup>1</sup>.

The king made the gods of the To Lich river and Long Do mountain the guardian spirits of the new capital, these two deities having more than once sown panic among the former Chinese occupiers by their supernatural actions. Legend has it that during the construction of the citadel, the earth walls repeatedly collapsed as soon as they were raised. After offerings were made at the Long Do temple, the king saw a white horse come out of the shrine, make a round run from east to west and back then return inside the temple and disappear. Thereupon, he ordered that the walls be built on the perimeter traced by the footprints of the horse. This time no mishap happened. From then on, the Long Do temple has also been called Bach Ma (white horse) temple. Rebuilt many times it is still to be seen in Hang Buom Street in Hanoi. The white horse symbolizes the sun and the story may bear some relation to the ancient Viet cult of the sun<sup>2</sup>.

The dykes raised along the Red River protected Thang Long from floods and also served as its boundaries. This system of dykes was called La Thanh or "Net-like ramparts". It ran along the right bank of the Red River in the east, along the West Lake in the north and then along the left bank of the To Lich river. Built in the 8th

century, enlarged in the 9th, it remained unchanged until the 18th. According to a document, it was then a not very high earth rampart, topped by a small wall and a carriageable road and protected by a bamboo hedge and a deep moat bristling with spikes<sup>3</sup>. The gates of La Thanh, called "cửa ô", were built of wood. They were shut at dusk and guarded by soldiers night and day. The "cửa ô" bore each a name. They totalled 16 in the 16th century and 8 in the 18th century. At present there remain only the vestiges of six. Close to each gate there was a market place where the inhabitants of surrounding villages met those living inside the ramparts whom they called "kẻ chợ" (townspeople). Dyke maintenance, particularly with regard to the portion along the Red River (called Co Xa dyke), was the duty of all inhabitants of the capital including students of the Quoc Hoc school who were exempted from all other corvées<sup>4</sup>.

The Hoang Thanh (Royal Citadel) lying in the centre of the capital city was also called Long Thanh (Dragon Citadel) under the Ly dynasty (11th—12th centuries) and Long Phuong Thanh (Dragon and Phoenix Citadel) under the Tran dynasty (13th—14th centuries). This rectangular structure was built of bricks and surrounded on three sides by a moat. On the northern side it was bounded by the To Lich river where boats could navigate. In the Hoang Thanh were the royal palaces and administrative buildings. Inside Hoang Thanh was the Cam Thanh (Forbidden Citadel) where lived the king, the queen, and the royal concubines. As its name implied,

## FROM THE CITY OF TO THE CITY ON THE

# THE RISING DRAGON

## S SIDE OF THE RIVER

nobody was allowed inside. Under the Ly dynasty, however, the heir to the throne did not live in Hoang Thanh but outside in order to be in closer contact with the people. In the early days, Cam Thanh was surrounded by an earth wall on its 1.5 kilometre perimeter. In 1029, the wall was enlarged and built of bricks. Cam Thanh had four sides, each with an entrance composed of three gates, except for the south, the main side, which had five gates.

Passing through the southern entrance was a large road for the mandarins to come and have their audiences with the king. It was wide enough for horses and elephants. On the roadsides, heaps of grass cut by prisoners lay ready to feed these animals, hence its name Hang Co (Grass Road) which has been preserved to this day. There now stands the main railway station in Hanoi (Ga Hang Co). The road on the eastern side led to Dong Bo Dau which was the major port on the Red River. On both sides of this road, sophora trees were planted to give shade, hence its name Hoe Nhai (sophora) Road. It was at Dong Bo Dau that trading junks unloaded their goods, making this area the most bustling quarter of the capital. In the west ran a road lined with willow trees, hence its name of Lieu Giai (Willow) Road. The northern side looked out on the West Lake, where the king and his mandarins used to go boating. From the 10th to the 13th century Hoang Thanh underwent no great change, but at the end of the 15th century, it was enlarged on the southern and eastern sides by the Le dynasty and in 1514 was

expanded to twice its size in the Le — Tran period.

Outside Hoang Thanh were the residential quarters of the mandarins and common people. They formed the Kinh Thanh (Capital City). In the reigns of the Ly and Tran dynasties, the high-ranking mandarins lived in their estates and came to the capital only when called by the king, hence the town quarters were not very large. However, under the Le dynasty, the mandarins lived in the capital, mostly south of Hoang Thanh. Early in the 17th century, following the decadence of the Le, power fell into the hands of the Trinh lords who lived outside the royal citadel in 52 palaces (all looking east) built in a large area between Lake Ta Vong (another name of Lake Hoan Kiem) and Lake Huu Vong (now the quarter around Hang Chuoi Street). Since then the area around Lake Ta Vong became the central part of the capital. It was there that the Trinh lords reviewed their naval forces, hence the name of Ho Thuy Quan (Lake of the Navy) given to this lake. It was then much larger than it is now and communicated with the Red River through a canal, spanned by a wooden bridge, hence the name given to a street in the area: Pho Cau Go (Wooden Bridge Street).

One does not know when it was named Ho Hoan Kiem (Lake of the Restored Sword), a name related to King Le Loi. According to legend, when Le Loi rose up against the Minh invaders, a deity gave him a sword with which to fight and save the country. After the occupiers had been driven out and peace restored, Le Loi one day

made a pleasure trip on the lake. Seeing a golden tortoise coming to the surface of the water he drew his sword and pointed it at the animal. Whereupon the latter snatched the weapon from his hands, and disappeared under water. Thus the sword was returned to the gods after the hero had fulfilled his duty to his country, hence the name of Lake of the Restored Sword.

Under the Ly and Tran dynasties, Buddhism was regarded as a State religion, and in the capital pagodas ranked second in importance only to the palaces. The most famous was Dien Huu pagoda, or Chua Mot Cot (One-Pillar Pagoda). Located near the western gate it was built in 1049 and repaired in 1105. It has the shape of a lotus flower resting on a stone pillar in the middle of a pond. Chan Giao was a large pagoda built inside the Hoang Thanh in 1179. On the bank of Lake Luc Thuy stood Bao Thien pagoda and its 12-storeyed tower (the upper storeys were cast in bronze). But the most ancient structure was the Tran Quoc pagoda, originally built on the bank of the Red River then moved to an islet in the West Lake in the 17th century. It was a monastery for the highest-ranking bonzes at the Court. We must also mention temples dedicated to national heroes and heroines such as the Trung sisters, Phung Hung, and Ly Thuong Kiet, or to such genii as Tan Vien and Tran Vo. The Dong Co (Bronze Drum) temple built in 1028, was one of the most famous temples of the country. Every year, on the 4th day of the 4th month of the lunar calendar, the king and mandarins went to this temple to swear loyalty and purity. This was one of the major festivals held in the capital and was called Hoi The Dong Co (Oath-taking Festival at Dong Co).

After Buddhism, Confucianism was already held in high esteem. In 1070, the Van Mieu (Temple

of Literature) was built on a site south of Hoang Thanh and dedicated to Confucius and the other founders of Confucianism. It was there that princes and young nobles came to study, valuable books were kept and wooden printing blocks stored. In 1076, Quoc Tu Giam, a school reserved for mandarins' sons, was built close by. In 1253, the Tran dynasty changed its name to Quoc Hoc Vien (National Institute) where the best students in the country were received. It thus became the first university of Vietnam. Under the Le dynasty, with Confucianism becoming the state doctrine, Van Mieu was enlarged with the Thai Hoc auditorium and an hostel for 300 students. Starting in 1484, stone stelae were erected on both sides of the temple. They bore the names of the topmost laureates of the literary competitions. Given the number of such competitions organized between 1442 and 1787, there should be 117 stelae, but there now remain only 82. It is not known whether the others were lost or destroyed or had been erected at all.

Apart from a number of brick and stone towers, Vietnamese architecture used wood as the principal building material. That is the reason why the buildings did not last long. Nevertheless, thanks to documents preserved to this day, we may have some idea of the main characteristics of our architecture along the centuries. Generally speaking, this architecture set little store by size and majesty, but paid attention to gracefulness and harmony with the environment. Some art workers hold that Vietnamese architecture in the 11th and 12th centuries skilfully combined Indian with Chinese architecture. One characteristic of Indian architecture was to have the buildings converge on a point symbolizing the sacred mountain Meru. This is seen in the disposition of the Hoang Thanh and some pagodas. On the other hand, each group of buildings was given a main orientation which, from the 15th century onward, followed a longitudinal axis, with symmetrical structures on both sides of a

median line, the *Shandao* of Chinese architecture. A foreigner who visited Thang Long in 1680 had the following remarks: "What was left of the triple walls of the old citadel and palace gave me an idea of what they had been at the height of their splendour. The palace alone occupied an area with a perimeter of six or seven miles. The marble-paved yards, the doors and the ruins of the apartments testified to its former magnificence and caused people to regret the destruction of one of the most beautiful buildings in Asia."

Thang Long was a political centre and the seat of the royal administration. The commoners who lived inside the citadel were the inhabitants of old villages which had existed there since long, and from which they were evicted whenever the Court needed land for new constructions. Thus the people of An Xa village were moved to an area on the banks of the Red River where they made a living from sericulture and fishing and which was later called Co Xa ward, the most ancient of the capital. Later when more enlargement was necessary, particularly under the Le dynasty, more people were displaced and taken to far-away localities. Conversely, should the population living inside the citadel grow too thin, the Court would call on people of other regions to come and clear the waste land in the capital. Under the reign of Ly Thai Tong (1028 — 1054), people from Le Mat village, in present-day Gia Lam ward (on the left bank of the Red River), were called in to till the land west of the capital city, where they set up the Thap Tam Trai, a group of Thirteen Farms. Even now they keep the custom of returning each year to their native village to participate in celebrations in honour of their ancestors. The main economic activity in the capital remained agriculture. A Ly king sent people to Dai Yen to grow medicinal plants. To this day many people in this locality have made a living from this occupation. In 1362 a Tran king had the Toan Vien quarter set up north of the capital

where people specialized in the growing of garlic and other aromatic herbs.

The first handicraft shops in the capital were undoubtedly those working for the Court. Employing artisans who were forced to work there for a certain time they turned out goods for use by the king and mandarins. Besides, the Court allowed old women servants who had retired from service to run private workshops making brocades (11th century) fans (14th century), silk fabrics (17th century). These were to develop into guilds. The Court also ordered artisans living in various regions to come to the capital to work for the State, just as it had done with peasants. The copper founders of the Ngu Xa guild established on the bank of the West Lake hailed from five villages in De Cau (now Ha Bac). They were forcibly recruited to work in the mint, in the 18th century. The silversmiths from five villages in De Cau (now Silver Street) since the 15th century had come from Chau Khe, Hai Hung province. Other artisans came to the capital of their own free will to find outlets for their products and formed guilds according to their villages of origin, or joined existing guilds. They continued their traditional techniques and kept in close contact with their native villages while creating new communities in the city. For instance, Hang Dao guild (now Silk Street) was founded by dyers from Dan Loan (Hai Hung) and Hang Tien by turners from Nhi Khe village (Ha Son Binh province). From Ha Son Binh province also came the embroiderers of Quat Dong village, the mother-of-pearl inlayers of Chuyen Nghiep, the lacquerers of Ha Vi village.

With the development of commerce, goods were brought to the capital from all corners of the country in greater and greater quantities. Markets took shape and became the main centres of economic activities. The first markets were set up near the four gates of the citadel: Cua Dong market in the east (now Hang Buom Street), Cua Tay market in the

west (now Ngoc Ha market), Cua Nam market in the south (in Cua Nam ward) and Cua Bac market in the north (now Cua Bac Street). It was at those market-places that royal edicts were proclaimed, prisoners executed, and festivals organized. With the development of commercial activities, other markets were set up. By the 18th century there were eight principal markets: Cua Dong, Cua Nam, Huyen, Dinh Ngang, Ba Da, Van Cu, Bac Cu and Ong Nuoc. Prior to the 15th century, foreign traders had been allowed to reside in the capital. They came from China, Champa, Java, and Siam. But in the 16th and 17th centuries restrictive measures were taken by the Court. Foreigners were no longer authorized to live in the capital. Even the Chinese who enjoyed special privileges were concentrated in certain quarters. In 1746 foreign traders were even forbidden to spend the night in Thang Long. That is why commercial activities in the capital failed to develop. Foreign trade was completely in the hands of the feudal State. Nevertheless because of continued relations with Westerners, the quantity of goods supplied to Thang Long kept on increasing, particularly at river ports. According to a foreign missionary "the number of boats is so huge that it is difficult to approach the river banks. Our rivers and most bustling ports, even Venice with all its gondolas and boats, cannot give an idea of the tremendous movement and activity of the riparian population of Ke Cho".<sup>6</sup> The commercial quarter of the capital was the area lying between the eastern wall of the citadel and the Red River bank, or the present old quarter of Hanoi. Here the *phuong* (guild) were located in fenced-off squares with two gates which were shut at night. As reported by a foreign visitor "the streets of Ke Cho (Hanoi) are wide and beautiful, partly paved with bricks, the lanes left unpaved being destined for the passage of royal carriages, horses, elephants, and other domestic animals".<sup>7</sup>

Thang Long underwent great changes due not only to population movements but also to the fact that in less than nine centuries it was the scene of fierce battles which decided the fate of the nation. Particularly worthy of note were the wars of resistance to the three invasions by the armies of the Chinese Yuan dynasty in the 13th century, to the occupation by the Chinese Ming forces in the 15th century, and to the aggression by the Chinese Qing forces in the 18th century. In 1397 to cope with a Chinese invasion the Ho kings moved their capital to Thanh Hoa, 200 kilometres south of Thang Long, and called it Tay Do (Western Capital) while Thang Long was renamed Dong Do (Eastern Capital). But after the liberation war the Le kings again made Thang Long their capital and in 1430 renamed it Dong Kinh (perhaps this misled the Western missionaries and traders into calling the whole of the Red River delta Tonkin). However, the name Thang Long remained in current use until the 19th century. When the first Nguyen king mounted the throne, he made Hue his capital and Thang Long was only the chief-town of Bac Ha, the North. In 1805, he ordered its citadel demolished and a smaller one built in its place on the model of Vauban fortifications. In 1812 an hexagonal flag-tower 60 metres high was erected south of the citadel. In 1831 the surrounding districts were merged into Thang Long to form the province of Hanoi (literally "the province on this side of the river"), hence the name of the present-day capital of Vietnam. Most houses in present-day Hanoi were built in the days of the Nguyen dynasty, and its size and splendour as a royal capital was gone. In 1802 the Van Mieu was restored. In 1842, the Bao An pagoda was rebuilt on a large area. Looking out on the Red River, and with its back against Lake Hoan Kiem, it was then the largest pagoda in Hanoi. Ngoc Son temple standing in the middle of Lake Hoan Kiem

was dedicated to Van Xuong, the god of education and literary examinations. It was rebuilt in 1865 under the guidance of Nguyen Van Sieu, a noted Hanoi scholar. Facing the Tran Ba (Break water) pavilion is the The Huc bridge (The Huc means to keep the morning light bright) at whose entrance stand two structures — the Thap But (Pen) tower, and the Dai Nghien (Inkstand) — honouring the study of letters.

At the end of the 19th century, however, Hanoi underwent yet another upheaval. The new buildings were destroyed in the war of aggression by the French colonialists. The citadel and other monuments were razed and replaced by office buildings of the colonial administration. Nevertheless, historical vestiges still remain on the edge of Lake Hoan Kiem, at the Temple of Literature, the One-Pillar Pagoda and dozens of other temples and pagodas. Although few in number, they are carefully preserved by the Hanoians as evidence of the brilliant age-old culture of their country.

#### ĐẠO HUNG

1. *Chiêu doi dô (Edict on the Transfer of the Capital) by Ly Cong Uan, 1010.*

2. *More than a thousand years before Co Loa citadel had been built by King An Duong following the footprints left by a golden tortoise. Now another citadel was built in an area delimited by the footprints of a white horse, a frequent symbol in Chinese mythology. This shows the influence of Chinese culture after one thousand years of Chinese domination.*

3. *Thuong Kinh Ky su (A trip to the Capital) by Le Huu Trac, 1781.*

4. *Tang thuong ngau luc (Notes on the Vicissitudes of This World) by Pham Dinh Ho and Nguyen An, 18th century.*

5. *A Description of the Tonkin Kingdom by S. Baron, Paris, 1752 (in French).*

6, 7. *Natural, Civil and Political History of Tonkin by J. Richard, Paris, 1778 (in French).*

# NAMES OF VIETNAM AND ITS CAPITAL IN DIFFERENT PERIODS

Name of the country	Capital	Dynasty	Period
Van Lang	Van Lang or Phong Chau (in present-day Me Linh district, suburbs of Hanoi)	The Hung Kings	Early 2nd millenium to the middle of 3rd century B.C.
Au Lac	Co Loa (now in Dong Anh district, suburbs of Hanoi)	An Duong Vuong	From the middle of 3rd century to 179 B.C.
Nam Bang	Me Linh (now in Me Linh district, suburbs of Hanoi)	Trung Vuong	(40 — 43 A.D.)
Van Xuân	Long Bien (now in Me Linh district, suburbs of Hanoi)	Early Ly Nam De	544 — 548
-id-	-id-	Trieu Viet Vuong	548 — 571
-id-	Co Loa (now in Dong Anh, suburbs of Hanoi)	Late Ly Nam De	571 — 603
(No name)	-id-	Ngo Vuong	942 — 948
Đai Co Viet	Hoa Lu (now in Ha Nam Ninh province)	Dinh	968 — 980
-id-	-id-	Early Le	981 — 1009
-id-	Thang Long (now Hanoi)	Ly	1010 — 1054
Đai Viet	-id-	Ly	1054 — 1224
Đai Viet	-id-	Tran	1225 — 1399
Đai Ngu	Tay Do (now in Vinh Loc, eastern part of Thanh Hoa province)	Ho	1400 — 1409
Đai Viet	Thang Long (or Dong Do, Dong Kinh)	Le	1428 — 1788
-id-	Phu Xuan (now Hue)	Tay Son	1786 — 1802
Nam Viet or Dai Nam	Hue	Nguyen	1803 — 1884
Democratic Republic of Vietnam	Hanoi		2 Sept. 1945 — 2 July 1976
Socialist Republic of Vietnam	Hanoi		Beginning from 2 July 1976

## OUR MONTHLY...

(Continued from page 1)

down by our ancestors — e.g. respect for knowledge and good manners — and the new traditions which have taken shape since the August Revolution: solidarity, mutual assistance, respect for the elderly and care for the children, etc. Most importantly, Hanoi is always on its guard, determined to defend national independence and sovereignty against all dark schemes hatched by Beijing in collusion with reactionary and imperialist forces.

For centuries Hanoi has been a mirror reflecting the Vietnamese nation's eventful history and life. Together with the whole nation Hanoi has vanquished all enemies in order to survive and advance. For Hanoi and for the whole nation difficulties are piling up. But the way forward has been charted. Like the entire Vietnamese people, the people of Hanoi are full of confidence in the future.

On the occasion of the anniversary of the liberation of Hanoi, Vietnam Courier will devote the bulk of this issue to our capital city in the hope of helping our readers gain a better knowledge of Hanoi and, through this city, of the Vietnamese people and their land.

20 September 1982

In old Vietnam, "Hanoi the city with thirty-six quarters held a special place with its many handicrafts and brisk trading activities. Besides its unique economic position, Hanoi was also a major cultural centre of the country, even after the feudal Court had moved its capital elsewhere. Hanoi has thus been named "the land with thousands of years of civilization" and the "courteous and refined" life style of the Hanoians has been claimed to embody the best in traditional Vietnamese culture.

### The Thirty-six Quarters of Old Hanoi

The old quarter of present-day Hanoi contains the vestiges of the "thirty-six quarters" of ancient times. It lies between the Red River on the one side, and the West Lake and the Lake of the Restored Sword on the other. In our traditional architecture, the building materials were made of wood, bamboo and bricks. They easily decay in a humid and hot tropical climate, hence no houses here have remained that are more than a couple of hundred years old. The oldest streets date from the 19th century.

Here, the streets are small and narrow, and just about a few hundreds metres, in some cases less than a hundred metres, long. Houses are crowded together and roads cross each other at short, uneven intervals. Some streets wind their way around residential blocs which were perhaps cosy clusters in the old days but now are uncomfortably pressed together. Wandering around, visitors are re-

mindful of the formerly brisk commercial activities of the capital city by the names of the streets: Hang Trong (Drum Street), Hang Gai (Hemp Street), Hang Dao (Silk Street), Hang Bac (Silver Street), Hang Duong (Sugar Street), Hang Dep (Sandal Street), Hang Mam (Fish Sauce Street), Hang Muoi (Salt Street), Hang Buom (Sail Street), Hang Bo (Basket Street), Hang Luoc (Comb Street), Hang Khoai (Sweet Potato Street), Hang

Hang Muoi, Hang Be, Hang May streets...

Now, almost all the streets have retained their old names, but the erstwhile trades are no longer carried out there. In some of them, temples and pagodas or vestiges thereof can still be seen together with vestiges of religious buildings belonging to different guilds, as well as remains of villages and hamlets, which had stood there. For instance, Hang Bong Street

## GLIMPSES OF OLD HANOI

Can (Scale Street), Hang Quat (Fan Street), Hang Chai (Bottle Street), Hang But (Brush pen Street), Hang Ca (Fish Street)...

In those places lived and worked craftsmen and traders who had come to the capital city from various localities. Quite a few houses here still show architectural features of the previous century. They are small one-storeyed structures, built of wood and roofed with fish-scale tiles. Each house is divided into successive parts separated by tiny courtyards decorated with potted plants and miniature mountain landscapes. Most of the houses are of small width and considerable length. The front end looking out on the street often has a small attic formerly used to store goods. Houses of this type are now mostly seen in Hang Mam,

still has some five temples and pagodas. The Phuc Hau temple, now bearing the house number 2, was dedicated to the memory of a man named Phuc Hau, believed to be the founder of the mirror-making craft. A stele here says that he lived in the days of the Tran dynasty (13th-14th century). The Luong Ngoc temple, now house No. 68 A, was built by villagers coming from Luong Ngoc (now part of Binh Giang district, Hai Hung province), to worship the tutelary god of their native commune. The Kim Hoi temple, now house No. 95, was dedicated to Tran Hung Dao, the national hero who defeated Chinese invaders of the Yuan dynasty in the 13th century. The Vong Tien temple, now house No. 120 B, was built to mark the place of the legendary meeting be-

tween King Le Thanh Tong (1460 — 1497) and a fairy. The Thien Tien pagoda, now house No. 120, was dedicated to Ly Thuong Kiet, the national hero who defeated Chinese Song invaders in the 11th century. In Hang Can Street, there remain two ancient temples and one pagoda; in Hang Dao Street, five pagodas and small temples; in Hang Duong Street, two temples, and one pagoda, the Dong Mon pagoda, now house No. 33 B. Here stelae stand, bearing inscriptions dated 1633, 1639, 1711 and 1816 which record the successive stages of the building of the shrine, and a bell with the inscription of the date: 1800. Those pagodas and temples are the pride of the old streets.

Although most of the old streets of Hanoi no longer retain their former trades as mentioned by their names, there are a few exceptions. Hang Ma Street, formerly engaged in making paper offerings to the gods and the dead such as flowers, articles of dress, houses, elephants, horses and even servants..., is still active making paper objects, but these are now children's toys. It does a brisk business at the approach of the Mid-Autumn Festival when large quantities of lanterns, masks, lion's heads, elephants, horses, and even scholars in effigy are sold... The street, only about eighty metres long, is then bursting with crowds of people for a fortnight, beginning from the first day of the eighth month of the lunar year. Parents come here to buy traditional toys for their young

children to decorate their traditional autumn fruit trays with. In Hang Thiec Street (Tinker's Street), most of the families living here are still engaged in making and selling tin-plate household utensils. Some families in Hang Manh (Bamboo Curtain Street) are still weaving bamboo curtains of various sizes for sale. Hang Hom (Wooden Box Street) is still selling boxes made of wood painted the traditional brown-red colour, for keeping clothes in. Cha Ca (Grilled Fish Street) had a different name, Hang Son (Paint Street), in the 19th century, when all sorts of paints were sold here. But early in the 20th century, a Doan family living in house No. 14, specialized in selling a tasty dish: fish cut in thin slices, seasoned with spices, then grilled on red-hot charcoal; it was served with rice noodles and about ten more kinds of condiments. The dish soon became very popular. Later on this family opened a *cha ca* grillroom which is still operating.

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The pagodas and temples outside the old quarter also constitute a particular feature of the city. Most of them are vestiges of Buddhism which flourished under the Ly and Tran dynasties, from the early 11th century to the late 14th century. Tran Quoc is the oldest pagoda in Hanoi. According to a stele here, it was built in the time of Kinh Ly

Nam De (544-546), on the edge of the Red River. It was then named Khai Quoc and occupied the 4th rank in the country. In 1615, the river bank was deeply eroded and the pagoda was moved to a small islet in the West Lake. In 1628, under the Le dynasty, it was renovated and renamed Tran Quoc. At the same time, a small road was built linking the islet with the bank. Later on, the pagoda underwent still more renovations and became the Buddhist centre of the capital city. Now, Tran Quoc pagoda is a renowned scenic spot of Hanoi. In summer, when lotus flowers blossom in the West Lake the pagoda looks as if it were rising from a great mass of lotus.

The smallest pagoda, and with the most original architecture, is the One-Pillar Pagoda standing in the middle of a tiny pond. It is square in shape, each side measuring only 3 metres and has a curved roof. The pagoda rests on a cylindrical stone pillar 1.2 metre in diameter, and rises about 4 metres above the pond surface. On top of the stone pillar is a wooden framework, which supports the pagoda itself. The structure looks like a lotus flower rising from the square pond which is surrounded with a brick balustrade. A flight of steps leads to the door of the pagoda on which there is a plaque saying "Lotus Dais", thus referring to a dream experienced by King Ly Thai Tong. Here is what the annals say: In a dream King Ly Thai Tong saw

himself led onto a lotus platform by Avalokitecvara, the Buddhist deity. On waking up, he consulted his court dignitaries. Some took it as a bad omen and a monk advised him to have a pagoda built on a stone pillar in the middle of a pond, in the likeness of the divine lotus platform seen by him in the dream, then have monks pray for his longevity. According to the annals the pagoda was built in 1049. Description in historical documents and ancient stelae shows that the One-Pillar Pagoda under the Ly dynasty was far bigger than it is now and its shape and structure more complex. Under the Tran dynasty, in 1249, the pagoda underwent major repairs and no longer looked the same as formerly. Later

on, other repairs took place. On September 11, 1954, before withdrawing from Hanoi, French-troops blew up the pagoda, and only the stone pillar and a few wooden beams were left. The people's administration had the pagoda restored, the work being completed in April 1955.

In the traditional society the faithful would throng to pagodas on the first and fifteenth days of the lunar month and devoutly pray in a haze of incense smoke. Today only old people would go, but pagodas continue to be well kept and are crowded on festive days.

Now the most respected and frequented cultural monument in Hanoi is the Temple of Literature

built in 1070 in Ly Thanh Tong's reign and dedicated to Confucius. Six years later King Ly Nhan Tong had a National School erected besides it for the education of princes and young nobles. Later selected students born of the people were also admitted. This was the first university of Vietnam. The school was razed by French troops who again seized the city in 1947 and there now remains only the Temple of Literature. It is here that on the occasion of the Lunar New Year, following a fine tradition, recitals of poetry both classical and modern — are held.

### Flowers and Bonsai Trees

Hanoians are very fond of flowers and ornamental plants. In Spring peach blossoms rank first. Without exhaling any fragrance they are none the less appreciated for the beautiful pink colour of their petals which moreover are a traditional symbol of happiness, joy, optimism and love for life. Thanks to a belt of villages lying along the northwest edge of the West Lake (Nhat Tan, Huu Tiep, Quang Ba, Nghi Tam...) and specialising in peach tree growing a lot of these blossoms are on sale when Tet comes. For the flowers to bloom at the approach of Tet the horticulturist has to draw from a wealth of experience in the art of grafting, caring for and manuring plants handed down from generation to generation. In general, people like the *bich dao* kind for its gorgeous pink, but some prefer the *dao phai* of a more delicate and lighter colour. If you have peach blossoms blooming in your home



A miniature mountain landscape and dwarf trees in the courtyard of a Hanoi home early in this century.

Photo: Courtesy Library of the Social Sciences Institute of Vietnam

on New Year's Eve this is believed to be good omen.

Apart from peach flowers Hanoians also like chrysanthemums, apricot flowers, narcissuses, begonias, peonies... Chrysanthemums are grown in pots, two or three flowers in a pot being enough. Yellow chrysanthemums rank first with their many gracefully curved petals. They were regarded by Nguyen Trai, a great thinker and poet of 15th-century Vietnam, as symbols of magnanimity. Apricot flowers are yellow or white, the latter being the more beautiful. They are planted in a pot displayed in a vase. The connoisseur will look for a slender stem with large blossoms. For the Vietnamese apricot flowers symbolise moral elevation. With their white petals, yellow stamens, sweet and delicate perfume, narcissuses evoke purity in the first place. They spring up from big onion-like bulbs the translucent peel of which shows pale yellow streaks. From the bulbs hang thick clusters of white roots. These bulbs can be put in glass jars filled with water and displayed either in the house or among ornamental plants in the garden. On the occasion of Tet, competitions used to be organised in the communal houses of Yen Phu, Ngu Xa, Nghia Loc, in the Temple of Literature, Ngoc Son and Bach Ma temples... where professional and amateur florists vied with one another in the art of trimming the bulbs and stimulating the buds of narcissuses so as to obtain short and even stems which give the whole "the aspect of a plate of sticky rice."

Hanoians also decorate their houses during Tet with small tan-

gerine trees, *quat*, planted in pots (preferably in "eel-skin" pots made in such well-known ceramic-making villages as Huong Canh, Tho Ha, Que, Quao...). A beautiful *quat* tree must have many fruit and few leaves. The tree must bear fruit of uniform size and golden colour, with a thin and glossy peel, and light-green leaves. The tree must be erect and its branches firm. A beautiful fruit-laden *quat* tree in the house is a symbol of abundance.

In the old days, connoisseurs would display their ornamental plants in "sets". A "four-season" set for instance comprised a dwarf apricot, a lotus plant, a chrysanthemum plant, and a dwarf pine, representing spring, summer, autumn and winter respectively. This quest for sets led to the art of growing dwarf trees, which has fallen into oblivion. Now only a few old experts own some heirlooms which they will from time to time lend to the city cultural department for public display.

Every year, when Tet comes a flower market is organized in Hang Luoc Street (Comb Street). This custom goes back more than a century. The flower market generally begins on the 23rd day of the 12th month of the lunar calendar when according to popular belief the household gods set out on their trip to heaven to report to the Emperor on the events of the year. Young and old, men and women, clothed in their Sunday best, stroll amid a sea of flowers brought in from the suburban flower growing villages. The keynote is the peach blossom. Buyers have the choice between truly

"native" flowers and more recent species, which were imported into the country half a century ago: gladioli, roses, larkspurs, pansies, carnations... They can also buy coloured folk prints or couplets calligraphically written on red paper... Only once in over a century did the flower market fail to take place: it was in 1947 when fighting had broken out in the city between resistance forces and the French colonial aggressors.

### A Few Traditional Dishes

To complete the picture let's mention some traditional dishes. Hanoi cuisine strives to keep the original flavour of the main ingredients. It uses relatively little fat and shuns elaborate concoction. This is perhaps a common characteristic of Vietnamese cuisine in general. A favourite dish is the *bun thang* usually eaten on the 3rd day of Tet. This is a light dish mainly composed of *bun* (rice vermicelli), in very fine strings made of rice from the latest crop: soft and fragrant. A portion of *bun* is put in a small bowl on a layer of minced persicaria. On the *bun* are disposed finely cut chicken, fried egg, pork-pie and grated shrimp, topped by a slice of boiled egg and a few leaves of coriander. Even before being tasted the food already looks delicious. But it will prove to be really exquisite when consumed with a broth of chicken and shrimp, seasoned with shrimp paste, pepper and a few drops of belostome essence.

*Bun thang* is often accompanied by *cuon*, another dish also made with *bun*. On a leaf of lettuce one put a little *bun*, some thin slices



A street of Hanoi at the turn of the century.

Photo: Courtesy Library of the Social Sciences Institute of Vietnam.

of boiled pork, a shrimp fried with sugar, a slice of pickled scallion, a bit of turnip dried in the sun then dipped in fish sauce, a pinch of grated grilled pea-nuts cooked in sugar and *dam bong* (mash from the brewing of rice alcohol) and a few leaves of parsley. The leaf of lettuce is then rolled (*cuon*, hence the name of the dish) and tied with a stem of scallion made supple by dipping in boiling water. A correctly rolled *cuon* will show the white of the *bun* at one end and the red of the shrimp at the other. One tastes it after dipping it in high-grade fish sauce flavoured with a few drops of belostome essence. The choice of the seven ingredients to be wrapped in a lettuce leaf is drawn from long experience and the absence of anyone of them will detract from the delicacy of the dish.

*Bun thang* and *cuon* are not favourites with Hanoians only. Indeed they figure among the best items of North Vietnamese cuisine. They are served on the occasion of Tet and also of other feasts and family ceremonies.

Another favourite with Hanoians and foreign guests alike is the *nem ran*. Minced pork, boiled crabmeat, vermicelli, minced scallion, finely cut mushroom, a few duck's eggs and pepper are mixed together, laid on rice wafers (*banh*

*da nem*) which will then be rolled and cooked in deep fat. It is eaten hot with various aromatic herbs and lettuce after dipping in a sauce prepared with fish brine, vinegar, sugar, garlic, pepper and thin slices of turnip and carrot.

To the same gastronomical family belongs the *nem chua* whose preparation is simpler. It is much appreciated as a relish by lovers of rice wine. Lean pork is pounded into a very fine paste which is mixed with a special yeast and wrapped into parcels not bigger than one's thumbs with banana leaves. After three days the meat will have fermented and gives out a slightly acid smell. These *nem* can be bought in any market of the capital. Once the wrappings are taken off, they are rolled in rice wafers with a few leaves of parsley and eaten with the same sauce as the *nem ran*.

Beside the "salt" dishes mentioned above, Hanoians also prepare "sweet" dishes which are no less delicious. First, the candied fruit: courgette, pea-nuts, coconut meats, tangerine, lotus seeds... sold in Sugar Street. Hang Than Street (Coal Street) was known in the past for its charcoal shops. But since the turn of the century it has earned a reputation for its *banh com*, a traditional cake made

with *com* (grilled unripe sticky rice) stuffed with green beans, candied lotus seeds and fine strips of coco-nut meat. Other traditional sweetmeats are *banh dau* (cake of green bean flour), *banh khao* (cake made with sticky rice flour), *banh xu xe* (sticky rice cake stuffed with stewed green beans), *banh gac* (same as above but the sticky rice is coloured with momordica)... At mid-autumn people enjoy eating *banh nuong* and *banh deo*, at the end of spring and at the beginning of summer, *banh troi* and *banh chay*. And one must also mention the many kinds of *che* made of various ingredients cooked in syrup: lotus seeds, *com*, black beans, green beans... *Che* made with green bean is particularly liked in summer as a refreshment. However, real gourmets prefer to nibble candied lotus seeds while drinking tea perfumed with lotus flowers.

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A quiet and modest city by its size, Hanoi is laden with traditions in its architecture, its cultural and spiritual life, its habits and customs... Now the groundwork is being laid to turn it into a modern city, a large political, economic, cultural, scientific and technical centre of Vietnam. In this mutation, however, Hanoi will no doubt know how to preserve the best of its traditional values.

PHUONG ANH

## CORRECTION

In our last issue (No 9 - 1982) the line on top left corner of page 18 should read *Vietnamese medicine* instead of *Vietnam medicine*.

## FACTS AND FIGURES (I)

— Within the space of four decades, from 1939 to 1979, the area of Hanoi was expanded by almost 200 times. In 1939, the peak year under French colonial rule, Hanoi covered 12 square kilometres not including the outskirts. In 1942 under Japanese occupation Hanoi included Hoan Long district and part of Thanh Tri and Hoai Duc districts, then belonging to Ha Dong province (now Ha Son Binh province), and was thus expanded to 130 square kilometres. In 1954, at the end of the first Indochina War, Hanoi covered 152 square kilometres. Through two expansion drives under the people's administration, the first in 1961 which broadened the capital city to 536 sq.km., and the second drive in 1979, the present capital city of Vietnam has an area of 2,130.5 sq.km., more than half of which (109,650 ha) is devoted to agriculture.

— The population of Hanoi stood at 75,000 in 1921, rose to 300,000 in 1942 and 380,000 in 1954. After the first expansion under the people's administration in 1961, Hanoi numbered 913,428 inhabitants, and following the second expansion in 1979, it had 2,462,195 inhabitants, of whom 1,269,136 are farmers. Since 1976 Hanoi began transferring part of its population to a new economic zone in Duc Trong district, Lam Dong province. In 1980—1982, the population of Hanoi stood at nearly 2.5 million, of whom 775,000 live in the inner city and 1,725,000 on the outskirts. Apart from the Viet who are the ethnic majority, there are about 18,000 people belonging to different ethnic minorities such as the Muong, Dao and San Diu. The number of foreign residents is negligible since the majority of the Hoa (Chinese residents) have left for mainland China or other countries during the campaign of forcible evacuation of Hoa people from Vietnam organised by Beijing agents in the latter half of 1978.

— Today, Hanoi has four inner-city districts and 11 suburban districts and two towns.

The four inner districts are:

— Hoan Kiem district; area: 4.5 sq.km; population: 154,000, subdivided into 18 wards.

— Dong Da district; area: 14 sq.km.; population: 223,000, subdivided into 25 wards.

— Ba Dinh district; area: 10.5 sq.km.; population: 160,700, subdivided into 15 wards; and

— Hai Ba Trung district; area: 11 sq.km.; population: 238,000, subdivided into 23 wards.

The 11 suburban districts are:

— Gia Lam district; area: 175.7 sq.km.; population 224,700, subdivided into 31 communes and two townships, Gia Lam and Yen Vien. Recently, at the proposal of the Hanoi People's Committee the National Assembly decided to integrate two more townships, Duc Giang and Sai Dong, into Gia Lam district.

— Dong Anh district; area: 184.2 sq.km.; population: 169,100, subdivided into 23 communes and one township, Dong Anh.

— Me Linh district; area: 254.9 sq.km.; population: 177,100, subdivided into 22 communes and two townships, Phuc Yen and Xuan Hoa.

— Soc Son district; area: 313.3 sq.km.; population: 143,200, subdivided into 23 communes.

— Tu Liem district; area: 109.7 sq.km.; population: 179,500, subdivided into 25 communes and three townships, Nghia Do, Cau Giay and Cau Dien.

— Thanh Tri district; area: 100.19 sq.km.; population: 160,300, subdivided into 26 communes and one township, Van Dien.

— Hoai Duc district; area: 122.1 sq.km.; population: 151,400, subdivided into 27 communes.

— Dan Phuong district; area: 76.8 sq.km.; population: 87,900, subdivided into 15 communes and one township, Phung.

— Thach That district; area: 93.4 sq.km.; population: 87,500, subdivided into 19 communes.

— Phuc Tho district; area: 102.5 sq.km.; population: 98,900, subdivided into 22 communes.

— Ba Vi district; area: 543.3 sq.km.; population: 207,300, subdivided into 32 communes.

The two towns are:

— Son Tay; area: 14.6 sq.km.; population: 33,900, subdivided into 3 wards and 9 communes.

— Ha Dong; area: 14.7 sq.km.; population: 64,200, subdivided into 2 communes.

Son Tay town was formerly the capital of Son Tay province, while Ha Dong was the capital of Ha Dong province. These two provinces were merged with Hoa Binh province in 1977 to form the present province of Ha Son Binh.

# HANOI IN THE RESISTANCE

## TO FRENCH AGGRESSION

Of all the authors who have written about the war against the French in Hanoi, the late Nguyen Huy Tuong (1912 -- 1960) was the most attached to this theme. His film scenario Luy Hoa (Flower Barricade) and the first part of his *Song mai voi Thu Do* (With the Capital to the Last Breath) were enthusiastically received by the public. Unfortunately, he succumbed to the illness in the midst of his effort to reconstruct the fight put up by Hanoians—one which was epical yet simple, spontaneous yet ingenious, bloody yet romantic.

To depict this fight is no easy job, even for people who had personal experience of it, because of the difficulties involved in sorting out events and putting them in proper perspectives. No less difficult to analyze is the state of mind of the people who were involved in this first war of resistance, people who had endured the shame of slavery, and whose hatred for the colonialists just fell short of xenophobia. And yet in March 1946 the same people patiently suffered that the French army came back to Hanoi—that very army which had sustained defeat at the hands of fascist Germany in its own country and had surrendered to the Japanese in Indochina—and the only thing which kept them from reacting

sharply against that return was their belief that the negotiations being conducted with France by President Ho Chi Minh would prevent useless bloodshed and would ensure Vietnam's independence without damaging friendly relations with the French people.

Hanoians were long known for their patriotism, heroism and indomitability. These qualities were now blended with a determination to preserve independence and build a new life.

On September 2, 1946, the National Day, people ate dinner out of doors. Tables were laid along the pavements in an atmosphere of communal festivity. All were unified in the joy of independence. Another novelty was the morning exercises, during which people mixed freely, singing "Be Strong for the Country" and "New Life". People were no longer conscious of class and status. During the Gold Week, contributions ranged from a single wedding ring to a hundred taels of gold, and wealthy employers now encouraged their house servants to attend political meetings. In education, French was replaced by the Vietnamese language, and teacher-student relationships underwent a complete change: they were now friends and comrades helping one another to become new masters of the country. Fashion also changed: the

vogue now was navy-blue trousers for men, skirts of the same colour for women, and white shirts for both. Formal forms of address were used less and less, and "comrade" was popular, especially in the army and mass organizations. Educated people thought that the same exuberant spirits must have prevailed during the French Revolution, and wondered why the descendants of the people who had made that revolution should now be attacking revolutionary Vietnam.

Until the night of December 19, 1946, Hanoians had firmly believed that war would never come to this City of the Rising Dragon\*. It was not that their vigilance was lulled by an old prophecy; they simply wished that their city would be spared destruction and be made larger and more beautiful, now that independence had been won.

Moreover, Hanoians knew that the balance of forces was not in their favour. In the South, French troops were returning in the wake of British forces coming to disarm the Japanese while the provinces on the northern border were being invaded by the very French units that had fled to Yunnan, China, under the onslaught of the Japanese army in March 1945. At the same time, other units commanded by General Leclerc were

being shipped to Haiphong from Da Nang to replace the departing Chiang Kai-shek army. Under other skies this show of strength would just be laughable, but against poorly-armed Vietnam it did cause some sensation, and the march made at a snail's pace on obsolete vehicles by Leclerc's troops from Haiphong to Hanoi did not fail to impress certain people. And while the leadership was envisaging an inevitable military confrontation, not a few among the people were hoping for a compromise and were under the illusion that the newly set-up "Joint-Control Commission" could effectively deal with the systematic provocations by the French army. So, at the outbreak of hostilities in December 1946, tens of thousands of people were to be stranded in the city. From them were to emerge many a brave fighter.

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At about eight on the evening of December 19, 1946, there was a general blackout and a sudden outbreak of gunfire. The inevitable had finally and irrevocably happened. If there had remained any uncertainty about the situation it was completely dispelled on the following day by an appeal made by President Ho Chi Minh calling on the entire people to rise up in arms: "As we desired peace, we made concessions. But the more concessions we made, the further the French colonialists went, because they are bent on invading our country once again." The whole country supported his sharp rebuke to the aggressors: "No! we

would rather sacrifice all than lose our country. We are determined not to be enslaved."

In Hanoi the French Command had planned to crush all resistance within twenty-four hours. This was clear from an ultimatum it had issued at 21:15 on December 18 stating that the French army would completely strip the Revolutionary Government of all powers.

To tell the truth, the plan was not entirely unfounded, considering the numerical strength of the French army, with its 6,500 troops, most of them belonging to Foreign Legionaries, 62 tanks and armoured vehicles, 19 aircraft, 42 heavy artillery pieces, 5,000 rifles, 600 light machine guns, and 180 heavy machine guns. Against this, Vietnam had only five regular battalions totalling 2,515 men, 1,500 rifles, four machine guns, one bazooka, and 200 "Molotov cock-tails". The five gun emplacements situated on the city's outskirts were armed with seven 75-mm. anti-aircraft batteries, one 75-mm. and one 25-mm. fieldguns captured from the Japanese.

Mention must also be made of 80 "three-tentacled bombs"—an anti-tank explosive charge fitted with three protruding detonators and a long handle. Volunteers would thrust them at enemy armoured vehicles. They were safe from the blast because the hollow charge was directed away from them; but they were dangerously exposed to enemy fire, because they had to get very close to their targets.

On an average there were two rifles for every three combatants, seven rounds of rifle ammunition

for each man, two grenades for every five, and a machine gun for every six hundred. Such was the situation of the Vietnamese regular forces. As far as the Self-Defence Corps was concerned the shortage was even more acute. True, members of the Corps were rather smartly dressed: they bought or made their own uniforms. But their weapons were a standing joke. Their rifles and pistols, which they bought with their own money, were of the kinds manufactured at the end of the last century. In addition to this heterogeneous arsenal were great quantities of rudimentary weapons: swords, spears, sticks, and even big firecrackers—charges of black powder wrapped in dried banana leaves to be exploded singly or in clusters for diversion or for effect on enemy morale.

The French Command staked heavily on its material strength. According to the Preliminary Convention signed between the French and Vietnamese sides on March 6, 1946, the French army would move into Hanoi, Haiphong and a number of other places to replace the Chiang Kai-shek army, which had finished disarming the Japanese army. But even before the conclusion of this temporary agreement, on March 1, General Leclerc had moved 15,000 French troops from Da Nang to Haiphong. Then, on March 13, elements of the Second Armoured Division, with 1,000 troops and 200 tanks, armoured troop carriers and vehicles of other kinds, had entered Hanoi with great fanfare. This force, strengthened by the 4,000 troops formerly detained by Jap-

anese in the Citadel and now released and armed, was posted at strategic points, and from then on French military vehicles prowled the streets day and night.

All this was part of a master plan. To provide a pretext for imposing French administrative control, the French Command on May 6 had deliberately instructed its agents to fire on departing Chiang Kai-shek troops. On May 19, French civilians had been ordered to leave Hanoi for Saigon. It had been planned that on June 22, after the withdrawal of the Chang Kai-shek army had been completed, the French would conduct direct interventions in Hanoi and other areas above the 16th parallel.

On July 6, in the midst of the French-Vietnamese negotiations at Fontainebleau, the French army had attacked many areas in South Vietnam, set up a puppet administration in Saigon and made the Central Highlands an "autonomous region". In Hanoi, a coup had been planned for July 14. On that day there was to be a military parade, and French-paid provocateurs were to attack African units with grenades (these "Vietnamese extremists" were to cause non-white casualties only). This would be pretext enough for the French army to seize the whole of Hanoi and arrest all Vietnamese leaders and cadres. But the Vietnamese authorities nipped the plot in the bud. All the traitors involved were arrested together with propaganda literature and weapons. The French military parade took place on schedule, but under strict surveillance of Vietnamese police and Self-Defence Corps.

Towards the end of 1946, the French army stepped up the execution of their plan of aggression, although it had failed in part. From October onward, after it had completely sealed off the coast from Haiphong to Mong Cai and the Sino-Vietnamese border from Mong Cai to Lang Son, the French army acted with increasing arrogance in Hanoi. They burnt down the whole of Ai Mo village in Gia Lam district, drove Vietnamese guards from the Bank of Indochina, fired on the police post at Hang Trong Street, looted the biggest department store in town and made a grenade attack on the Town Hall, killing a guard.

What the French army did in Hanoi in November and December could no longer be described as mere "provocations" or "violations of agreements", but were open hostilities on the part of an aggressor army. French troops occupied the Ministry of Finance, where they replaced the Vietnamese flag by the French tricolor. Deliberate "accidents" were caused by French vehicles, and French troops would shoot at the drop of a hat. On December 2, French troops ransacked the City Information Hall, tearing up bulletins and newspapers, scrawling graffiti on the walls. They returned the following day to hoist the French flag in place of the Vietnamese colours, and wrote on the bulletin board this insolent warning: "If this flag is lowered this building will be burned down". At 7:25 a.m. on December 4, they carried out the threat by setting fire to the building.

More crimes were committed. On December 17, French troops

from the Citadel sealed off nearby Yen Ninh Street, rounded up the inhabitants and gunned down dozens of them. Another mass massacre was perpetrated the following day at Hang Khoai Street close to Dong Xuan, Hanoi's biggest market.

All this substantiated the threat in the ultimatum that on December 20 the French army would disarm the Vietnamese regular army and Self-Defence Corps and would occupy all administrative offices in Hanoi.

"The time has come for us to fight back". These words were often heard in Hanoi during the last days of December 1946, and Hanoians deeply felt their meaning. Preparations for armed resistance were no longer a hush-hush affair. From the regular army were selected twelve "death-braving" squads, whose main task was to intercept enemy armour with "three-tentacled bombs." On December 16, a ceremony was held at the Town Hall for them to take the oath. Thirty-six guerrilla groups were also formed in the city. The First Quarter, the most subject to attacks, was supplied with half of the available fighting means — 10,000 rounds of rifle ammunition, 500 grenades, 100 "Molotov cocktails", two radio transceivers, and food to last three months.

The First Quarter was an administrative-military division of Hanoi set up in the last days of 1946. It was part of an important plan. The idea was that once the war broke out the Vietnamese forces could not be expected either to storm the Citadel and wipe out the main body of the French army there, or to deploy in the whole

city to counter out-flanking movements of the enemy. Military planners, therefore, decided to thwart the enemy's blitzkrieg strategy by blocking all main roads leading from the city while forming a war front inside it, and that front was to be the First Quarter. By the end of the third day of hostilities this war zone had taken definite shape. In the south it was limited by the streets of Hang Thung, Cau Go, Hang Gai and Hang Bong. In the west, by Phung Hung Street. In the north and northwest, by the railway, the Long Bien Bridge, the Red River and Lo Su Street. The plan was to pin the enemy down for a fortnight, but the resistance forces managed to keep the enemy busy a full sixty days and then to withdraw safely. By the time they left Hanoi they had become a full-fledged regiment, the Regiment of the Capital City. Its officers and men, urbane city-dwellers turned battle-seasoned soldiers, were to

form the core of the Vanguard Division famous in all later major campaigns.

On December 9, words had been given to the army and Self-Defence Corps to mine all bridges and roads. Holes were bored into trees for dynamite charges which would fell the trees at a moment's notice to form obstacles on the streets. Openings were made in walls to enable people to move from house to house and from street to street without exposing themselves to enemy fire. Food was stored. Orders were given for the evacuation of the non-combat population—the sick, the old, and children. A few days before the outbreak of hostilities, obstacles had been set up at street intersections, with wooden stakes driven deep into the ground and topped with all kinds of materials, including beds, wardrobes and other articles of furniture from people's homes. A slogan was seen everywhere: "Young people, we'll

fight to a finish to defend our city!" Hanoians were determined to break with the old life full of pettiness and selfish calculations, and they could feel in their hearts that a new life would be born from this fight.

On the evening of December 19, French guards at the far end of the Long Bien Bridge suddenly opened fire at Vietnamese guards. The leader of the group was killed immediately. His comrades fought hand to hand with the enemy. "They fought like tigers," said one of the French guards taken prisoner.

The Governor's Mansion, now the Government Guest House, was subject to intensive fire from enemy tanks. A guard dashed out into the street with a "three-tentacled bomb" and blew up one tank. He returned with another bomb, but was gunned down. The fight lasted the whole of that day through noon of the following day, when Le Gia Dinh, the commander, gave orders for his men to retreat to the adjacent Post Office. Everybody was to go, except himself. "No," protested his men. "Alive or dead we're together." But Le Gia Dinh patiently reasoned with them. By retreating, he said, they would preserve their strength for further actions. Le Gia Dinh eventually remained alone. When the enemy stormed the premises he exploded a bomb, killing ten, and died in the blast.



**Attacking French tanks with explosive charges during the first days of resistance to French colonial aggression.**

Photo: NGUYEN BA KHOAN

Everywhere the initiative was in the hands of the defenders. In the Eastern Sub-Sector, three Self-Defence Corpsmen broke into the Citadel. "The Viet Minh!" French troops exclaimed incredulously. "How could they get here?" And there was a near panic. French troops captured during this daring attack later testified to the utter confusion of Sainteny and Morlières. On the Long Bien Bridge the explosive charge destined to blow it up failed to go off (on that first night of hostilities in the city many of our mines and bombs failed to explode due to faulty manufacture) so our men removed some of the planks on the motor lanes. The lead vehicle in a French convoy plummeted into the river and a terrific jam ensued. Organization, however, was far from perfect. This was particularly true with the Self-Defence Corps. Yet, people managed to rejoin their units and resistance pockets were formed that very night, together with supply, medical, printing and liaison units. Complete strangers found themselves members of the same teams.

For the first time, city people, who had been used to keeping themselves to themselves, were formed into one tightly-knit community regardless of living habit and life style. Footloose bohemians rubbed shoulders with disciplined factory workers, and high-browed students were readily accepted into organizations of members of the labouring masses. To fight meant to unite and build a new, meaningful life.

It had been the intention of the French Command to crush the resistance forces within twenty-

four hours. The Vietnamese side, for its part, had planned to hold the city for only a fortnight. But, for many days after that limit, a free zone continued to exist in the heart of the city, and for the people who were there freedom had a very concrete meaning. Life was hard, but spirits were high. People put on their best clothes to go to battle. Starting on December 22 there was published in the free zone a paper called *Thu Do* (Capital City). During the French Revolution people ate cat meat as recorded in a contemporary cartoon. In Hanoi in late 1946 and early 1947 people fared better. They could even eat at Chinese-owned restaurants which, though not so well stocked as before, were still serving good food. Shops owned by foreigners, mostly Chinese, were still open. For their part, the resistance authorities treated the foreign community with courtesy. They even invited them to a party for the New Year and would invite them to another, given just before the resistance forces withdrew from the city. On February 17, 1947, the foreign colony made a request for food: several tons of maize and a certain amount of sesame. This was coupled with a request for a one-day ceasefire for the evacuation of all foreign residents from the embattled zone. The resistance authorities agreed to this and, after consultation with the French Command, set the date for the following day. The resistance forces, which had already been instructed to leave the city, took advantage of this occasion to withdraw in safety.

That the First Quarter had held its ground much longer than ex-

pected was due to the support of a vast rear base ringing the city. Contact between the front and the rear was firmly maintained, and supply was steady. For Tet there were even peach flowers and traditional glutinous rice cakes. President Ho Chi Minh sent a message to the Regiment of the Capital City on this occasion. "How is Tet in Hanoi? Are you having a good time?" he confidently asked. Weapons and ammunition were sent from army factories at Ha Dong, and medicines came from the Army Hospital at Van Dien, both places less than fifteen kilometres away. The front commander, in a message to the Regiment, ordered the quartermaster to serve sprouted green beans to the men to make for a wholesome diet.

Inside the city, raiding parties made inroads into enemy-held quarters. Outside, the encirclement never slackened, and all enemy sallies were broken. For several days in early January 1947, French troops were pinned down at Giang Vo, west of the city. Then in an assault made under cover of fog, they disguised themselves as Vietnamese. The company defending the village, taken by surprise, had to retreat. The commander, Vu Cong Dinh, with one leg severed by a shell splinter, stayed behind to cover his men's retreat. A nurse—a girl from Luu Xa village—stayed with him and the two fought to their last breath.

On January 19, 1947, to mark the first month of resistance, an artillery unit crossed the Red River into Nghi Tam village and blasted the French garrison at Buoi College. At four o'clock on the afternoon of January 25, an

infantry unit shot down two French aircraft which were returning to Gia Lam from a raid. The fighters who achieved those daring feats of arms were not aware that they were initiating two of the many unconventional methods which were later to be used and gradually perfected by the People's Army.

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On the night of February 17—the eve of the temporary ceasefire—the Regiment withdrew from the city after violently attacking the French at Hang Thiec Street and Dong Xuan Market. Even as the main body of troops was moving out, demolition squads blew up key structures which could be used by the enemy, setting the city ablaze.

The evacuation was carried out in complete safety, without any casualties. Not a single man was left behind, not a single gun was lost. The wounded were all moved out of the city. The squad led by Nguyen Van Noi had a bad time of it when it was stranded on a sand bank in the middle of the Red River where it had been posted to cover the retreat. Dawn was breaking when it was still there. However, it managed to fight off pursuers and catch up with the rest of the Regiment.

The people who left Hanoi that night promised to return to liberate the city from "temporary enemy occupation". To those who stayed, the vast free zone outside became "the rear".

In French-occupied Hanoi terror reigned. At Dang village on the outskirts the enemy ripped up the belly of a captured guerrilla and hung his entrails up on a tree as a warning. At Yen Duyen, they

slit the throats of twelve village elders who refused to yield. Villages were razed to make room for army posts. Prisons were so full that public buildings, including the Mint (now the Tien Bo Printing Works), were used to hold the many hostages and suspects.

In spite of savage enemy repression, the people's struggle continued, gaining momentum every day. Students boycotted the welcoming ceremony staged for Bao Dai, the ex-emperor who was now made "head of state". On August 19, 1949, they reminded one another to observe the fourth anniversary of the victory of revolution. On November 25, students at Chu Van An high school struck (during the savage repression which followed, the American consul was seen closely watching the scene). A few days later, the strike spread to other schools. On January 20, 1950, memorial services were held at the Cathedral and the Quan Su pagoda for Tran Van On, a student who was killed in Saigon on January 19 while leading a mammoth demonstration against the visit of two American warships. His funeral was, according to press reports, attended by the largest number of mourners since the obsequies of Phan Chu Trinh, a great scholar patriot, on March 24, 1926. The memorial services in Hanoi climaxed in demonstrations, and many participants were arrested.

The struggle extended to include factory workers, small traders and office workers. More important still was its in-depth development. Resistance groups in the suburbs established contacts in the city. Caches were built in cemeteries, and private homes to hide resistance literature, weapons and

underground cadres. The working-class quarter on the sand bank in mid-stream of the Red River was subjected to frequent police raids, but it never was "pacified". The puppet mayor, Do Quang Giai, called Dong Xuan the "Viet Minh market". "Viet Minh country begins at the far end of Kham Thien Street leading into the suburbs," he complained. Giai was wrong in his geography-based assessment. It would have been correct for him to say: "Scratch a Hanoian and you'll find a partisan." How could he account otherwise for the raid by resisters on Bach Mai airfield on January 18, 1950 which cost the enemy millions of litres of gasoline, dozens of aircraft, and several ammunition depots, or that on Gia Lam airfield on March 3, 1954, which caused him even heavier losses.

Wherever they were the men of the Regiment of the Capital City always thought of Hanoi. During the assault on the French post at Pho Lu near the Sino-Vietnamese border in early 1950, favourite battle cry was: "Let's liberate Hanoi!"

The long-expected moment was to come on October 10, 1954. In the city, for several days before this historic date, factories, schools and offices were occupied by workers, students and employees. The purpose was to prevent the enemy from dismantling the equipment and taking it away. People were busy making flags and putting up streamers. Hanoi was getting ready to welcome its boys back after nine long years. At the same time it was preparing for a new life.

CHAU DIEN

\* *Thang Long (Rising Dragon) was the ancient name of Hanoi.*

## FACTS AND FIGURES (II)

● Throughout the French colonial rule and during the French occupation in the days of the Vietnamese people's war of resistance Hanoi was a city of consumers. There was practically no manufacturing industry except a few small repair and maintenance workshops, chiefly to maintain and repair trucks and locomotives. Handicrafts stagnated and dwindled rapidly as it was unable to compete with imported goods from France including such minor items as needles and soap.

At the time of the takeover of the city by the people's administration in late 1954 the whole city had only 8 small privately-owned factories, nine other factories moved into the city from the resistance zone, and 496 small private shops poorly equipped and operating erratically due to shortage of raw materials. The unemployment figures stood at 77,000 or more than one-fifth of the city's population. Meanwhile, 40,000 families of private traders had been dealing in goods imported from imperialist countries.

● Following two years of economic rehabilitation (1956 — 57) Hanoi embarked on a Three-Year Plan for socialist transformation of private capitalist industry and commerce and collectivization of agriculture (1958 — 1960).

By the end of that period, Hanoi had completed the peaceful transformation of private capitalist industry. 495 enterprises owned by 403 capitalists had been reorganised into 62 joint State-private enterprises and 16 co-operative enterprises. 5,027 workers or 95% of the total in private enterprises had been freed from capitalist exploitation.

The collectivization of small industries and handicrafts had also been completed with 95% of the craftsmen having joined production or service co-operatives, including 926 production co-operatives accounting for more than 50% of the total workforce.

In the commercial sector, 800 families of capitalist traders had undergone peaceful transformation. Nearly 27,334 small traders had been organised into 2,266 co-operative organisations of various forms while 2,534 small traders had switched to handicraft production.

In addition, transformation and co-operativization had also been undertaken with regard to those engaged in transport, either with mechanized or rudimentary means.

Agricultural co-operation was basically completed in 1960 in the then four suburban districts, namely Tu Liem, Thanh Tri, Gia Lam and Dong Anh with 88% of the peasant families having joined the co-operatives. By 1974 more than 317 high-level co-operatives, each farming 90 hectares of land on an average, had been formed. Since 1959 many agricultural co-ops have started building collective pig farms.

● The ten-year period (1955 — 1964) between the end of the anti-French resistance and the start of the US aggression was a period of vigorous development of Hanoi in the field of construction.

— In this period, added to the 17 State-owned factories and plants existing in 1954 (8 of which were taken over by the people's administration, the nine others transferred from the resistance zone) Hanoi built up another 99 State-owned enterprises including the Hanoi Mechanical Engineering Plant (now the Machine-Tool Plant No. 1) which has played and is still playing a very important role in the equipment of the national economy.

At the same time Hanoi organised another 78 joint State-private enterprises and co-operative enterprises along with 928 small-industry and handicraft co-operatives.

Also in this period, on the agricultural belt around the capital city three irrigation and drainage systems were completed. These are the Thuy Phuong system in Tu Liem district, the Gia Thuong system in Gia Lam district and the Ap Bac — Nam Hong system in Dong Anh district. Nine State farms have also been set up since 1961, engaged in pig, dairy-cow and poultry raising. There are also many scientific research institutions catering for agriculture such as breeding and seeds farms (rice, pig, fish, silkworms, and vegetables), a veterinary medicines factory, a pig semen (for artificial insemination) farm, a fodder processing factory, an establishment to conduct research on irrigation and drainage, and several meteorological stations.

● Industrial, small industrial and handicraft production and agriculture have been reorganised when the country switched from peace time to war time conditions in the resistance against US aggression, then again reconverted when peace was restored.

By 1980, the last year of the second Five-Year Plan, Hanoi had:

— 254 State-owned factories employing 120,000 workers;

— 433 small-industry and handicraft co-operatives, mostly composed of integrated shops resembling the small co-operatives founded at the beginning of the socialist transformation of private capitalist industry, employing 122,000 workers.

Compared with the figure of 5,000 workers in Hanoi during the French occupation, the number of workers at the State-owned factories and small-industry and handicraft establishments increased 50 times.

— 315 agricultural co-operatives, each farming 300 — 500 hectares and comprising 1,500 — 2,000 farmers;

— 10 tractor stations with 275 large-size tractors, and hundreds of small two-wheeled tractors to till the soil for the co-operatives. 40% of the farm work in former Hanoi was mechanised. The rate now reached only 14% for the new Hanoi.

— 10 State-owned livestock breeding farms.

## FACTS AND FIGURES (III)

Under the French occupation, there was in Hanoi only one university comprising two colleges: that of law and that of medicine, 1 fine-arts school, 5 State-run secondary schools, two of them reserved for French children, 4 hospitals (one private and one reserved for French patients) with a small staff of doctors and pharmacists, and a small number of beds.

There are now in Hanoi:

### A — Education:

Schools	:	454
— Basic general education schools	:	401
— Secondary general education schools	:	53
Pupils in kindergartens and general education schools	:	713,000
— In kindergartens	:	100,000
— In basic general education schools	:	557,000
— In secondary general education schools	:	56,000
Teachers:		
— For basic general education schools	:	39,300
— For secondary general education schools	:	2,884
Students in higher education establishments and secondary vocational schools	:	70,600
— University and post-graduated students	:	54,300
— Higher education school students	:	6,800
— Secondary vocational school students	:	9,500
Higher education and vocational school teachers	:	8,640
— College teachers	:	6,888
(among them 17 professors, 81 associate professors, 15 doctors of science, and 847 candidate doctors of science).		
— Higher education teachers	:	929
(among them 25 candidate doctors of science).		
— Secondary vocational education teachers	:	823

### B — Public Health:

— 19 hospitals, with a total of 4,010 beds		
— One 100-bed leper sanatorium		
— 283 communal and cityward health stations with a total of 2,814 beds		
— Doctors	:	772
— Assistant doctors	:	1,166
— Pharmacists	:	242
— Assistant pharmacists	:	310
— Traditional physicians	:	126

### C — Culture:

— 14 cinemas and 30 mobile projection teams		
— 7 art ensembles (among them 2 for renovated drama, 1 for cheo (traditional opera), 1 for spoken drama, 1 for song and dance troupe, 1 for circus, and 1 for marionette shows) (not to mention the centrally-run theatres situated in Hanoi).		
— 21 libraries with 890,000 books (not to mention the central libraries situated in Hanoi).		
— 6 museums		
— Cinema attendance	:	21,365,000
— Art-show attendance	:	1,814,000
— Reading attendance at libraries	:	100,000

Hanoi was freed from French occupation on October 10, 1954. But a new shadow loomed: the threat of war by US imperialism. Besides, a pain gnawed at the hearts of the people: the South was not yet liberated and reunified with the rest of the country. On January 1, 1955, the Hanoi people greeted the return of the Party Central Committee, the Government and President Ho Chi Minh to the capital city. Uncle Ho declared on this occasion: "The South and the North are blood brothers; they cannot be separated."

The Hanoi people were deeply conscious of the fact that their city is the capital and the heart of the whole of Vietnam, half of which was constituted by the South. This truth guided them in their march forward and finally they took up arms to fight the new foe.

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The Americans interfered more and more deeply in the affairs of South Vietnam. The threat that they would expand the war to the whole country loomed large. On March 27, 1964, President Ho Chi Minh convened in Hanoi a Special Political Conference which could be likened to the Dien Hong Conference of the Elders in the 13th century, at which the Royal Court asked the latter: "In face of the powerful Yuan invading forces, will Vietnam sue for peace or fight?" As at Dien Hong, the 325 participants and the over 500 Hanoi observers at the Special Conference were resolved to fight, whatever the sacrifices. There was a reason for the favour granted to the Hanoi people to send observers to the meeting: In the first days of the Revolution Hanoi had been seething with revolutionary fervour, with such slogans as: "Vietnam is one, Vietnam for the Vietnamese"; the sons of Hanoi had stubbornly fought against the French to achieve this goal and over one decade of relative peace, they had engaged in national construction while at the same time waging the war of resistance against the Americans. They had fought in all battlefields and worked in all branches of activity: road

building, factories, State farms, logging camps, army workshops, and had achieved splendid exploits which eventually earned them this high distinction: the Order of Independence, First Class, on May 6, 1967.

The war of resistance against the Americans differed from that against the French in that most members of the armed forces in the first war (1945—1954) had been illiterate while in the second

The American imperialists were bent on "bombing North Vietnam back to the Stone Age" but they failed to reckon with the determination of its people.

On June 25, 1965, the first American jet on a reconnaissance mission over Hanoi in preparation for massive bombings was downed. The plane crashed near the Machine-Tool Plant No. 1, five kilometres from the centre of the city. All subsequent raids over Ha-

Following the example of Nguyen Viet Xuan, the commander of an A.A. battery who shouted to his men "Aim straight at the enemy!" Hanoians positioned A.A. guns on top of every high building to hit back at enemy planes. They lopped off the tops of tall trees and turned gardens and parks into gun emplacements which they adorned with flowers. Factories and offices had their own self-defence units. Thanks to this organization, Hanoi had a close-knit air defence net-

## HANOI IN THE RESISTANCE TO AMERICAN AGGRESSION

war most soldiers had finished secondary education; many of them had graduated from higher education establishments. A great number of Hanoians served in such branches as medicine and pharmacy, chemistry, engineering, road building; others were writers, poets, journalists, cameramen, artists, musicians...

In the war against the Americans, they could be classed in three groups: those who joined up and fought in far-away battlefields; those who stayed and worked in production and combat-support units; and those who were evacuated to the countryside; but this did not mean that the latter did not take part in the fighting: they, too, made great sacrifices. Many government offices, economic undertakings and schools left the city, and families were divided: mothers were severed from their children, wives from their husbands and they had but few occasions to meet. To see each other they had to travel over heavily-bombed roads. Even at the evacuation places, they were not safe. The Son Dong school thirty kilometres from Hanoi was bombed by American planes, all teachers and pupils killed. A father who came to visit his children evacuated to Son Dong only found a common grave in which the remains of his six children were buried.

Hanoi were duly punished. Hanoi air defences brought down 53 planes in 1966, and 176 in 1967 (10 planes on May 19 and 12 on November 19, the record figure) and captured many American airmen. In 1968 and 1969, realizing that all their frenzied attacks were in vain, the Americans shifted to "limited bombing" tactics, allegedly to show "goodwill" at the Paris conference table, but even in those two years, 35 US planes were brought down over Hanoi.

The riposte to American air strikes was most effective. In those hard days, Nguyen Tuan wrote a book, *"Hanoi Fights the American Raiders Very Well"*, in which he tried to analyse the state of mind of the American pilots when they came to rain bombs on Hanoi. He found that those men were so witless that they did not understand why they should do what they were doing. Yet, they persisted in thinking that Vietnam was threatening the security of the US! And so they just showered bombs on the economic enterprises and populated quarters of Hanoi. Long Bien, the only bridge spanning the Red River, the power plant, railway station, schools, hospitals, churches and pagodas in our capital city were raided repeatedly. The An Duong workers' quarter, Kham Thien Street, Ngoc Son Temple were also the targets of American bombings.

work. A line in a popular song ran like this: "you aggressors may come but won't be allowed to escape."

Hanoi air defences fully matched the American air escalation when it reached its peak.

As many still remember, after four years of negotiations, the Paris Agreement was about to be signed on October 31, 1972. But then Nixon felt he had secured victory in the race to the White House, and made a complete volte-face. He stepped up the "Vietnamization of the war" in the South, and the air-lift of war materiel to the Saigon Administration; he gave the green light to his puppets to oppose the Paris Agreement, then ordered his B.52's to launch a major bombing campaign on Hanoi, Haiphong and other urban centres in North Vietnam, with Hanoi as the main target.

The Americans had used B.52 strategic bombers in South Vietnam as early as June 1965; but they had not been very effective against rural and hilly regions having a thin population. Now in defiance of public protests, they unleashed those planes for the first time on the North's populated centres. In Hanoi, Kham Thien, a bustling street one kilometre long, and Gia Lam district, where the locomotive repair works and

engineering works were located, were subjected to carpet bombings. The biggest hospital in Hanoi, located in Bach Mai in the suburbs, was not spared. In 12 days of savage raids lasting from December 18 to 29, 1972, the Americans flew 663 B.52 sorties (444 over Hanoi) and 3,884 fighter-bomber sorties (1,000 over Hanoi); The ultra-modern F. 111 swing-wing jet was used for the first time in those air strikes, and bombs of all kinds including "smart" bombs were dropped, round-the-clock.

But the Hanoi people were not cowed. Intercepted by surface-to-air missiles nicknamed "Fire-Belching Dragons" and hit by heavy flak, the Americans lost 23 B.52's, 2 F.111's and 5 other jets over Hanoi. The most glorious day for Hanoi was December 26, 1972 when 5 B.52's crashed in flames in its streets. On the night of December 22, at 9.15 p.m., the militiamen of Hoan Kiem and Hai Ba Trung districts brought down an F.111: They had fired only 19 machine-gun bullets.

Though advanced in years, writer Nguyen Tuan frequently visited A.A. defences around the city and he was delighted to note a few interesting events: for instance, the wedding of a young couple both members of a militia unit, at their fighting position.

Hanoians are optimistic people. At the approach of Tet, the Lunar New Year festival, they quickly cleared up the debris from bombed areas, reserved a spot for a memorial to the dead, tidied the streets and houses to welcome spring, confident that it would bring even more victories. In this they were not mistaken.

Speaking of Hanoi we must include both its inner and outer districts. The road linking the city to Noi Bai International Airport passes through Co Loa, a region full of historical vestiges. There the first citadel in the history of the nation was built of packed earth and what remains of it testifies to the determination of our ancestors to stand firm in defence of their native land. Now this region is seething with economic activities: it is the site of motor car and tractor repair workshops, a depot of building materials, a ball-bearing factory, a lock factory, a bicycle-parts factory and a printing-house which supplies tens of millions of copies of textbooks each year to general education schools and adults' evening classes.

Near this industrial centre is the Cuong No agricultural co-operative, credited with brilliant exploit in 1972. During the twelve days of the US air blitz, this co-operative of one square kilometre received

2,100 bombs released by B.52's during 22 carpet-bombing raids. Seventy per cent of its farmland was full of craters. An average of 1.5 bombs was dropped per head of population. But the co-operative suffered only 13 dead and wounded during the first bombing raid. Drawing experience from that first combat, Cuong No suffered no further casualties the following days. Its members built solid shelters, and prepared seeds to sow as soon as the raids stopped. When this happened, tractors immediately came to plough the fields and in the next harvest, the land yielded 6 tons of paddy per hectare. The Cuong No people had shown that they would not be "bombed back to the Stone Age".

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To use a favorite phrase of the Hanoians, in this war against American aircraft, the capital city had "shared fire" with the rest of the country, particularly with Saigon and Hue to which it was bound by ties of sworn brotherhood. Hanoi had once again fulfilled its duties as the capital and the "heart" of the country.

PHAM TOAN

## FACTS AND FIGURES (IV)

● During the eight years of the war of resistance to French aggression (1946 — 1954) the army and people of Hanoi

- put out of action 19,283 enemy troops.
- destroyed 47 planes of various kinds, 37 train and tram engines and thousands of tons of weapons, ammunition and fuel.
- captured 420 guns of various kinds, 68 motorboats, ships, and military vehicles, and hundreds of tons of ammunition and military equipment.

● During the eight years of the war of resistance to US aggression (1965 — 1972) the army and people of Hanoi

- defeated the enemy at all steps of their escalation;
- shot down 358 planes including 23 B.52's;
- killed and captured hundreds of pilots (not counting 19 planes, and two B.52's brought down over areas which were intergrated into Hanoi only in 1979).

In recognition of those feats of arms during the wars of resistance to French and US aggression Hanoi was awarded 105 decorations of various kinds:

- One Resistance Order, First Class;
- Nine Distinguished Service Orders, Second and Third Class;
- 95 Military Exploit Orders.

# HANOI — DATES TO REMEMBER

- 3rd century B.C.: King An Duong founded the Kingdom of Au Lac and had the Co Loa citadel built (in the present district of Dong Anh) which he made his capital city.
- A.D. 544: Ly Bon, after overthrowing the Chinese Liang dynasty's domination, renamed the country Van Xuan and established himself in Co Loa.
- 939: Ngo Quyen, after destroying the invasion army of the Chinese Southern Han dynasty, proclaimed himself king and settled in Co Loa, ushering in the period of national independence.
- 1010: Ly Thai To founded the Ly dynasty and moved from Hoa Lu to the new capital city of Thang Long (now Hanoi).
- 1070: Construction of the Temple of Literature.
- 1075: Holding of the first literary examinations.
- 1077: Defeating the invasion army of the Chinese Song dynasty at the Song Cau defence line to the north of Thang Long.
- 1108: Building the Co Xa dyke to protect Thang Long from the floods of the Red River.
- 1226: The Tran dynasty succeeded to the Ly dynasty and continued to have its capital in Thang Long.
- 1253: Founding of the Military School, the first military academy of the Vietnamese feudal regime.
- 1258: First occupation of Thang Long by the Yuan invaders (January 20). The Dong Bo Dau victory liberated Thang Long (January 29).
- 1284: Conference of the Elders at the Dien Hong Palace: King Tran Nhan Tong asked them whether to try to reach a compromise with or to resist the Chinese invaders of the Yuan dynasty who were planning a second invasion of Vietnam.
- 1285: Second occupation of Thang Long by the Yuan (January).  
— Liberation of Thang Long (May).
- 1287: Third occupation of Thang Long by the Yuan (December).
- 1288: Liberation of Thang Long (March). The Yuan forces were dealt a crushing blow at a battle on the Bach Dang river (April).
- 1400: Ho Quy Ly overthrew the Tran and founded the Ho dynasty and moved the capital city to Tay Do (Western Capital) in the present Thanh Hoa province. Thang Long was renamed Dong Do (Eastern Capital).
- 1406: The invasion army of the Chinese Ming dynasty occupied Dong Do and changed its name to Dong Quan (Eastern Gate) (January 22).
- 1426: The insurgent army originating from Lam Son (Thanh Hoa province) under the command of Le Loi battered the Chinese at Tot Dong — Chuc Dong southwest of Dong Quan, killing, wounding and capturing 60,000 enemy troops (November 5 — 7).
- 1427: Following the Chi Lang — Xuong Giang battle in which 100,000 Chinese reinforcements were wiped out, the Chinese military commander in Vietnam, Wang Tong, surrendered (December 16).
- 1428: The Chinese invasion army completely withdrew from Dong Quan (January 3).  
— Le Loi, leader of the Lam Son insurrection, ascended the throne and established himself in Dong Do.
- 1430: Dong Do was renamed Dong Kinh.
- 1527: The militarist group under Mac Dang Dung overthrew the Le and occupied Thang Long.
- 1592: The Trinh lords defeated the Mac, restored the Le dynasty and brought the young king back to Thang Long.
- 1776: The Tay Son peasant uprising defeated the Nguyen lords in the South and the Trinh lords in the North, then entered Thang Long, reuniting the country.
- 1778: The invasion army of the Chinese Qing dynasty occupied Thang Long (December 17).
- 1789: Nguyen Hue, after proclaiming himself Emperor Quang Trung, led a liberation army from Phu Xuan (Hue) to the North and annihilated the 200,000 troops of the Qing and liberated Thang Long (January 25 — 30).
- 1802: Emperor Gia Long proclaimed himself emperor, founded the Nguyen dynasty, and made Hue its capital city. Thang Long was made the capital of northern Vietnam.
- 1805: Gia Long gave a new meaning to the name of the capital city. The writing of the Chinese ideogram "long" which originally means "dragon", symbol of royal power, was changed to mean "prosperity".
- 1831: Emperor Minh Mang changed the name Thang Long to Hanoi.
- 1873: French troops stormed and took Hanoi citadel. Following negotiations, the Hue Court made concessions, and let them establish a garrison in Don Thuy.
- 1882: The French attacked Hanoi for the second time.
- 1888: Four years after the signing of the Patenotre Treaty (1884), which established French rule over the whole of Vietnam, Hanoi became a French concession.
- 1907: The "Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc" movement, the first patriotic movement against French colonial rule, proclaimed its goal of liberating the country through cultural and educational development.
- 1908: Attempt at poisoning the French garrison in Hanoi undertaken by some patriotic Vietnamese soldiers in the French army. The plot was uncovered and all the plotters were beheaded. Their heads were displayed in public places.
- 1913: Vietnamese patriots exploded a bomb at the Hanoi Hotel killing two high-ranking French officers.

- 1925: Street demonstration demanding the release of the patriot Phan Boi Chau.
- 1926: Memorial service for the great patriot Phan Chu Trinh at the Hai Ba Temple.
- 1928: Founding of the Hanoi branch of the Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Association.
- 1929: Founding of the first cell of the Communist Party (March).  
— Founding of the Communist Party of Indochina (June), one of the three Communist organizations, forerunners of the Indochinese Communist Party to be founded on 3 February 1930.
- 1930: Tran Phu, the first general secretary of the Indochinese Communist Party, drafted the Program of the Democratic Bourgeois Revolution working in his hideout in basement of No. 90, Tho Nhuom Street.  
— Widespread strike by factory workers lasting from mid-1929 to mid-1930 with the participation or support of some of the poorer strata of the Hanoi population.
- 1936: The revolutionary movement developed strongly among workers, students, women, small traders, intellectuals and other sections until 1939. This was considered a period of preparation and training for the General Uprising in August 1945.
- 1938: Founding of the Democratic Front in Hanoi. A 20,000-strong meeting was held in front of the Exhibition Centre in Hanoi to mark International Labour Day (May 1st).
- 1939: Repression of the revolutionary movement by the French colonial authorities.  
— Japanese troops invaded Indochina and entered Hanoi (September).
- 1942: Founding of various National Salvation mass organisations within the Viet Minh (League for the Independence of Vietnam).
- 1944: Hoang Van Thu, an outstanding revolutionary, member of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the Indochinese Communist Party, was executed by firing squad at the Tuong Mai firing range.  
— Founding of the Hanoi Self-Defence Fighting Force.
- 1945: The Japanese staged a coup against the French in Hanoi and throughout Indochina (March 9).  
— The National Salvation Workers' Association stormed and seized a number of rice stores of the Japanese and distributed the rice to starving people (April).  
— The National Salvation Women's Association held an anti-Japanese meeting at Me Tri on the outskirts of Hanoi (April 24).  
— The National Salvation Workers' Association and the National Salvation Youth League staged many talks by armed propaganda teams at factories and schools.  
— Founding of the Hanoi Insurrection Committee (August 16).  
— 100,000 Hanoians staged a march in support of the Viet Minh Front (August 17).  
— General Insurrection in Hanoi (August 19).  
— President Ho Chi Minh on behalf of the Provisional Government read the Declaration of Independence at Ba Dinh Square, proclaiming the birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and Hanoi to be its capital city (September 2).  
— Troops of the Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi) army given mandate by the Allied Forces to disarm the Japanese forces in the provinces of Vietnam north of the 16th parallel entered Hanoi (September 9).  
— Opening of the Gold Week to raise funds in support of the revolutionary power (September 23). The same day French troops under cover provided by British troops sent to South Vietnam to disarm the Japanese started hostilities in Saigon.  
— Organisation of the "South Vietnam Day" in support of the resistance of the South Vietnamese people against French aggression (November 5).
- 1946: General elections to the first National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (January 6).  
— Signing of the Preliminary Convention with France in Hanoi whereby the French were authorized to replace Chiang Kai-shek troops and complete the disarming of the Japanese (March 6).  
— French troops entered Hanoi (March 18).  
— Massacre of people of Yen Ninh area in Hanoi by French troops (December 17).  
— French troops occupied the offices of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Communications of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (December 18).  
— The French sent an ultimatum to the Vietnamese Government demanding that the Vietnamese armed forces be disarmed and the maintenance of security and order in Hanoi be handed over to French forces (morning of December 19).  
— The Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam ordered nationwide resistance to French aggression (evening of December 19).
- 1947: After sixty days of fierce fighting, the Regiment of the Capital City, slipped through enemy encirclement and safely withdrew from Hanoi (February 17).
- 1948: Commando forces of the resistance stormed enemy positions in Nhat Tan, Yen Thai, Cau Giay and Yen Phu on the outskirts of Hanoi (August).  
— In the latter half of the year the regular army and guerillas fought 400 battles inside and outside Hanoi.  
— Launching of a campaign for the destruction of the puppet administration on the outskirts of Hanoi (December).
- 1949: Shelling of the Bach Mai airfield. Two French aircraft were destroyed (July 27).
- 1950: Commando attack on Bach Mai airfield destroyed 25 aircraft and set fire to 600,000 litres of gasoline (January 10).  
— A week-long student strike (from January 13).  
— Students held memorial services for Tran Van On and ten other students massacred by French police during an anti-US demonstration on January 19 in Saigon (January 20).

- Anti-taxation strike by women market vendors (August).
- 1953: Dockers at Pha Den wharf on the Hanoi waterfront helped many Vietnamese soldiers in the French army escape to the free zone.
  - A three-month long struggle of women market vendors against heavy taxation (from May to August).
- 1954: In co-ordination with the Dien Bien Phu campaign, resistance forces in Hanoi attacked Gia Lam airport, destroying 18 enemy planes and a fuel depot (March 3).
  - Hanoi intellectuals sent a petition demanding that the French Government negotiate with the Ho Chi Minh Resistance Government (April).
  - Following the signing of the Geneva Agreements (July 20) Hanoi people waged a vigorous struggle against the enemy's plan to forcibly evacuate the population to South Vietnam, dismantle factories and take away equipment and files and documents (from August onward).
  - The Vietnam People's Army took over Hanoi under the terms of the Geneva Agreements (October 10).
- 1955: Huge meeting at Ba Dinh Square to welcome the Party Central Committee, the Government and President Ho Chi Minh back to the capital city (January 1st).
  - Land reform on the outskirts of Hanoi.
- 1957: Inauguration of the Hanoi Engineering Plant (now the Machine-Tool Plant No. 1), the first heavy-industry plant built with Soviet assistance.
- 1958: Beginning of the Three-Year Plan for the transformation of private capitalist industry and commerce and for agricultural co-operation.
- 1961: The National Assembly decided on a plan of expansion of Hanoi (April 20).
  - 300,000 people in Hanoi held a meeting to protest against the plotting of the US imperialists and the SEATO aggressive bloc to interfere militarily in South Vietnam (May 25).
- 1964: A Special Political Conference, convened and presided over by President Ho Chi Minh with the participation of representatives of people of all walks of life throughout the country, voiced determination to fight to the end against the US imperialist aggressors (March 27).
  - In a ceremony Cot Co Street leading to Ba Dinh Square was renamed Dien Bien Phu Street (May 7).
- 1965: First US air raid on Hanoi. First US plane downed over Hanoi (June 25).
  - Inauguration of the Hanoi Polytechnic built with Soviet assistance (November 5).
- 1966: President Ho Chi Minh called on the 'people' throughout the country to be resolved to fight and defeat the US aggressors (July 17).
- 1967: Hanoi was awarded an Independence Order, First Class, by the National Assembly and Government and was praised by President Ho Chi Minh (May 12).
  - Ten US war planes were shot down over Hanoi (May 12) in a single day.
- 1972: The US carried a strategic air blitz against Hanoi, Hai Phong and other places in North Vietnam using a large fleet of B.52 bombers. Hanoi air defences broke the enemy attack, shot down 30 US aircraft including 23 B.52's and two F.111 swing-wing fighter planes (December 18 — 30).
- 1975: Rallies and festivities were held in the capital city to celebrate the liberation of Saigon (April 30).
- 1976: General elections to the National Assembly of reunified Vietnam (April 25).
  - The National Assembly of reunified Vietnam meeting in Hanoi decided to adopt a new name for the country: the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, with Hanoi as its capital city (July).
- 1978: The "nanqiao" campaign launched by Beijing spread to Hanoi, causing a great commotion among the Hoa people in the Vietnamese capital city, especially following the statement of May 24, 1978 of the spokesman of the Commission for Overseas Chinese Affairs under the Chinese State Council slanderously charging that Vietnam was "discriminating against, maltreating, ostracizing and expelling Hoa people from Vietnam". Thousands of Hoa families left for China after selling everything they could not take along with them.
  - The Chinese Government cut all aid to Vietnam and called back all Chinese experts after sending a note dated July 3, 1978 to the Vietnamese Government. Among the 72 projects left unfinished because of this move by China, many were located in the Hanoi area, including the Thang Long bridge, a large bridge crossing the Red River.
  - Directed by the Chinese Embassy in Hanoi Chinese provocateurs caused disturbances at the Hanoi railway station on the night of August 11 at a time when a Vietnamese—Chinese diplomatic conference was holding its second session in Hanoi to discuss the question of the Hoa in Vietnam.
  - The Hanoi daily Nhan Dan published many documents on Chinese spy rings and provocateurs working under the direct command of the Chinese Embassy in Vietnam (in 5 consecutive issues from September 18 to 22).
  - The National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam adopted a decision, the second since liberation, to further expand the capital city (December 28).
- 1979: Implementation began of the decision of the National Assembly and the Government to further expand Hanoi.
  - Three weeks after Beijing launched its war of aggression against Vietnam all along our northern border, the National Assembly ordered a general mobilisation on March 4, 1979. Within a week the Hanoi military command received 200,000 applications to join up.
  - Hanoi intensified its defence work. Within two weeks the population of the capital city dug 150,000 fox holes and 70,000 metres of underground tunnel and built 30,000 collective shelters. Hanoi youth formed 30 regiments to build a defence line along the Song Cau river to the north of the capital city.

# CHRONOLOGY

(16 August — 15 September)

## AUGUST

16. At the seventh special emergency session of the UN General Assembly Hoang Bich Son, head of the Vietnamese permanent mission to the UN, declares that Vietnam is ready to support any concrete and effective measures aimed at compelling Israel to strictly implement the resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly and Security Council.

19. Founding of the Vietnam — Afghanistan Friendship Association.

20. A Vietnamese traditional art troupe visits Italy.

21. Hussein Sheikh Islam, Deputy Foreign Minister and special envoy of the Iranian President, visits Vietnam (from August 19 to 21).

— Founding of the Vietnam Biologists' Association.

22. Founding of the Art Council with poet Cu Huy Can as its chairman.

— Pham Binh, special envoy of the President of the Vietnamese Council of State, visits Mali, Sierra Leone, and Ghana (from August 11 to 22).

23. Vice Foreign Minister Vo Dong Giang, special envoy of the President of the Vietnamese Council of State pays an official visit to Zambia (from August 19 to 23).

— Of the 157 Vietnamese photo-exhibits presented at the International Photographic Competition held in Japan by the Asian and Pacific Cultural Centre of UNESCO, six win awards: two second, one fourth, and three fifth prizes.

24. The Vietnamese permanent mission to the UN sends a note to the UN Secretary-General rejecting the fabrication contained in the note dated August 16, 1982 of the Thai permanent mission, which slanderously claims that Vietnamese troops have infiltrated Thai territory and territorial sea.

25. The Vietnamese Council of State confers the Gold Star Order on Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, on the occasion of his 70th birthday.

— Signing in Paris of an agreement on France's aid of 6,000 tons of wheat to Vietnam.

26. Founding of the Vietnam Building Workers' Association.

— Signing in Vientiane of an agreement on non-commercial payments between Vietnam and Laos.

— Vice Foreign Minister Hoang Luong attends the vice-ministerial conference of the socialist countries held in Poland.

28. With the authorization of the Vietnamese Government, the Huu Nghi border post in Lang Son province returns to China 12 Chinese captured while illegally intruding into Vietnamese territory.

— Vice Foreign Minister Ha Van Lau attends the first session of the Inter-Governmental Co-ordinating Committee on Co-operation between developing countries held in Manila.

30. VNA rejects the fabrication by *Xinhua* (China News Agency) dated August 29, on alleged Vietnamese armed provocations in areas along the China-Vietnam border on August 26 and 27.

31. Vice Foreign Minister Ha Van Lau visits Indonesia (from August 29 to 31)

## SEPTEMBER

3. Vice Foreign Minister Ha Van Lau pays an official visit to Thailand (from September 1 to 3).

5. The Ministry of Higher Education and Secondary Vocational Education holds a conference in Hanoi to review post-graduate education from 1976 to 1982 and discuss the orientation and tasks for the coming years.

6. 14 million pupils of general education schools and kindergartens throughout the country begin their new school-year (1982 — 1983).

8. The Vietnamese Commission for the International Year of the Elderly holds its first conference in Hanoi.

9. VNA rejects allegations by Thai military sources, as reported by the Japanese News Agency *Kyodo*, that Vietnam has increased its troop strength in Kampuchea.

11. A delegation of the Bulgarian National Assembly, headed by Stanko Todorov, Political Bureau member of the Bulgarian Communist Party Central Committee and Chairman of the Bulgarian National Assembly, pays a visit to Vietnam.

12. Convening of a Conference on Peace, Security and Co-operation in Asia by the Committee on Asian Security of the Presidium of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (AAPSO) in Hanoi (from September 10 to 12).

— The AAPSO Information and Liaison Centre for Asia holds a conference in Hanoi.

— Signing of a protocol on professional and technical co-operation between Vietnam News Agency and the Kampuchean News Agency SPK.

14. Vietnam participates for the first time in the Mechanical Engineering Fair in Brno (Czechoslovakia).



19 August 1945: General uprising in Hanoi, beginning a new chapter in the history of Vietnam with the regaining of national independence.

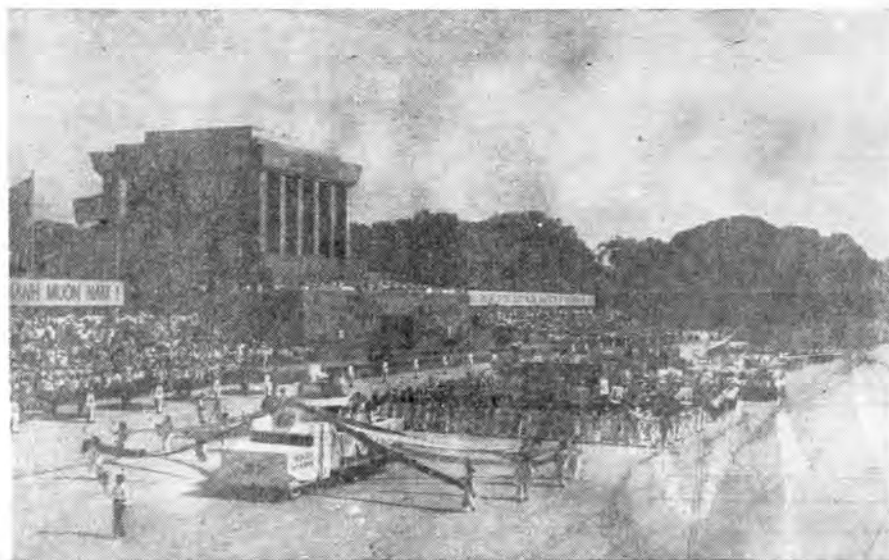


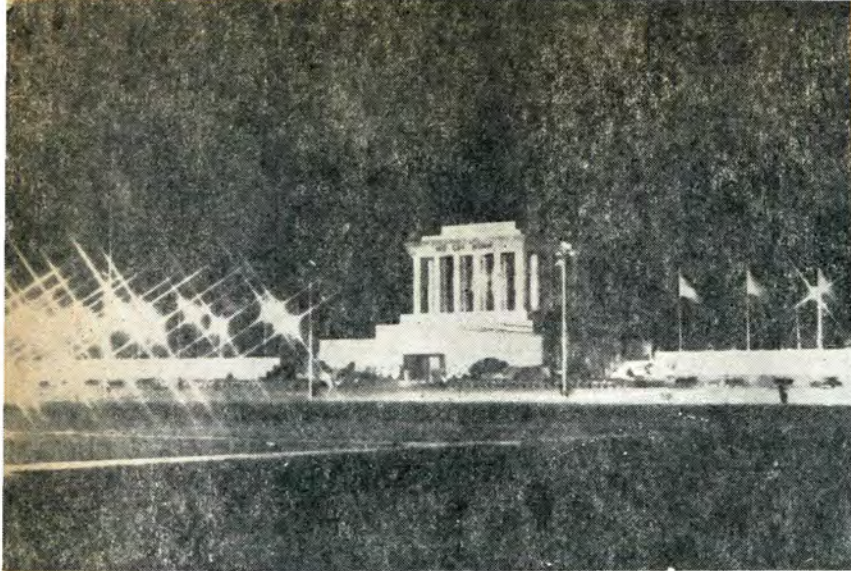
10 October 1954: The Vietnam People's Army liberated Hanoi from French occupation.

## HANOI: THE SUCCESSIVE REVOLUTIONARY PERIODS

2 September 1975: A parade in Hanoi to welcome the total liberation of south Vietnam.

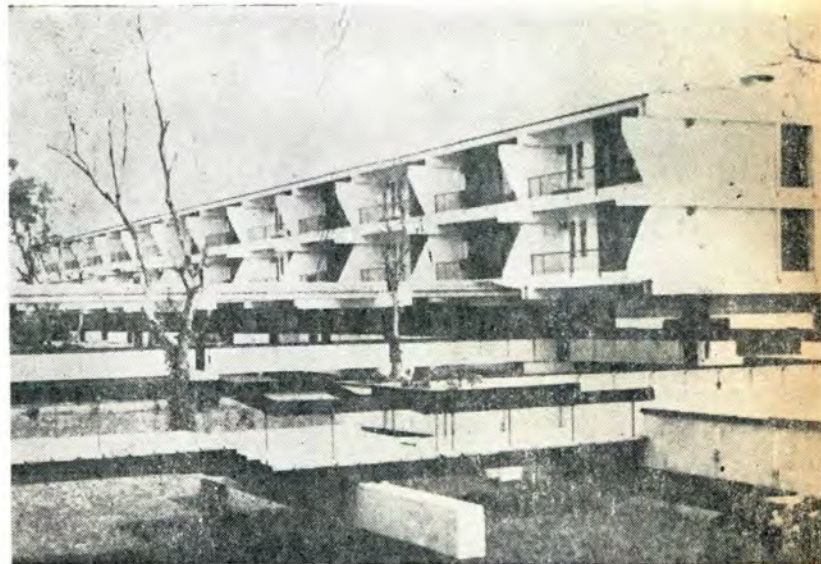
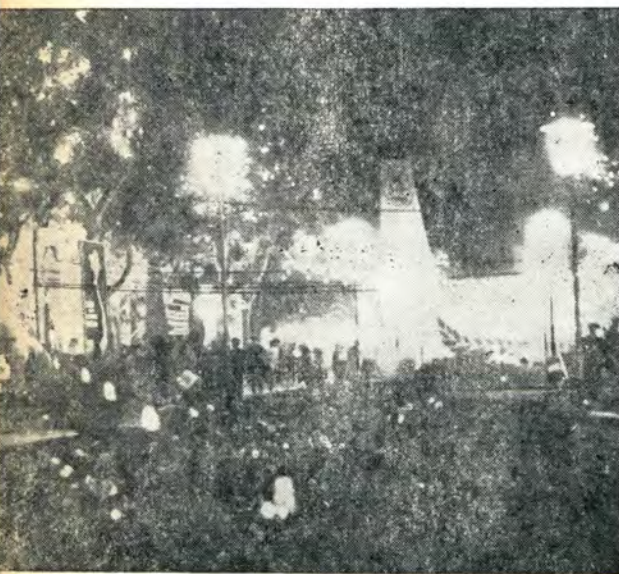
Photos:  
NGUYEN BA KHOAN





President Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum in Ba Dinh Square.

A festival in Lenin Park at night.



Thang Loi (Victory) Hotel on the edge of the West Lake.

Photos: DAN QUE

**Vietnam**  
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**НОВОСТИ**  
**ВЬЕТНАМА**

**El Correo**  
**de Vietnam**

Báo đối ngoại **TIN VIỆT NAM**

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

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