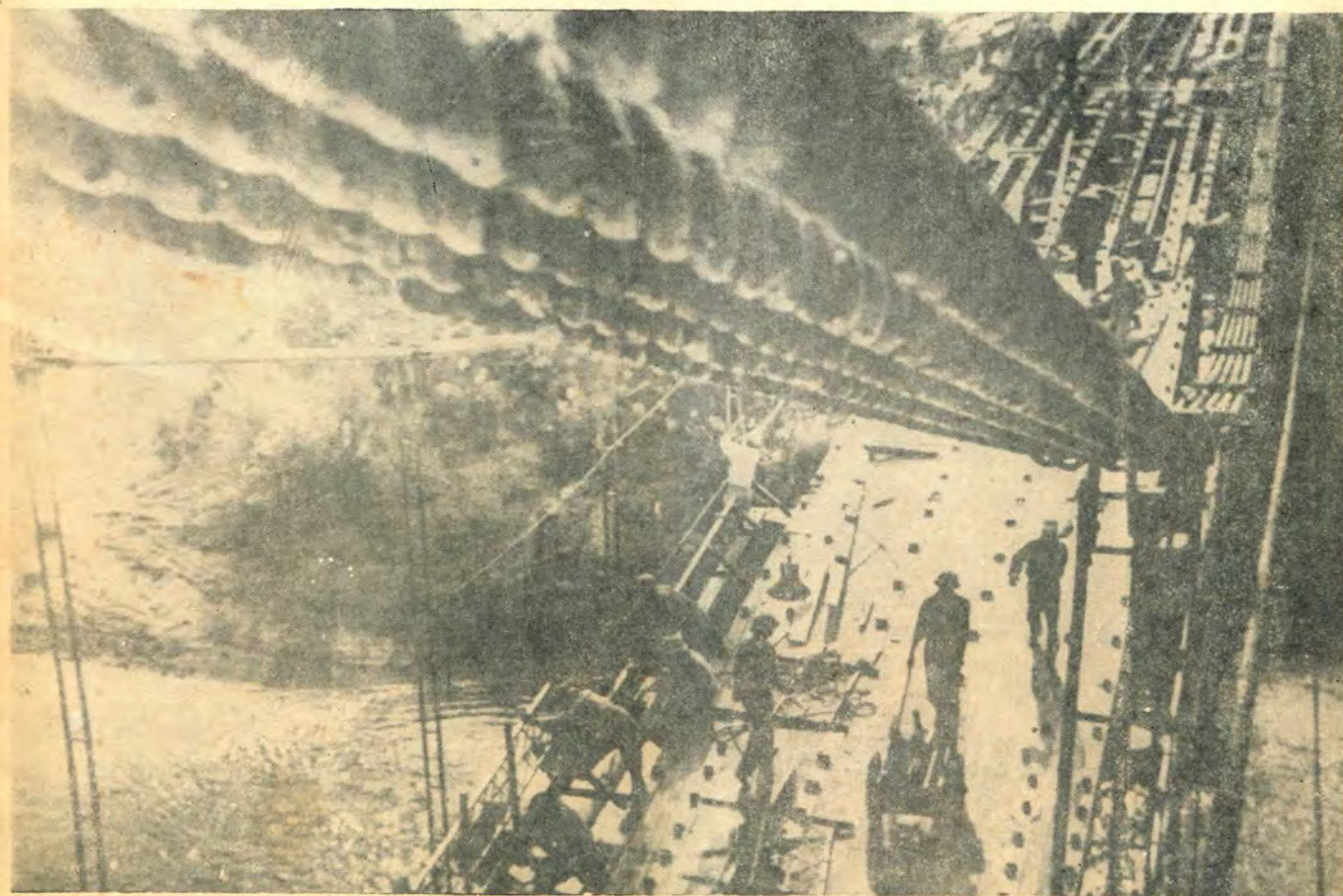


# Vietnam courier



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*Photos: MINH DAO*



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Front Cover: A suspension bridge in an army new economic zone.

Photo: TRAN NHAN

**Vietnam**  
**COUPLER**

12-1982

# OUR MONTHLY COMMENT

*The changes in the mechanism of economic management resulting from the Resolution of the 6th plenum of the Party Central Committee (Sept., 1979), and officially confirmed and brought into full play by the 5th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (March 1982) have created a new atmosphere of enthusiasm in all branches of the economy.*

*It is the contractual system in agriculture that has given rise to good harvests: this year, both the winter-spring and the summer-autumn crops were successful, and the current 10th-month crop is also a promising one, except in Nghe Tinh province, which has been severely damaged by typhoon Nancy. The number of buffaloes, cows, pigs and poultry have all increased.*

*For the first time in many years Vietnam does not have to import large quantities of food grain. It is a pity, however, that the output of subsidiary food crops has decreased, for peasants were more interested in contracted production of rice. By redressing the shortcomings in subsidiary food crops production, stepping up intensive farming and expanding rice cultivated areas, we will be able to be self-sufficient in food.*

*There has also been progress in solving the clothing problem: the Party's appeal to boost mulberry growing, sericulture and cotton growing in order to produce and provide cloth and silk for ourselves has had a good response throughout the country.*



With regard to industry, Resolution 25-CP (especially since a supplementary decision was issued, concerning the rectification of the shortcomings in its implementation, and the remuneration and incentive system), has brought about increases in production in many economic branches: electricity, coal, engineering, metallurgy, cement, fertilizer, chemicals and consumer goods. This includes the role of small industry, handicrafts and family sidelines which have developed as a result of the new policies.

By putting an end to scattered investments and by concentrating on some main capital construction projects, this year we have made remarkable progress in building a number of thermo-power and hydro-power projects, cement factories, textile mills and in exploiting more coal mines; these projects have come into operation one after another. Some of these capital construction projects such as the hydro-power project on the Da river built with the help of the Soviet Union, and the Soviet-Vietnam oil and gas undertaking in Vung Tau will be a guarantee for our country's future development.

Exports have also increased compared with previous years. Transport and communications between the North and the South, and the handling of goods at the ports have been improved.

Our people still have to face many difficulties in their living conditions, we cannot control price increases. But a number of factors have opened up good prospects for an adequate solution to the problem of circulation and distribution of goods. The State has been increasingly able to control agricultural produce as well as industrial products; the State Bank is operating according to new regulations, which helps the State to control the money supply.

This does not mean that it will be plain sailing from now on. We still have a lot to do in the years to come if there is to be a smooth "take-off" for the Vietnamese economy. For we are blazing a trail in economic development and we still lack ex-

perience in this field, as we did in the past in the military field. Vietnam wasn't in the position of the victor in the early years of the wars against French and US aggressions, either. But it is inspiring that we have started, albeit hesitantly, to find a way of meeting the objective requirements of the first steps in the period of transition to socialism.

In spite of the US economic blockade and the sabotage by the Chinese in their efforts to isolate Vietnam, we have not collapsed, as our adversaries wished. On the contrary, we find ourselves gaining in strength.

Likewise, we have strengthened our position in the world. By unstintingly putting forward proposals on the settlement of Southeast Asian problems — building this part of the world into a region of peace, stability, co-operation and friendship — we have succeeded in bringing about the resumption of dialogues between Indochina and ASEAN countries, and holding dialogues means developing mutual understanding and then finding solutions to the issues of common concern, with respect for each other's interests. We have held out our hand to the People's Republic of China, wishing to normalize our relations with it. If the Chinese leaders want to prove that they are following a new foreign policy, that they wish to seek peace as they said, then this is a chance for them.

In recent years, our adversaries have described Vietnam as a country with a rickety economy but full of aggressive ambitions. We want to tell them that this is only a bluff, if not self-deception. As the year 1982 is drawing to an end, a correct assessment of the Vietnamese situation is necessary for those who take an interest in our country — be they sympathetic to the cause of Vietnam or not. The truth is that Vietnam is still holding its ground and gaining in strength, and its strength is only used for the sake of peace and friendship between nations, first of all, between neighbouring nations.

20 November 1982

**VIETNAM COURIER**





**LEONID ILICH BREZHNEV**  
(1906 – 1982)

On 12 November 1982, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the Council of State and the Council of Ministers of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam issued a communiqué on the death of Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet. The communiqué says:

"Comrade Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet,

passed away at 8:30 on 10 November, 1982 in Moscow.

"Comrade Brezhnev was a loyal successor to the great cause of Lenin a prominent activist of the international communist and workers' movement, a tireless fighter for peace and for the victory of socialism and communism, and a great friend of the Vietnamese people.

"Comrade Brezhnev's death is a great loss not only for the Soviet Communist Party and people, but also for the entire Vietnamese Communist Party and people, and for the whole of progressive mankind."



# A GREAT CHAMPION OF SOCIALISM AND PEACE

The Nhan Dan's editorial of November 15, 1982 wrote:

The Vietnamese communists and people will for ever remember Comrade Leonid Brezhnev with profound respect and sincere gratitude.

In nearly two decades at the head of the Soviet Party and State he made enormous contributions to consolidating and strengthening the great friendship, militant solidarity and all-round co-operation between the two parties and the two peoples.

During their long fight against US aggression our people always enjoyed vigorous support and valuable assistance from the Soviet Party, State and people. At each turning point of the situation we always heard words of encouragement full of fraternity from Comrade Brezhnev reaffirming the Soviet Union's unshakable solidarity with Vietnam. Every Vietnamese has engraved in his heart this statement of Comrade Brezhnev: For the communists and the entire people of the Soviet Union, to unite with Vietnam has been and is the dictate of our hearts and minds.

After the complete liberation of our country Comrade Brezhnev again reiterated his strong support for our people in the building of socialism and in the defence of our socialist homeland. He signed with Comrade Le Duan, the esteemed leader of our Party and people, the Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between the two countries on November 3, 1978. When the Beijing expansionists and hegemonists sent 600,000 troops to invade Vietnam, Comrade Brezhnev made a firm declaration: "In these difficult hours for the Vietnamese people, we fully and completely unite with them. Let no one have any doubt about the Soviet Union's loyalty to the Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation binding our two countries!"

Vietnamese — Soviet co-operation has not ceased to develop in the new stage. The annual meetings between Comrades Le Duan and Brezhnev have played

a major role in the broadening and strengthening of the relations of co-operation between the two parties and the two countries.

The fine results of the Vietnamese — Soviet talks at the Kremlin last October between a Vietnamese Party and State delegation led by Comrade Truong-Chinh and a delegation of the Soviet Party and State led by Comrade Brezhnev marked a new step in the development of the militant solidarity and all-round co-operation between the two countries. On that occasion, Comrade Brezhnev reaffirmed: "We know that nothing could shake the determination of the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea to build a new life. They have loyal and trustworthy friends, and among these friends there have been and there will always be the Party of Lenin and our Soviet State."

The Vietnamese communists and people have engraved in their hearts the image of respected Comrade Brezhnev, a close and esteemed friend of the Vietnamese people, and will never forget all that he has done for our nation and people.

Comrade Brezhnev is no more, but his great cause will for ever live with his country and his people, with all the friends of freedom and peace throughout the world.

Faced with this common loss of the Soviet Union and Vietnam, we feel all the more attached to our Soviet brothers and sisters. We closely unite with the Soviet Union and are confident in the strength and steadfastness of the Soviet Union. We believe that under the new leadership headed by Comrade Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov, a close comrade-in-arms of Comrade Brezhnev, the Soviet communists and people will certainly translate into reality the historic resolutions of the 26th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Long live Vietnamese — Soviet friendship!



# **VIETNAMESE PARTY AND STATE DELEGATION'S OFFICIAL FRIENDSHIP VISIT TO CUBA**

A delegation of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the Vietnamese State Council, headed by Truong-Chinh, Political Bureau member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam and President of the State Council, paid an official friendship visit to the Republic of Cuba from October 12 to 19, 1982.

A joint communiqué was released at the end of the visit.

The Vietnam-Cuba Joint Communiqué underlines both countries' complete unanimity on the strengthening of their relations of friendship, militant solidarity and fraternal co-operation as well as on important international problems of mutual concern.

Both sides strongly condemn the arms race policy of US imperialism and other international reactionary forces, highly value and fully support the Soviet Union's peace initiatives, and support movements for national independence and liberation. The two countries affirm their determination in the common struggle to strive for the preservation of the non-aligned movement's

aims, i.e. to struggle for peace, national independence and against imperialism. The two countries express their determination to contribute to the success of the coming seventh summit of the non-aligned movement, to promote the non-aligned movement to a new stage of development so as to meet the aspirations of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples.

The Republic of Cuba strongly condemns the expansionist and hegemonist policy of the reactionaries in the Chinese ruling circles in collusion with the US imperialists that threatens the peace and security of the world peoples, especially of Indochina and Southeast Asia. Cuba fully supports the proposals put forward by the Indochinese countries in the joint statement of the Sixth Conference of Vietnamese, Lao and Kampuchean Foreign Ministers and considers them as very important initiatives contributing to peace and stability in Southeast Asia.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam resolutely condemns the US imperialists and demands that they

immediately put an end to their schemes and war-like acts against Cuba and fully supports Cuba's noble cause in socialist construction and in the defence of the socialist homeland, and its correct stand to preserve peace and stability and to promote co-operation in Central America and the Caribbean.

The two countries declare that they will spare no effort to make a worthy contribution to the struggle to turn Southeast Asia and the Caribbean into regions of peace, stability, friendship and co-operation.

A treaty of friendship and co-operation between Vietnam and Cuba was signed on this occasion. The treaty provides for all-sided relations between the two fraternal countries in building socialism and communism and in the common struggle for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism as well. This treaty will be valid for twenty-five years and will be automatically renewed for periods of ten years, if neither party declares its intention of terminating it.



# DECLARATION

## ON THE BASELINE OF VIETNAM'S TERRITORIAL WATERS

The Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on November 12, 1982 issued the following Declaration on the baseline used to measure the width of Vietnam's territorial waters:

In furtherance of Paragraph 1 of the Declaration of May 12, 1977 of the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam concerning the territorial waters, the contiguous zone, the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf which was already approved by the Standing Committee of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic Vietnam

The Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam hereby defines the baseline used to measure the width of the territorial waters of Vietnam:

1. The baseline used to measure the width of the territorial waters of the continental part of Vietnam is constituted by straight lines linking the points the coordinates of which are mentioned in the table attached to this Declaration.

2. The baseline used to measure the width of the territorial waters of Vietnam going from point 0—the meeting point of the two baselines used to measure the width of the territorial waters of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and that of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, located on the high seas and on a straight line linking the Tho Chu Archipelago to the Poulo Wai Island to Con Co Island the coordinates of which are defined in the table, is drawn on maps of the 1/100,000 scale of the Vietnam People's Navy published prior to 1979.

3. The Bac Bo Gulf is a gulf situated between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the People's Republic of China. The maritime frontier drawn in the Gulf between Vietnam and China is defined in Article 2 of the Convention on the delimitation of the frontier between Vietnam and China signed on June 28, 1887 between France and the Qing dynasty.

The waters in the part of the Gulf belonging to Vietnam constitute the historical waters pertaining to the juridical regime of the internal waters of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

The baseline from Con Co Island to the opening of the Gulf will be defined following the settlement of the question of the opening line of the Gulf.

4. The baseline used to measure the width of the territorial waters of the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagos will be determined in an ensuing text in conformity with Paragraph 5 of the Declaration of

May 12, 1977 of the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

5. The waters situated on this side of the baseline of the territorial waters facing the coast and islands of Vietnam form the internal waters of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

6. The Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam will solve with the countries concerned through negotiations on the basis of mutual respect for each other's independence and sovereignty and in conformity with international law and practice the differences concerning the maritime zones and the continental shelf of each country.

## COORDINATES OF THE POINTS ON THE BASELINE USED TO MEASURE THE WIDTH OF VIETNAM'S TERRITORIAL WATERS

Points	GEOGRAPHIC NAMES	Latitude N	Longitude E
0	On the southwestern demarcation line of the historical waters of the SRV and the PR of Kampuchea		
A1	At the Hon Nhan Island, Tho Chu Archipelago, Kien Giang province	09°15'0	103°27'0
A2	At Hon Da Island, southeast of Hon Khoai Island, Minh Hai province	08°22'8	104°52'4
A3	At Tai Lon Islet, Con Dao Island in Con Dao—Vung Tau special sector	08°37'8	106°37'5
A4	At Bong Lang Islet, Con Dao Island	08°38'9	106°40'3
A5	At Bay Canh Islet, Con Dao Island	08°39'7	106°42'1
A6	At Hon Hai Islet (Phu Quy group of islands), Thuan Hai province	09°58'0	109°05'0
A7	At Hon Doi Islet, Thuan Hai province	12°39'0	109°28'0
A8	At Dai Lanh Point, Phu Khanh province	12°53'8	109°27'2
A9	At Ong Can Islet, Phu Khanh province	13°54'0	109°21'0
A10	At Ly Son Islet, Nghia Binh province	15°23'1	109°09'0
A11	At Con Co Island, Binh Tri Thien province	17°10'0	107°20'6



**TABLE OF COORDINATES**

POSITION	LATITUDE(N)	LONGITUDE(E)
0	Situated on the southwest boundary of the historical waters of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the P.R. of Kampuchea	
A1	09°15'0	103°27'0
A2	08°22'8	104°52'4
A3	08°37'8	106°37'5
A4	08°38'9	106°40'3
A5	08°39'7	106°42'1
A6	09°58'0	109°05'0
A7	12°39'0	109°28'0
A8	12°53'8	109°27'2
A9	13°54'0	109°21'0
A10	15°23'1	109°09'0
A11	17°10'0	107°20'6



# VIETNAM'S THREE SUCCESSIVE CONSTITUTIONS: THEIR ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS

That Vietnam should one day have her own constitution was on the mind of the young patriot Nguyen Ai Quoc in the very first years of his mysterious emigration. It may be recalled that among the Eight Claims sent by him to the Versailles Conference held by the Allied Powers in 1919 at the end of the First World War, Point 7 demanded that France should grant a Constitution and replace the regime of decrees by that of laws in the administration of the three countries of Indochina pending the official recognition of the peoples' sacred right to self-determination. Small wonder that that courageous gesture which "produced a bomb-shell" in Paris bore, however, no concrete result. This eventually led Nguyen Ai Quoc, enlightened by the teaching of Lenin, to conclude: "The only way to free the nation is to liberate the proletarian masses. Both liberations can only come from communism and world revolution."

The two banners, the national and the socialist — as emphasized at the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam held in 1976 — have guided our people's revolutionary movement over the past half century and more. They have also lighted the path for the building of a Vietnamese constitutional regime over the past 35 years. In successive stages of the revolution these two great and noble tasks have combined in varying degrees. They laid the foundations for our three successive Constitutions. In this way they have governed the advance of our society as well as the material and spiritual life of our people.

## I

### The 1946 Constitution: For total independence and the building of the country on democratic foundations

The fundamental rights of nations and the fundamental rights of Man: these two primary elements of human life, organically linked together by President Ho Chi Minh in the Declaration of Independence of 2 September 1945, inspired the Constitution of 1946.

Approved by the National Assembly in November 1946, it stated in its Preamble: "The August Revolution wrested back sovereignty for the nation and freedom for the people and established the democratic republic... Our country has entered a new period..."

But in the months that followed, when the groundwork was being laid for the constitutional regime, the French colonialists again landed in Nam Bo (former Cochinchina), expanded their invasion, then, violating the Preliminary Convention of 6 March 1946, rigged up a Southern State and started hostilities in the North. "Independence and democracy were like a thousand-kilogram weight hanging by a hair." It was stated in the Constitution: "The nation's task in the present period is to safeguard territorial integrity, regain total independence and build the country on democratic foundations."

With a view to building democracy the Constitution gave three directives: 1. Unite the entire people

regardless of race, nationality, sex, class and religion. 2. Guarantee democratic freedoms. 3. Realize the people's powerful and enlightened State power.

The dominant principle, as can be seen, was to put the nation's supreme interests above class interests. The point was to implement the line charted by the Party Central Committee on 25 October 1941 and clearly laid down in these words filled with patriotic fervour: "At present, if we fail to resolve the problem of national liberation and to regain complete independence, not only would the whole country, the whole nation be reduced to the fate of draught animals — buffaloes and horses — but we would never be able to overcome class-interest, even tens of thousands of years from now." And so the 1946 Constitution did not solve the agrarian question although it lay at the core of the people's democratic revolution. It addressed itself essentially to the task of framing regulations for and organizing the people's sovereign rights on the political plane. Indeed it was clear that the people would have everything if they held revolutionary State power and that they would keep everything if they kept that power.



## Organization of the people's State power

The 1946 Constitution set up an entirely new State apparatus. Already in late 1924, in a course of initiation to the "revolutionary path" given in Canton to "Young Revolutionary Comrades", Nguyen Ai Quoc had told them: "As we endure a thousand sacrifices struggling for the revolutionary cause, we must wage a thorough revolution. This means that once the revolution is accomplished, power should be entrusted to the majority of the population, not left in the hands of the minority. Only on that condition shall we not have to endure new sacrifices; only on that condition shall the people win happiness."

The State set up by the Constitution was indeed the State of the working class and the peasantry in a broad union with the other patriotic strata of the national united front. The backbone of the State apparatus was made up of the system of People's Committees directly sprung from the pre-insurrectional Committees of the Viet Minh (League for the Independence of Vietnam). Following the general and local elections of 1946 this system quickly became that of People's Councils topped by the National Assembly which was, in President Ho Chi Minh's words (in his Report on the Revised Constitution in 1959), the "People's Council for the Whole Nation". It may be recalled that the National Liberation Committee elected by the Viet Minh National Congress meeting in Tan Trao in early August 1945 had proclaimed itself "Provisional Government of Vietnam" in order to give leadership to the general insurrection. The Tan Trao Congress had assumed the task of a Provisional National Assembly and the "Ten Political Measures of the Viet Minh" which it had made public may be considered the forerunner of the 1946 Constitution. Although this Constitution fulfilled its historic task long ago, the people's State power of which it laid the foundations has continued

to develop and evinces increasing vitality.

## How to fulfil the anti-feudal task and safeguard the interests of the workers?

Let us note that while democracy was excellent on the political plane, its economic foundation was not yet very solid. The Constitution stated: "The right of private ownership is guaranteed." (Art. 12). This means that the land-owners still subsisted as a class. This should not surprise us. "The anti-feudal task must be fulfilled together with the anti-imperialist task, as demanded by the strategic line for the whole period of the people's democratic and national revolution. In the present stage, we must conduct the anti-feudal struggle step by step, according to a definite plan, so as to increase the forces of the people while safeguarding the great national unity needed in the resistance to imperialist invaders." Thus said Truong-Chinh at the Party's Second Congress (February 1951).

On the other hand, the Constitution stated: "The interests of the workers, intellectual as well as manual, are guaranteed" (Art. 13). In fact, in the very first months of its activity, the Provisional Government ordered a 25% reduction in rents. Later, during the Resistance, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam decreed the confiscation of lands belonging to French colonialists and Vietnamese traitors, shared them among poor peasants and redistributed communal rice-fields in a more equitable fashion, reduced the interest rate, etc. For workers and employees of private enterprises, a veritable labour legislation was promulgated (Decree of 12 March 1947) which established the 8-hour working day, weekly holiday, disability pension in case of accident, etc. With regard to intellectuals, the republican government maintained at its service almost all functionaries of the former regime, even appointing some to leading posts in central government departments, administrative committees and law-courts.

land-owners in general and the big landlords in particular lick the boots of the imperialists, compromise with them and betray the homeland. In face of our democratic reforms, they engage in slander and sabotage, thus preventing our economy from developing and our society from advancing". The peasant masses, in contrast, endured great sacrifices in both the armed struggle and the payment of taxes. This state of affairs urged the Party to bring a radical solution to the anti-feudal question.

## The agrarian law of 1953 and developed democracy

Agrarian reform was decided upon at the Central Committee plenum of January 1953 and approved by the National Assembly in December 1953. The *Law on Agrarian Reform* gave land to the tillers, abolished the land-owning class, established the political hegemony of the working peasantry in the countryside, imparted a decisive momentum to the resistance and a vigorous impulse to agriculture.

With the Agrarian Law, the people's democracy advanced to a higher stage. On the economic plane, the 1946 Constitution was clearly left behind for it had expressed social reality and laid down political tasks only for the historical stage going from August 1945 to the end of 1952. During those years, the toiling classes (essentially the peasantry) had spearheaded their struggle against the enemy of the nation and had paid little attention to their fundamental class interests.

The 1946 Constitution was that of the first stage of the people's revolution, marked by the supremacy of the task of national liberation. As a result, in order to determine the constitutional regime of our country during the entire period of the people's national democratic revolution, we must base ourselves on both the Constitution of 1946 and the Agrarian Law of 1953. The latter was not an ordinary law, promulgated with a view to the implementation of the 1946 Constitution. It was a constitutional law aimed at completing and developing further the 1946 Constitution.

The resolution adopted at the 14th plenum of the Party Central Committee in November 1958 said: "The successful agrarian reform has

## II

### Completion of people's democracy and passage to socialism — The 1959 Constitution

At the Second Party Congress, General Secretary Truong-Chinh, in his report on "The Vietnamese

Revolution", reviewed the changes in society since the start of French colonial aggression: "The class of



helped increase agricultural production, and has paved the way for economic progress and the development of the regime of people's democracy in its gradual advance to socialism."

On 31 December 1959, the National Assembly approved a new draft Constitution.

In its preamble this Constitution declared itself to be the "Constitution for the building of socialism in the North, the struggle for the country's reunification, and for the completion of the people's national democratic revolution." It raised high two banners: National Independence and Socialism, and was aimed at implementing the two strategic lines to be laid down by the Third Party Congress the following year (1960), given the fact that "the building of socialism in the North is the decisive factor for the full development of the Vietnamese revolution and the reunification of the country."

Thus the predominant task in the North was to advance resolutely to socialism. The Constitution devoted the whole of its Chapter 2 to the "economic and social regime". It laid down the principle of socialist transformation of the age-old economy which was to lead to the definitive suppression of private ownership of the means of production; it entrusted the State with the task of directing the country's economic activity according to a single plan (Art. 10), etc. At a conference held in the spring of 1961 for the political education of cadres, President Ho Chi Minh said: "At present the socialist revolution has won decisive successes... The exploitation of man by man has been abolished. *The working people have become the master of society, the master of the State...* The workers have become the collective master of all material and cultural wealth and are equal in rights and obligations." (Emphasis ours).

It was due to the establishment of that economic infrastructure that *the people's State power set up since the 1946 Constitution found its class content reinforced.* Indeed it was affirmed in the Constitution that "The Democratic Republic of Vietnam is a people's democratic State founded on the alliance of the working class and the peasantry under the leadership of the working class." Several articles of the Fundamental Law brought the

organization of the State apparatus to the "hitherto highest degree of people's democracy". Let us note for instance the more complete concentration of power in the representative organs, the law-courts being under the authority of the National Assembly and the People's Councils (Art. 104); let us also note a more advanced direct democracy, the districts having their own elected bodies for the exercise of State power (Art. 79), etc.

### **The first steps in the advance to socialism**

While there was already in the North a highly advanced State apparatus built and perfected by the Party and the toiling masses over several decades of persevering effort and while the people's political power had taken on a clearly socialist character, one must recognize that the country had remained at the stage of small-scale production with an essentially agricultural economy, backward and parcelled out, although the land had been collectivized. In his book *The Vietnamese Revolution — Fundamental Problems — Essential Tasks* published in 1970<sup>1</sup> Party General Secretary Le Duan said:

"The struggle between the two ways — the capitalist and the socialist — in the North of our country consists essentially in a struggle to raise small-scale production to large-scale socialist production. To hold firm to the dictatorship of the proletariat in order to carry out simultaneously the three revolutions, the keystone being the scientific and technical revolution — such is the basic content of class

*struggle in the period of transition to socialism in the North of our country."*

The 1959 Constitution declared that "The Democratic Republic of Vietnam is gradually advancing from people's democracy to socialism thanks to the development and the socialist transformation of the economy" (Art. 9). In other words, the economy of North Vietnam was characterized by the parallel existence of several forms of ownership of the means of production and several corresponding economic sectors. Article 11 of the Constitution said: "During the period of transition in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the main forms of ownership of the means of production are: ownership by the State, i.e. of the entire people; ownership by the cooperatives, i.e. collective ownership by the workers; ownership by the individual worker; and ownership by the national bourgeoisie." The people's democratic State exercising the functions of the State of the dictatorship of the proletariat set itself the task of "protecting, assisting and at the same time orienting and transforming" the non-socialist sectors in the interest of the gradual construction of socialism. Above all, the State ran the State sector for which it ensured priority growth so that it could play a leading role in the economic life of the whole country (Art. 12).

We may infer from the above that the 1959 Constitution in both its stipulations and spirit was the Constitution of the early stage of the period of transition to socialism in the northern part of Vietnam, which had been artificially partitioned due to the U.S. imperialists.

## **III**

### **The Constitution of 1980: the Constitution of the building and defence of the socialist Vietnamese homeland**

Following the Great Victory of Spring 1975, Vietnam regained total independence and territorial integrity. The National Assembly sprung from nation-wide general elections met in July 1976 and at its very first session proclaimed the name of reunified Vietnam to be the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. A symbolic event: for the

first time, before the representatives of the entire people, the Party General Secretary in the name of the Central Committee delivered a speech which charted the road ahead for the whole nation. The National Assembly approved the General Secretary's definition of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Vietnam as the right to collec-



tive mastery in the hands of the working masses with the worker-peasant alliance at the core, a right which they are to exercise through the agency of the State and under the leadership of the Party.

### **The right to collective mastery constitutionalized**

The Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, held in December 1976, decided that a new Constitution be worked out to "institutionalize the socialist right of collective mastery of the working people. "In the Political Report to the Congress, it was emphasized that the exercise of the right to collective mastery through the agency of the State would set in motion the acting energy and creative spirit of the working masses and a strong impulse would be given our nation, resulting in the country advancing at a rate hitherto unknown.

The Constitution, approved by the National Assembly on 18 December 1980, proclaimed itself to be the heir of the Constitutions of 1946 and 1959, which it developed. It called itself the "Constitution of the period of transition to socialism in the whole territory of Vietnam." In its Article 2, it proclaimed the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, a State of proletarian dictatorship, whose historical mission is first and foremost to realize the workers' right to collective mastery. Article 3 says that this State is to guarantee the constant improvement and consolidation of the regime of socialist collective mastery of the working people in all fields — political, economic, cultural and social.

The fundamental principles of the regime of collective mastery are set forth in the Preamble: "The Party leads, the people act as collective master, the State manages". Those fundamental principles express the *primary organic relationship between the three constituent elements of the political system.*

Under Article 6 of the Constitution; all power belongs to the people, who exercise State power through their representative organs — the National Assembly and the People's Councils — which they elect directly and which are directly responsible to them. The Party is the sole force which gives leadership to the State and society (Art. 4). The State mobilizes and organizes the people to carry out the three revolutions (revolution in

the relations of production, scientific and technical revolution, and ideological and cultural revolution), abolish the regime of exploitation of man by man, successfully build socialism, stamp out all counter-revolutionary opposition and repel all foreign invasion, and contribute to the consolidation of peace and revolutionary movement throughout the world.

The workers' right to collective mastery is present in all other chapters of the Constitution, which deal with the economic regime, the fundamental rights and duties of the citizens, the organization of the State apparatus, etc. Concerning citizens' rights and duties in particular, the Constitution harmonizes the demands of social life with the genuine liberties of the individual and guarantees the unity of the interests of the State, the collective, and the individual in accordance with this principle: "Each for all, and all for each" (Art. 54).

### **The system of People's Councils perfected**

Due to their effective functioning over 35 years, the People's Councils, both national and local, are recognized by the Fundamental Law of 1980 as "the political foundation of the system of State organs" (Art. 76).

The new Constitution perfects this people's representative apparatus for it to better serve the dictatorship of the proletariat. For instance, *the principle of the unity of socialist power, both legislative and executive, embodied in the elected bodies of the working people, is more than ever reinforced.* Indeed, besides Article 83 which lists the 15 attributions of the National Assembly, as was done by the previous Constitution, there is Article 82 which stipulates that this supreme people's council holds not only supreme legislative but also executive (or administrative) power for it "decides upon the fundamental internal and external policies, the objectives of economic and cultural development, the principal rules governing the organization and activity of the State apparatus and the citizens' social relationships and activity. Likewise, the Council of State, in addition to its concrete attributions, is given the general power to "decide upon important questions related to the construction of socialism and the defence of the homeland" (Art. 100 and 98). In the

same spirit, before listing the 12 concrete attributions of the local People's Councils (Art. 115), the Constitution gives them the overall task of "deciding upon and carrying out" measures aimed at "building the locality in every field, ensuring its economic and cultural development, raising the people's standard of living..." (Art. 114). Let us point out that there were, no such provisions in the 1959 Constitution.

In consequence, according to the new Constitution, one may distinguish two categories of functions belonging to the representative organs. The first are explicitly listed legislative (regulatory) or managerial ones, which belong exclusively to the representative organs and which they do not share with the executive organs — Council of Ministers or People's Committees. The second category includes managerial functions which are formulated in an abstract fashion, which are part of their general competence, and which they share with the executive — administrative organs. It is understood that the decision-making power of the latter, which are professional managers if one may say so, is subordinated to the decision-making power of the representative organs, which is of a general character.

### **The economic system of the S.R.V. in the period of transition to socialism**

While the political system of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, built on a frame of People's Councils which have been well consolidated after forty years of struggle for the "two liberations" (national liberation and emancipation of the workers), is now a powerful instrument serving the people's building of socialism, the economic system is by contrast only undergoing construction and is facing enormous difficulties. This is of course essentially due to objective reasons. We are only at the start of the period of transition. The country's economy is extremely weak and heterogeneous. Amidst untold devastations due to war, there remains an ocean of individual proprietors and entrepreneurs, even private capitalists, especially in the newly-liberated South. The Party line, as charted at the Fourth Congress, is to mobilize all productive forces for the advance to socialism. So, the Constitution of 1980 gives the



socialist State the task of "orienting, utilizing and transforming the non-socialist sectors of the economy" (Art. 18). It authorizes any worker to conduct personal economic activity which conforms to the law in the fields of agriculture, small industry, handicrafts, services and artistic professions (Art. 24). Incidentally, let us note that the Fifth Party Congress asserted that "the family economy must be given encouragement, guidance and assistance and made into an integral part of the socialist economy."

On the other hand, one must not lose sight of something we have built at the cost of great efforts and which is for us a legitimate source of pride: for more than 20 years a State sector and a socialist cooperative sector have been successfully put to the test in the North. Together with a political system which is solidly built albeit still confined until 1975 to one half of the country and functioning in wartime conditions, *This State sector has been able to play a leading role in the national economy*, as asserted in the Constitution (Art. 18). Another favourable element: planned cooperation and mutual assistance within the socialist community (Art. 143). Thus, the new Constitution has good grounds for declaring that our Socialist Republic, whose economy is still essentially one of small-scale production, is advancing directly to socialism, bypassing the stage of capitalist development, and will successfully fulfil its central task: the socialist industrialization of the country (Art. 15 and 16).

Drawing upon the experience gained in the North over the past 20 years, the new Fundamental Law makes a constitutional principle of the *socialist mode of economic management*, to be applied in Vietnam during the period of transition—something which the 1959 Constitution was naturally not able to do. This means: to combine central planning by the State with the independent activity and creative spirit of the various echelons of the economic apparatus, production branches and units, and individual workers, in working out and implementing State plans; to bring into play the economic laws of socialism; to apply the principles of democratic centralism; to harmonize the interests of the State, the collective, and the individual (Art. 33 and 34).

### The defence imperative

Economic and cultural building, which calls for the greatest efforts from our people, should not, however, take precedence over the defence of the homeland. This lesson drawn from our millennia-old history is embodied in the double revolutionary task in which our people have been engaged for the last half century: independence and socialism, to fight and to build, to build and to fight. The defence imperative is vindicated by this exceptional political situation: "Our socialist revolution is unfolding in an eventful, very complex international context. Militarist groups in imperialist countries, in collusion with the Chinese expansionist and hegemonist clique, are mustering their forces to counter the world revolutionary movement,

the Soviet Union and the socialist community in particular... Our country now finds itself in a situation in which we have peace yet must face multifiform sabotage by the Chinese expansionists and hegemonists acting in collusion with the American imperialists. At the same time we must stand ready to face a large-scale armed invasion." (Political report of the Central Committee to the Fifth Congress of the CPV). This lesson of history has been highlighted in the new Constitution. *A special chapter is devoted to the "defence of the socialist homeland."* This Chapter 4 immediately follows chapters on the economic system, culture, education, science and technology. Let us also note that Article 16, Chapter 1, stresses that the economy is to be associated with national defence.

### CONCLUSION

This review of the three successive Constitutions of Vietnam leads to these three observations:

1. In order to characterize a socialist Constitution, one should base oneself on the tasks of the revolution in a given historical period or a particular stage in that period. These tasks dominate the life of a people at a definite stage of their development, in accordance with the inter-relationship between the economic infrastructure and the socialist political superstructure. Thus our 1946 Constitution was that of the first stage of the people's national democratic revolution. The 1959 Constitution was that of the first stage of the period of transition to socialism in North Vietnam. The 1980 Constitution is that of the period of transition to socialism in the whole of reunified Vietnam. All three Constitutions have been adopted while the country is facing, or threatened with, foreign aggression.

2. Concerning our country and its three successive Constitutions, one must stress that the fundamental tasks of the Revolution are related in varying degrees, depending on the historical period, to the solution of crucial problems which are tied together and command the destiny of our people. With the 1946 Constitution the national banner was raised higher than the class banner. With the 1959 Constitution the two banners are at an equal height. With the 1980 Constitution, the national and socialist banners are one and are raised

higher than ever. These somewhat oversimplified metaphors have at least the merit of making the comparison more vivid.

3. The first Constitution had not yet set up an economic base. The second and third Constitutions establish an entirely new economic regime which is, however, only taking shape and still lacks sufficient material and technical bases. But all three have a political regime that is clearly set forth, rests on solid foundations and resolutely states its aims. This is a people's State power that is, in the words of our beloved President Ho Chi Minh, both "powerful and enlightened". This power is exercised through the agency of the system of People's Councils, national and local, which has been strengthened and perfected in successive historical periods and has now become an effective tool of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the enforcement of the workers' right to collective mastery and in the building and defence of the socialist homeland. One should note that any socialist constitution is not only the consecration of a state of affairs accomplished by the revolution but also a political programme for the development of the country, now and in future.

VU DINH HOE

1. Foreign Languages Publishing House — Third Edition, 1978, p. 92.



**TEN YEARS AGO**

# **THE AERIAL DIEN BIEN PHU BATTLE AGAINST THE US AIR FORCE**

The strategic air attack of the US Air Force against North Vietnam lasted twelve days and nights from December 18 to December 29, 1972, and on the least expected occasion, the Christmas season. In earlier years, at this time, it had been customary to agree, tacitly if not formally, to a cease-fire so that the Catholic community in Vietnam could celebrate together with their fellow believers throughout the world. Moreover, the Paris talks were nearing their final stage and the hopes for "a peace at hand" had never been so great in Vietnam, in the United States and elsewhere in the world.

For twelve days and nights on end the US Air Force sent from 500 — 700 sorties of tactical aircraft and 130 — 150 sorties of B.52 strategic bombers daily to North Vietnam. Apart from the two main targets which were Hanoi and Haiphong, US planes showered bombs on 11 towns including Thai Nguyen, Viet Tri, and Vinh, 14 district towns and 300 villages. The 1972 Christmas "present" of the White House to the Vietnamese people included 100,000 tons of bombs which represented an explosive force five times that of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. And the ordnance used was very diversified. There were airborne rockets, bombs of 2,000—3,000 pounds to obliterate whole industrial projects, laser-guided "smart" bombs to destroy isolated targets with surgical accuracy, anti-tank perforating bombs to destroy shelters deep in the ground, fragmentation and flechette bombs under the generic name of anti-personnel ordnance. These did not include the

CS-gas bombs which caused widespread intoxication in the provinces of Quang Binh, Ha Tinh, Thanh Hoa, Son La and elsewhere.

In addition to the customary aircraft such as the A-6, A-7, F-105 and F-4 which had daily sown death and destruction in Vietnam for a dozen years, the Pentagon this time sent into action two of its "trumps", the F-111 swing-wing fighter-bomber, the latest model in the arsenal of the US Air Force which could fly very low at supersonic speed to avoid detection by ground radar without losing its capacity for accurate strike. (These aircraft, capable of carrying nuclear warheads, are now deployed in US bases in Britain.)

But the main weapon the Pentagon counted on remained the intercontinental strategic B.52 bombers taken from the basic weapons arsenal of the US Air Force which came into production in the mid-fifties.

This machine of extermination can carry 30 tons of bombs including nuclear bombs, can fly at a maximum altitude of 16 kilometres and is equipped with electronic devices to escape radar detection as well as with means to detect and destroy enemy planes from a long distance. Each B.52 sortie is accompanied by a squadron of support attack aircraft. In terms of money, each plane costs 9 million dollars, the cost of training a member of the 6-member crew is valued at 70 kilos of gold and the cost of each sortie, excluding the cost of support and ordnance, stands at 41,000 dollars. Of course, Washington planned its crime with utmost lucidity. It maintained absolute secrecy, meaning to inflict a crippling

blow on the adversary without a word being said, and on the other hand, to muzzle its victims by obliterating the Voice of Vietnam Radio right in the first raid. If things had happened as planned by the strategists and electronic computers of the Pentagon this would have been a very swift and definitive blow that would have given Vietnam no time to react and would have presented the world with a fait accompli when the news finally reached the outside.

Anyone who witnessed the strategic attack of the US Air Force against North Vietnam cannot help shudder even now as they recollect those days. Daylight was the time for the operation of the tactical air force. The attack aircraft would bomb or search out aircraft, radar stations, flak emplacements, rocket launchers, MIG shelters, fuel and ammunition depots, infantry gun nests of the militia... in short, all the targets which were either constantly on the move or were carefully camouflaged and defended and as such posed a deadly threat to the American pilots. The B.52 fleets usually operated at night. For consecutive nights from December 18 the population of Hanoi and Haiphong could see these monsters coming from the west where lies neighbouring Thailand. In the inky night they flew in broad V-formation defiantly blinking their signals while moving slowly, inexorably to their targets.

In the shelters deep underground one could hear their arrival from a great distance. At first they sounded like the roar of the sea, ominous, mysterious and oppressive. Then when the bombs began raining, the shelter would rock and



roll like a ship on a rough sea. The moment seemed interminable.

"Whose turn would be next?" everyone was asking themselves because nobody thought they could possibly survive if they were in the area of a carpet bombing.

In Hanoi alone, during those 12 frightful days and nights, the B.52s carpet-bombed 353 places inside and outside the city, causing particularly heavy destruction at Van Dien, Me Tri, An Duong, Luong Yen, Kham Thien, Gia Lam, Yen Vien, Co Loa... The compound of the Bach Mai hospital, a major treatment and research centre of the country with 1,200 sick beds and 50 laboratories was virtually obliterated. Some foreign embassies were also hit. In the stricken areas mangled bodies lay in different positions evoking the scene painted by Picasso in his famous "Guernica", that city of 7,000 souls destroyed by Nazi aircraft during the Spanish war. Some visitors also thought of Dresden where 30,000 people were massacred in one night in the last days of the Second World War when 3,000 sorties of 1,000 Allied aircraft staged an extermination bombing allegedly to deal a finishing blow

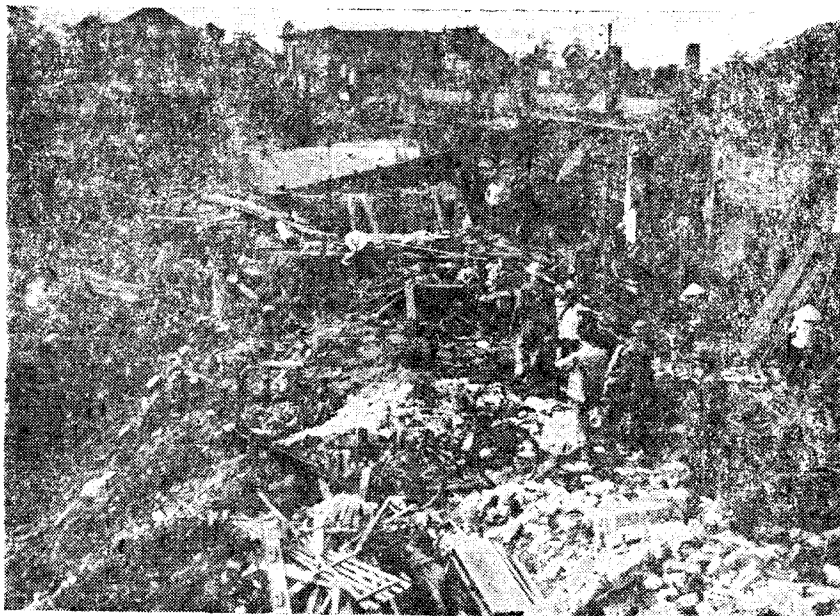
to Nazism but actually to check the stormy advance of the Soviet army into the last refuge of Hitler's regime.

Perhaps, their deaths at least had taught the Vietnamese to be ever aware of the butcher mentality which comes to the fore in times of war. Immediately after Washington started its war escalation against North Vietnam all the cities and towns had, by a general order, organized a large-scale evacuation. Together with the factories, government offices, schools and hospitals, everyone whose presence in the towns was not strictly necessary left for the countryside where they lived under the protection of the peasants. Among the victims of the US strategic air blitz not a few died because they had ignored the order of evacuation, in the false belief that Washington might give them a chance for family reunion during Christmas Day. They thought that the leaders of America were also pious worshippers of God and that the then president of the United States, when placing his hand on the Bible in his swearing-in ceremony, would not dare to make a fool of God even though he might gamble on the people's credulity.

### The collapse of a myth

The B.52 stratofortresses were first used in the Vietnam war on the 18th of June 1965 seven years six months before the air blitz on Hanoi and Haiphong. They had made regular bombings against the stationing areas of the South Vietnam Liberation Armed Forces deep in the jungle. But these were mostly ineffective due to the elusiveness of their adversary. These giant bombers are not visible to naked eye because they fly at a very high altitude. They can be detected from the ground by sheer experience, and can be firmly identified only when the first carpet of bombs shakes the earth like rolling thunder. As for the B.52 crews, they had the self-confidence of an executioner in front of his tied-up victim. They knew perfectly that they were out of harm's way and any danger to their lives could only come from some technical trouble in the air.

The same confidence remained intact as they were ordered to fly into North Vietnam, until the results of the electronic computers of the Pentagon proved to be too simplistic. First there were several elements of surprise for the F.111s when they were detected by ground radar and met with a dense fire network from the machine-guns and other infantry rifles specifically posted on flat ground or on flat-roofed buildings to ambush low-flying aircraft. The flak emplacements were so positioned to weave a crossfire around aircraft flying at medium altitude. But the surprise was completed for the B.52 armada by SAM 2 missiles which had been improved right on the Vietnamese soil to attain the necessary range.



Part of Kham Thien Street destroyed by B.52 bombers on December 26, 1972.

Photo: VNA



## A B.52 shot down in Hanoi.

Photo: MINH TRUONG

And only a few minutes after these "fire-spitting dragons" went into action, the "MIG" interceptors from their ambush places shot into the high sky thanks to a system of rocket-propulsion and did the remaining job. The first night of the blitz also witnessed the first downing of the supposedly invincible B.52 flying fortresses. The fall of a super bomber in the night sky of Hanoi is something to be remembered for life. From very high a ball of fire flared up and grew gradually until it became a blaze lighting up a wide area that made a newspaper readable one kilometre away.

Also on that first night, amidst the thunder of bombs and gunfire, at the Thong Nhat Hotel, which was called "Metropole" in French times, a waitress hurriedly took off her apron and picked up a rifle to join the militia in shooting at low-flying aircraft on top of the hotel. "Aren't you afraid?" a foreign reporter asked. "Don't you see that houses are falling down all around?" "Houses may go down," she replied, "but the Vietnamese will never fall." At other times this might sound a bit high-flown but it did not at that moment, especially when the first B.52 was set ablaze over the sky in Hanoi and the public address system of the city announced that the suburban militia had captured the first B.52 airmen. More and more B.52s were shot down on the following nights, reaching a record of five planes on the single night of December 26 over Hanoi alone. People danced and cheered at the gun emplacements and in air-raid shelters, and flocked together to ferret out the fugitive downed airmen while fragments of the shattered aircraft fell all over the city. The White House and the Pentagon had intended to engineer a tragedy right in the cradle of the Vietnamese nation, a wound that would be remembered



for life by every Vietnamese. But the riposte was so severe, so surprising and so effective that the enemy himself was dumbfounded.

In those days the world press made frequent references to the "Hanoi Hilton", a humorous name for the Vietnamese prison for American airmen. During the strategic air blitz an average of a dozen or so B.52 airmen who used to be the idols of their lesser colleagues were taken to the "Hanoi Hilton" daily.

Lieutenant John Harry Yuill, 38, brought to the "Hanoi Hilton" on the night of December 21, may be regarded as a typical case. He had flown into Hanoi aboard a B.52 taking off from the Utapao airbase in Thailand. His record would impress any flyer: 5,500 hours of flight, 3,200 of which aboard B.52 bombers. He said: "My aircraft was hit by a rocket at an altitude of 25,000 feet. This is one of the worst Christmas I've ever lived. I have seen in Life magazine many pilots of tactical aircraft imprisoned here. I knew full well that their number is very, very big. But I never thought that we pilots of strategic bombers would one day share their fate." Statements in the same vein could be heard from many other captured US airmen. All of them

before take-off were assured by their commanders that there would be nothing to fear. "Yours will be a night raid from very high. The communist SAMs and MIGs will be of no use. Just fly in single line and come back. You'll return safely to base without a single plane missing."

Were the US commanders fooling their subalterns? Were they fooling themselves? Maybe both. At any rate, the strategic air blitz ended in a complete fiasco. Within 12 days and nights the US Air Force lost 81 aircraft including 23 B.52 stratofortresses and five tactical F.111 fighter-bombers. Hundreds of US pilots were either captured or reported missing. These were almost the last US aircraft downed over North Vietnam because the United States was to declare a bomb halt on January 15, 1973. By then the cemetery for US aircraft in North Vietnam had already gathered the wrecks of 5,000 planes of 47 different types. A myth estimated at billions of dollars—to borrow a favourite American way of reckoning—had just collapsed: the invincibility of the US Air Force in general and of the B.52 armada in particular.



Together with this military setback Washington also experienced an unprecedented loss of face politically. Before the whole world the White House and the Pentagon had appeared in their true colours as the lair of modern barbarians. The raid sparked off vigorous protest in all continents drawing a wide cross-section of the population including political, social and religious organizations, intellectuals, scientists and artists. Many governments, particularly those in the socialist and non-aligned countries, and even several Western governments, issued vigorous condemnations. What is most noteworthy was that taking part in this world-wide protest movement were also broad masses of the American people, congressmen and prominent American personalities.

At the same time, the progressive world warmly welcomed the exploit of the small Vietnam in the fight against the American Goliath and its success in defeating the enemy scheme of using electronic warfare to push it back to the Stone Age.

In Vietnamese folk literature there is a tale about a woodcutter, Thach Sanh, who in a fight against a boa-monster used his magic axe to cut its head, but each time the head fell another grew in its place so that he had to cut nine heads before the monster was finished. The Vietnamese might consider the strategic air blitz of the US Air Force the ninth head of the boa-monster. Washington subsequently had to return to the Paris conference table and on January 27, 1973 signed the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam. Then on March 29, 1973 the last units of the US expeditionary corps left South Vietnam under the signed agreement.

The Vietnamese press named the victory over the B.52s the aerial Dien Bien Phu battle. Ten years have gone by since. The fields devastated by B.52 bombs are again covered with luxuriant rice and the houses destroyed have been rebuilt. Pham Tuan, one of the heroes of this battle who shot down a B.52 with his MIG, has become the first Vietnamese cosmonaut.

VU CAN

# AN AVIATION SCHOOL

The briefing room was in an unimpressive building at one end of the airfield. It was bare of all decoration and the furniture consisted solely of a long table and, around it, solid but mismatched chairs. Its simplicity verged on poverty reminiscent of the time of guerrilla warfare and in contrast to the air of modernity generated by the neat rows of jet fighters on the apron.

It had rained the whole of the previous week. Now the weather had cleared and training had resumed. There would be a lot of work but everybody was filled with expectation.

The briefing was presided over by Tran Quang Ngu, group deputy-commander. On his orders the other officers reported on the weather, physical fitness of the trainees, the aircraft, the runways and radar control. The principal performers, however, were the four trainees in their early twenties—Nguyen Van Vinh from Vinh Phu province, Tran Huu Tung from Nghe Tinh, Dang Hung Trang from Hai Hung, and Lam Van Tiep, a Tay national from Cao Bang. All were secondary-school graduates and from a peasant background. Since their kiteflying days, they had dreamed of becoming pilots and now their dreams had come true. They had completed the first course organized in the country for jet pilots and were now receiving follow-up training to become instructors.

In the old days, locally-trained jet pilots had to start with less sophisticated aircraft. Those who wished to take a short cut had to go to the Soviet Union. Now a training group has been set up for beginners by the School of Air Force Officers and Aviation Technique.

A two-seater jet was waiting on the runway. Tran Quang Ngu and another officer boarded it, took off, and made a wide circle for meteorological reconnaissance.

It was now the turn of the aspiring instructors—four tall, solidly built youth, who sprang up and ran towards four parked jet fighters. Their movements were quick and precise, but quite natural. They checked their machines, shut the sliding canopies, and gave the thumbs-up sign. From the control tower the group deputy-commander could now order the take-off.

The jets took off one by one to practise flying in formation. The school was close to a large town. Below were ricefields, factories, office buildings, and roads heavy with traffic. In the first days, people on the ground, would pause at whatever they were doing to gaze up the aircraft, and the pilots, knowing that they were being watched, would become self-conscious. Now flying had become a routine to both parties.



"Tower to Forty-seven. Can you see the ground clearly?"

"Tower to Fifty-three. Are the dials in good order?"

"Climb, Eighty-four!"

"Watch your direction, Seventy-two!"

The deputy-commander was speaking into the mike on the desk, his voice clear, undramatic. The drill ended at noon. The trainees returned to ground, outwardly normal. Only their doctors could tell that they were exhausted.

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The flying school of the Vietnam People's Air Force opened in the winter of 1958. During the first years each time a Czechoslovak-built propeller-driven "Trenner" appeared in the sky over Hai Phong, it filled both pilot and spectators with pride. The aircraft were filmed and photographed as a major event in the life of the country, which has just emerged from the war against the French and was girding itself for another war, this time against the Americans. Twenty-four years had gone by and the young men who were now flying jet trainers could remember, looking at old photographs, the time when they had been mere toddlers. Czechoslovak aircraft were still in use now, but they were all jet-powered.

Before they were allowed on real aircraft, trainees had to work on mock-ups in simulated conditions. The large hall which contained the simulators was one of a series dedicated to more than twenty specialties where combat pilots, transport pilots, air-control officers and ground technicians were trained side by side.

Most of the officers and technicians have come from this school, and a number of them have received follow-up training abroad. During the war against US aggression, the Air Force downed 320 enemy aircraft, destroyed 24 others on the ground, sank many naval craft, and made thousands of supply flights to the front. Its exploits during the wars against



Exchanging experience after a flight.

Photo: VNA

the Khmer Rouge on the southwestern border and against the Chinese aggression from the north were no less spectacular.

In twenty-four years the school has produced combatants morally and physically qualified to carry out even the most difficult tasks. Many heroes emerged during the war against the Americans. Fighting against great odds, they shot down sophisticated aircraft, even the B.52 claimed by the Pentagon as a perfect strategic weapon beyond the reach of ordinary jet fighters.

The school's museum displayed photos of the best students, among them Le Hai, who brought down six planes and who is now deputy-commander of a combat division; Vo Si Giap, who died while trying to avoid hitting a school in his badly damaged plane; and Do Van Lanh, Hero, who hit four US aircraft and died in training. Two of them did not have their pictures there, but they were known to all: Vu Ngoc Dinh, Hero, six hits, and Dang Van Song, three hits, now respectively director and deputy-director of the school.

"The Vietnam People's Air Force," the deputy-commander said, "has advanced from the obsolete Mig-17 to more sophisticated types. The people who man such modern aircraft are required to have perfect physical and mental fitness". He predicted further progress in the Air Force with the devoted assistance of the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, noting in particular that a Vietnamese combat pilot had become a cosmonaut.

"The collusion between Beijing, the Pentagon and other reactionary forces," the deputy-commander stressed, "is growing to an alarming degree, and the Air Force is facing new problems in defending socialist Vietnam and world peace. This means we must work harder to be equal to our tasks."

This determination was graphically illustrated on a big poster displayed on the facade of the principal building. It read, "Good Instructors, Good Trainees".

CHINH YEN



# SOVIET ASSISTANCE IN TRAINING VIETNAMESE WORKERS

Over the past 15 years, the Soviet Union has helped train nearly 16,000 Vietnamese workers. They were trained in more than 50 job-training schools and many factories in 11 Republics of the USSR. The training program covered more than 200 professions such as tool-cutting, metallurgy, electricity, coal mining, building, railway, maritime and river communications. In recent years, more than 400 Vietnamese managers at all levels have gone to study in the USSR. Many job-training schools are being built with Soviet assistance, 4 among them are already in operation: the Vietnamese — Soviet job-training schools at Uong Bi, Tam Diep, Phu Tho, and Xuan Hoa. Moreover, 13 technological teacher-training schools are being re-equipped.

All the above-mentioned schools are equipped with modern teaching aids. Each year, Soviet experts come to Vietnam for teaching or exchanging experiences in job training.

Vietnamese trainees in the Soviet Union have been studying in schools with modern equipment, rich experience and good traditions. They are taught by experienced teachers, managers and skilled workers. The factories where they work are well-known in the Soviet Union. They are looked upon as members of the same family by the Soviets. Many Soviet cadres have worked together with Vietnamese trainees for 10 or even 15 years. Vietnamese trainees are taken good care of, and favourable conditions are created for them

for their all-round development. They are noted for their industriousness and skillfulness and are quick at picking up Russian. They always observe discipline and the laws of the Soviet Union and have friendly relations with the Soviet people. That is why new comers are welcomed by these schools. Annually, the proportions of excellent and good trainees reaches 70, 80%, even 100% in some schools. Almost all trainees get good marks in their work. Very few of them are undisciplined. In 1977, two Vietnamese in job-training school No. 92 in Leningrad made an innovation bringing an annual profit of thousands of rubles to the school. In 1979, in a Russian-language competition organized for 6,000 foreign trainees who were studying in the Soviet Union, Vietnamese trainees were awarded three of the five first prizes. One of them was rated excellent. Thirty per cent of the Vietnamese received red diplomas after graduating. Hundreds of graduated trainees were chosen to continue their studies to become job-training teachers or managers. In 1982, 17 trainees were chosen to continue their studies at universities. Back in Vietnam, the majority of them become skilled workers. They are now working actively for the defence and building of socialism in Vietnam.

HONG LONG  
Director of the General  
Department of Job Training

The 4,000-year-old history of the Vietnamese people is, in economic terms, the history of agricultural production, mainly of rice cultivation.

Rice planting was practised in very early times by the ancient Vietnamese. From Phong Chau, the capital of ancient Vietnam in the northern uplands, Viet tribes gradually descended to the marshy plains, farming the land by using first the slash-and-burn technique then bronze ploughshares. They settled step by step in the plains of the Red and Ma rivers, expanding in the process their rice area and building economic bases for their villages and communes that were to form the Van Lang Kingdom at the dawn of national history. Then with the swift progress in agricultural production and the technique of wet-rice growing, with bronze implements replacing stone hoes, the habitat of the Viet tribes gradually extended farther and farther from the initial population centres.

Wet-rice growing is the main characteristic of the civilisation of the Red River, the first of the Vietnamese people. It created a firm material basis for the bronze culture, and its development was to accelerate the birth and development of succeeding cultures.

Today, wet-rice continues to occupy the major part of our cultivated land from the North to the South. It remains the principal crop of Vietnam. It adapts well to the marshy lands and river plains, big and small, from the Red River delta to the Central plains and the vast plain of the Mekong. The main rice crop is grown in the wet season as it is in the whole of monsoon Asia. Rice land extends from the mountain areas to the uplands and the coastal plains.

Vietnam was one of the first regions in Asia to grow rice in the dry season. The summer rice crop, which is actually the dry season rice crop in Vietnam, has more than two thousand years of



history. As early as the beginning of the Christian era, people began to plant two rice crops each year in the delta of the Red River, and even now this delta is among those with the highest proportion of double-cropped rice area in the world. But the problem is how to provide enough fertilizer to support two rice crops per year, as in most parts of Southeast Asia people grow only one rice crop in the wet season and leave the fields idle in the dry season.

In the course of time Vietnamese farmers have accumulated a wealth of experience in the production and use of fertilizer for rice plants, using the slime from ponds and river beds, letting ploughed fields

ago. There is no historical record as to when the pig was first bred in Vietnam but it must have been domesticated in very early times.

There has been frequent talk of the imbalance between crop cultivation and stock-breeding in the delta of North Vietnam, and a Western scholar, in a study on agriculture in the Red River delta, wrote: "Man and crop cultivation have driven the domestic animals out of the plain", meaning that all or almost all the land was devoted to the growing of rice and other food crops. This scholar noted that there was no land left for fodder plants. If there was any, it was negligible. The output value of stock-breeding occupied a small

The ricefields in the plains have their own way of creating a balance between crop cultivation and stock-breeding.

As a matter of fact, rice growing calls first of all for the use of draught animals which, in the case of the Vietnamese plains, are the oxen and buffaloes, and in this sense rice cultivation has actually drawn those animals to the plain, not driven them out of it. A comparison of the densities of draught animals per square kilometre in the delta and mountain provinces respectively shows the following 1976 data: In Lai Chau province in North Vietnam, on a rice area accounting for 1.4% of the land area, this density is 3.7 head per square kilometre. Even in Ha Tuyen, another mountainous province, which possesses good strains of buffaloes and oxen and a rice area accounting for 3.8% of the land area, this density is only 13 head per square kilometre. On the other hand, in the delta province of Thai Binh with a cultivated area accounting for 119% of the land area (taking into account the double-cropped fields) this density is as high as 35.5 head per square kilometre. In Hai Hung, also in the delta, with a rice area occupying 91% of the land area, this density is 33.6 head per square kilometre. This is one of the highest densities of draught animals in North Vietnam. Thus, the rice-growing plains have a much higher cattle population and density than the mountain regions with a large land area and vast potentials for cattle raising. The same can be seen in South Vietnam. For instance, Gia Lai — Kontum province on the Central Highlands with a rice area accounting for 3.3% of the land area has a cattle density of 3.2 head per square kilometre. Dac Lac province also on the Central Highlands with a rice area occupying 3.2% of the land area has only 1.2 head of cattle per square kilometre. Meanwhile, Tien Giang province with a rice area occupying 83.7% of the land area has a cattle

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## RICE AND PIGS IN VIETNAMESE AGRICULTURE

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dry in the sun, or growing *azolla pinnata*. In particular, animal manure was used at a very early date. To fertilize the ricefields with manure is indeed a characteristic of rice growing in the Red River delta and in some plains in Central Vietnam, unlike other rice-growing areas in Southeast Asia. And the main source of manure is the pigsties.

The rice plant and the pig have long been closely associated in the history of Vietnamese agriculture. The rice plant was introduced into the country from time immemorial, maybe as far back as the Hoa Binh Culture, between 8,000 - 9,000 years

proportion of the total value of agriculture. Like other productive activities in the traditional Vietnamese countryside, stock-breeding obviously held a secondary role and had invariably to submit to the requirements of rice production. Indeed, given the poor material and technical bases of a small-scale production conducted chiefly by handicraft means, a given area of rice would produce a quantity of food generating ten times as many calories as an equivalent area used for stock-breeding.

However, this observation was but a superficial one as a closer look reveals a different picture.



density of 12.8 head per square kilometre, and this although the Central Highlands clearly have much better conditions for cattle raising. Up to now, the oxen and buffaloes in Vietnam are chiefly used as draught animals pulling the plough. Hence a high concentration of cattle in the rice-growing areas. Cattle raising there, especially in the Red River delta, requires painstaking effort since cultivation work is done almost all the year round. "Raising the buffaloes on one's shoulders" is the peasants' way of saying that they have to go long distances to cut grass and carry it home on their shoulders during the dry season. The situation has improved since some areas have been marked off as pasture for the buffaloes, but feeding the draught cattle during the winter months remains a major problem.

While cattle are the draught force for rice growing, the fertilizer for the rice plants, is mainly pig manure. Like cattle, the pig population is distributed in close proportion to that of ricefields. In the Red River delta, Thai Binh which has the highest percentage of ricefields in the total land area also has the largest pig population in North Vietnam (361 head per square kilometre), followed by Hai Hung, 209 head per square kilometre, compared with 6.8 and 19.7 head respectively in Lai Chau and Ha Tuyen provinces. With the by-products and waste of one ton of paddy (bran, broken rice, unhusked paddy) supplemented by coarser fodder such as vegetables, water lily, banana stem... formerly farmers in North Vietnam could raise one pig of the small local breed (35-40 kilos). The manure from this pig mixed with rice husk, dead leaves, grass, rice straw... can give 1.5-2 tons of compost. Interestingly enough, the farmer likened pig raising to saving money, since the sale of the pig will barely cover the price of feed and reward part of the labour invested in it, the actual profit lies in the manure accumulated. The relationship between rice and the pig in the Red River delta takes place in an autarkic agriculture with low

yields in both rice growing and pig raising. This relationship, however, has helped preserve and develop the double-cropped rice cultivation system all through the history of the exploitation of the Red River delta and some other plains. In recent years, the pig population has also increased proportionately with the total output of rice.

In the Mekong River delta, especially in the biggest rice-growing areas, not only bran but grain itself is used in pig raising. Rice is not only the staple food of man but has also long been an important source of feed for animals. This explains the high density of pigs there. The balance between rice and the pig is still preserved here but in a different way: the density of the pig population per square kilometre grows proportionately to the percentage of ricefields in the total land area. Dong Nai province, for instance, where 6.6% of the land area is planted with rice, has 6.9 pigs per square kilometre.

In Tien Giang province the figures are 83.7% and 53.1 head, and in Hau Giang province, they are 90% and 88.2 head. Here pigs are raised chiefly for meat. The pigs are selected from good and fast-growing breeds. They are well fed and fattened intensively. Pigsty manure is little used since the fields are constantly fertilized by the silt from annual floods which provide enough fertilizer for the local paddy strains with medium or low yields.

This is another type of balance between rice and the pig in a vast cultivated area producing enough food grain not only for man but also for pig raising.

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In the socialist relations of production, the former low-level balance between rice and the pig in North Vietnam has been taken to a higher level. During the resistance against US aggression, the

targets of 5 tons of paddy per hectare per year and two pigs per hectare of cultivated land (or 4 pigs per hectare on two-cropped fields) were achieved in most co-operatives in the northern delta. Together with a considerable amount of chemical fertilizer, manure from the raising of four pigs per hectare of cultivated land has provided the main supply of organic fertilizer for the ricefields in the drive for 5 tons of paddy per hectare per year. The growing rice output has also resulted in an increase in the pig population. In fact, the rice output of North Vietnam has doubled compared with the period before World War Two, and so has the number of pigs.

In many co-operatives where rice output has risen higher than the average, the number of pigs per hectare of cultivated land has also been higher. At Vu Thang co-operative, for instance, which in recent years has achieved 8-9 tons of paddy per hectare per year, 6 pigs are raised per hectare of cultivated land. In addition to *azolla pinnata*, the co-op has fertilized each hectare with about 15 tons of compost per crop, chiefly pigsty manure. However, experience has indicated that pigsty manure alone does not provide enough plant nutrients for obtaining that output. Each year the co-op has used on each hectare of ricefield around one ton of chemical fertilizer (including 600-700 kilograms of nitrogenous fertilizer). Of the 220-240 N needed for two rice crops, the nitrogenous chemical fertilizer supplies 120-140 N, the rest less than half this amount (about 100 N). With this additional amount of nitrogenous and phosphate fertilizer, Vu Thang has been able to quickly increase its rice yield, and this in return provides enough food for developing pig raising both by individual families and by the co-operative. So the pigs are now partly raised on rice grain, not only on by-products of rice as in the past. The quick increase of pigsty manure has also greatly contributed to enriching the

(Continued on page 26)



# PHAN CHU TRINH

## PATRIOT OF A TURBULENT PERIOD

This year sees the 110th anniversary of Phan Chu Trinh (1872 — 1926), an outstanding patriot whose activities played an important part in the national liberation movement early this century. He was born in Tam Ky district, Quang Nam province at the time when the French colonialists occupied the southern provinces of Vietnam. They had completed their occupation of Vietnam and the whole of Indochina by the time Phan Chu Trinh grew up. He came from a family of junior military mandarins, and though his father died very early, his mother tried every means to help him continue with his studies. In his youth, Phan Chu Trinh was known as one of the four best students of Quang Nam province, who were called "the four tigers". Two of them were his friends, who actively participated in the anti-French movement: Tran Qui Cap (1870 — 1908), who was sentenced to death for anti-tax activities, and Huynh Thuc Khang (1876 — 1947), who became Minister of the Interior in 1946 in Ho Chi Minh's revolutionary government. In 1900, Phan Chu Trinh won the title of *cu nhan* (Master of Arts); and it was an interesting coincidence that Phan Boi Chau, another great patriot, was also awarded the title of First Laureate at the triennial examinations in Nghe An that year. In 1901, he went to Hue to sit for the provincial examinations and won the title of Doctor. The next year, he was called back to the capital to work as a mandarin at the Ministry of Rites.

At that time, using military means, the French had almost pacified the country. The *Can*



PHAN CHU TRINH  
1872 - 1926

*Vuong* (Save the Kings) movement led by scholars aimed at restoring the monarchy was wiped out, except for some sporadic insurrections, of which Hoang Hoa Tham's forces at Yen The (Ha Bac) were worthy of note. With its exploitation, the French colonialists did bring about some initial changes in Vietnamese society: more towns sprang up; civil servants and city dwellers increased in number; handicrafts and trade tended to capitalism. Scholars could not help noticing these changes. They had witnessed the defeats of the military uprisings, but still they could not find a way out for the national liberation movement. However, the most striking thing was the inadequacy of Confucian ideology. The notion of "loyalty to the king" was antiquated, for the king had become a collaborator of the foreign rulers. Lusting for

fame, some scholars such as Ton Tho Tuong, Nguyen Than, Hoang Cao Khai became the invaders' henchmen and repressed their own compatriots.

Phan Chu Trinh was even more deeply affected by the new social situation as he was a native of Quang Nam, a coastal province in central Vietnam not far from Hue. The province had for centuries communicated with foreign countries through its port at Hoi An. Handicrafts in Quang Nam, therefore, were more developed than in other parts of the country, especially textiles. The shipping trade was also more prosperous. In the early years of this century, Quang Nam province witnessed the growth of the national bourgeoisie. It was under these circumstances that Phan Chu Trinh became acquainted with the political situation in Asia, especially in China and Japan.

Through the so-called "New Books" smuggled into Vietnam from China, Phan Chu Trinh learnt of the reformist line of Keng Yuwei, Liang Chichao and others, the policy based in the Court of Man Chu (Qing dynasty) to bring about reforms from the top in order to put China on the road to capitalism like European and American countries, and get rid of its dependence on Western powers. He also admired the Restoration reforms carried out by Emperor Mutsuhito, which turned Japan from a feudal monarchy into a powerful capitalist country able to deal with Western countries. When he was a mandarin in Hue, Phan Chu Trinh was given access to books by Rousseau and Montesquieu translated into



Chinese. Those books opened new horizons for him, and introduced him to the democratic ideas of bourgeois revolution.

Armed with new political conceptions, Phan Chu Trinh was able to see through the decay of the Vietnamese mandarinal feudal regimes. He met Phan Boi Chau in 1903 when the latter was launching a movement for sending our young people abroad in preparation for the armed struggle against the French colonialists. The two men discussed a petition demanding the abolition of the old system of mandarinal examinations and the establishment of new system of education with the emphasis on experimental sciences. But their dream did not come true. No longer wishing to continue his mandarinal career, Phan Chu Trinh submitted his resignation in 1904. This clear-cut decision enhanced his prestige among the people.

Of the patriots of the early 20th century Phan Chu Trinh was one who had the most complex ideas. This explains the divergence of views among his contemporaries and others regarding him. In his opinion, to win back independence it was necessary, first of all, to increase the people's knowledge and help them enjoy their rights as free citizens. On the strength of this, industry should be developed to strengthen the country and enrich the people. So the greatest obstacle to the attainment of that goal was the rotten monarchy and mandarinal system which had to be overthrown. Under these circumstances, the French had to be relied upon to do away with the monarchy and to this effect the question of violence against the French had to be temporarily put aside. As for seeking foreign aid, it was out of the question, for no country is willing to give disinterested assistance.

Although brought up on the traditions of Confucianism, Phan Chu Trinh soon realized that it was a backward and reactionary philosophy. As a patriotic scholar he tried to assimilate Western democratic ideas, but did not grasp the class character of those ideas. So he propagated bourgeois democratic ideas, at a time when the bourgeoisie was coming into being in Vietnam and lacked a solid social basis

for the assimilation of those ideas.

He failed to see that the collusion between colonialism and feudalism was a historical necessity, therefore his ideas reached a deadlock. He wrote:

"We advocate setting up an autonomous State, so we must rely on the French. As we must rely on the French we should not make use of the people's hatred for the French. But we know that the people have been nurturing great hatred against the French Government, so we must put all the blame on the Vietnamese mandarins, and go out of our way to ostracize them in order to save the face of French. Therefore we cannot help establishing relations with the French so as to promote the ties of friendship between the two countries. That is a course of action we are bound to follow." (New Vietnam in the Wake of France-Vietnam Alliance).

Having submitted his resignation, Phan Chu Trinh became engrossed in the study of political books. He also travelled throughout the country to rouse people to action. He encouraged his friends and comrades to open schools and set up trade associations, considering this as the first step towards enlightening the people. When he was in Phan Thiet, he discussed with his friends the setting up of the Lien Thanh trade-association and the opening of the Duc Thanh school for youth education where Nguyen Ai Quoc (Ho Chi Minh) taught before going abroad. When he came to the North he paid a visit to Hoang Hoa Tham at his base. But their ideas were not the same. In 1906 he went to Hongkong to meet Phan Boi Chau. Together they went to Japan. Heated discussions took place between the two men, which was later related by Phan Boi Chau:

"In ten days, there were repeated discussions between Phan Chu Trinh and I. He wanted to overthrow the monarchy first of all in order to bring about democracy. But I wanted to overthrow the French, and to bring about changes only when the country was independent. I intended to take advantage of the monarchy but he strongly opposed it; I was not for overthrowing the monarchy to

heighten the people's rights. He and I had the same aim but our methods were poles apart. He wanted to rely on the French to restore Vietnam. So our views were diametrically opposed. Though his opinion differed from mine, he liked my strong will very much."

Returning home, Phan Chu Trinh wrote a letter to the French Government (1906) in which he criticized the administrative and economic policies of the colonialist rulers, and at the same time put forward some suggestions on social reforms as a basis for Vietnamese-French co-operation. At that time he actively participated in the *Duy Tan* (Renovation) movement sponsored by the scholars, including the setting up of the *Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc* (Tonkin Study Institute) in Hanoi—a private school where the new script and practical knowledge necessary for propagating patriotic ideas were taught. From the *Duy Tan* movement, which appealed to the people to learn the *Quoc ngu* (Latinized Vietnamese), cut off the chignon then worn by men and do away with backward customs, etc. these ideas spread to the countryside and turned into anti-tax and anti-corvée movements, by the peasants. In March 1908 demonstrations broke out in Quang Nam then spread to the central provinces of Quang Ngai, Thua Thien, Nghe Tinh... Meanwhile, Phan Chu Trinh was giving talks in Hanoi. The French authorities know that he had no direct connection with those movements but exerted a great influence on them owing to his prestige among the people. That's why they tried by all means to indict him, finding a pretext to eliminate a dangerous element. They arrested him and sent him to Hue where he was sentenced to death. But then his death sentence was reduced to deportation to Con Dao island (Poulo Condor). However, it was stipulated in his file: "Do not release him even if there is an amnesty."

When Phan Chu Trinh was in prison, a Frenchman named Babut, director of the *Dai Viet Tan Bao* newspaper, with whom he had made acquaintance in Hanoi, urged the Association of Human Rights in France to intervene on his



behalf. Eventually, he was released but forced to reside in France. In 1911, he was sent by ship to France. There, at the beginning he received some allowances, but they were later cut off because he refused to co-operate with the French Government. Phan Chu Trinh had to develop photographs to eke out a living. The French colonialists' aim was to isolate him from the revolutionary movements in the country in the hope of taking advantage of his line of "relying on the French" to carry out their domination of Vietnam. But in France, Phan Chu Trinh continued to exchange letters and make contact with French political circles and struggle for reforms to be carried out in Vietnam. Many of his writings such as "On Politics in Indochina", "New Vietnam in the Wake of France-Vietnam Alliance" were produced during that time. His literary works consisted of appeals to the people in the country and reflected the feelings of a patriot living far from his homeland.

The First World War broke out. Suspected of having entered into a secret alliance with the Germans, Phan Chu Trinh was put in prison. He was freed in 1915 as the accusation was without foundation. During this time, Phan Chu Trinh met Nguyen Ai Quoc, and shared with him the difficulties of the hard life in France. Even when Nguyen Ai Quoc joined the Socialist Party, then the French Communist Party, Phan Chu Trinh still engaged in a correspondence with him to express his own ideas. Though their ways to national salvation differed, they held each other in high esteem for they had the same ideal: to win back national independence. In 1924, when the Left came to power in France, the French Government — some members of which had formerly defended Phan Chu Trinh — allowed the Vietnamese patriot to return to his homeland.

Phan Chu Trinh was the representative of a revolutionary trend in the transitional period. The road he chose did not lead to success, but his struggle helped to keep up the revolutionary spirit and set a good example for the generation to come: lessons of experience are

always acquired at the expense of great sacrifices. We can see his complicated ideas and feelings in a letter he wrote to Nguyen Ai Quoc:

"... Fully aware of what has been happening back in the country, we have so far published many articles in the newspapers appealing to French people of conscience to help Annamese overthrow the forces of oppression, but it is of little avail. Not a tiny bit of the freedom, equality, fraternity upheld by Montesquieu and Rousseau is seen in this land of Annam. From this we can draw a conclusion: a nation can only depend on its own forces to be civilized. Unfortunately, since Annam was conquered by French boats, the people and men of valour have been rising up in one insurrection after another against the administration of the protectorate, but in vain. Today those insurrections are getting scarcer, because some people have changed their hearts and some others have become turncoats or ruffians, and because the movement lacks leaders.

"I have been discussing many questions with you and Mr Phan (Lawyer Phan Van Truong Ed.). But up to now you have not shared my views about enlightening the people first, then boosting their spirit, and finally improving their living standards. As for me, I do not agree with your method which consists in 'staying abroad to rally wise people and biding one's time to infiltrate the country'. I do not agree either with Phan's theory of winning the people's hearts. Owing to our difference of views and methods, you told Mr Phan that I belong to the category of conservative and narrow-minded scholars. That label you gave me did not anger me at all, because after all my French is so poor that I fail to understand the books written in the language of this civilized country. In this field I am far behind you, let alone Mr Phan. I compare myself to an old horse which can no longer gallop. By so saying I do not mean that you belong to the privileged class. To tell the truth, I have never underestimated you, on the contrary I am filled with admiration for you. I am saying all this

in all frankness, without making the slightest attempt at flattering you..." (Letter to Nguyen Ai Quoc, Marseilles 18 Feb., 1922)

Phan Chu Trinh arrived in Saigon in the middle of 1925, when the French colonialists had just arrested Phan Boi Chau in Shanghai and brought him back to Hanoi for a trial. These two events had a great impact on the public at home. Phan Chu Trinh jumped at the chance. He made speeches denouncing the monarchy and praising the democratic system. His speeches exerted a good influence over patriotic intellectuals and students in the country. Unfortunately, just as Phan Chu Trinh was preparing to go to the North, he fell seriously ill and died in Saigon on March 24, 1926.

In the wake of these events, the political atmosphere in Vietnam was in great turmoil. Ceremonies to commemorate his death, solemnly held in big cities such as Saigon, Hue, Vinh, Hanoi, were good opportunities for the Vietnamese people to give vent to their patriotic feelings. The French colonialists, fully aware of this, went out of their way to repress the people's movement. But this was tantamount to adding fuel to the fire of the people's struggle. The Vietnamese came to know that concessions or mere reforms did not pay. Following workers' and students' strikes, a new generation of young people left the school benches in order to take the road of the revolution. They bore in their hearts the same patriotic fire as their predecessors, but the road they were taking was completely different. It was this generation who blazed the trail for the revolutionary upsurge in the '30s.

DAO HUNG

Note: The excerpts used in this article are from a document about Phan Chu Trinh, published by the Hue Teacher-Training College, with Nguyen Van Duong as editor-in-chief.

1. In the original: You travel in a four-horse coach and receive six measures of rice a day.



# THE NGUYEN DU SCHOOL OF WRITING

It is a commonplace that a writer is taught by life, but this is not to deny the fact that a piece of work is the synthetic result of all that makes a writer, from perception and thinking, life and cultural assets to creative art. As these can be improved upon in a school, attention has long been paid to training young writers and proving Marx's thought that if communism cannot make a Raphael it can turn a gifted man into a Raphael.

As far back as the early years of the war of resistance against French aggression the literature and art associations in the war zones opened classes to form young writers. Between 1947 and 1949, for instance, the Fourth Zone opened three classes which trained 111 students, among them such prominent writers as Hoang Trung Thong, Vu Tu Nam, Tran Huu Thung, Minh Hue and Hoang Minh Chau. During the years of socialist construction and war against US aggression, in the North, the Vietnam Writers' Association set up a school to train young writers which opened seven classes from 1962 to 1975 for 337 students, among them were young writers sent by the Lao Patriotic Front and others from occupied Saigon. Of these 113 were admitted to the Vietnam Writer's Association, which now has 359 members in all.

Those classes contributed no small part to training writers. However, they had weaknesses almost unavoidable in those circumstances and conditions and in their inexperienced debuts: their limited content — mainly to com-

municate experiences of writing, and their short duration — usually three or six months.

After the liberation of the South in 1975, this kind of class could no longer meet the requirements of socialist construction and national defence throughout the country which posed many complex problems. The formation and training of writers should be comprehensive, and more systematic so as to shape a synthetic ability in young writers enabling them to draw upon past and present writers at home and abroad, analyse problems, develop their capacities and look for a style of their own. This prompted the Writers' Association, together with the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Higher and Vocational Education, to open a new kind of school for young writers, at first attached to the Hanoi College of Culture, but now a separate entity — the Nguyen Du School of Writing. This is a school for gifted students with basic college training: the application requirements include a certificate of general education and works already published by newspapers, and publishing houses.

The first group to graduate (1979 — 1982) comprised 45 students including 14 members of the Vietnam Writers' Association, 6 women and 39 men, 3 from national minorities, 6 workers and scientific — technical cadres, 16 cadres from various branches of literature and arts and the press and 20 army cadres. Nine are from the South, among them young writers from

the former US-puppet occupied zone who have joined the mainstream of reunified Vietnam. The oldest were 40 years of age (maximum age for an applicant) and the youngest 25.

During the three years the students studied philosophy, political economy, scientific socialism, Party history, aesthetics, theory of literature, Vietnamese and world history, history of Vietnamese, Western, Chinese and Soviet literature, linguistics and rhetoric, as well as a number of human sciences necessary for a writer such as psychology, ethnography, sociology, art (mainly the language of plastic arts) and English or Russian. The curriculum also included many lectures on Confucianism, Buddhism, the Vietnamese village, semiotics, cybernetics, modern achievements in biology, etc. Apart from teachers on the school staff there is a network of collaborators with high scientific knowledge and enthusiasm to train the young writers. The students were deeply impressed by the lectures of professors, teachers and research cadres from the Nguyen Ai Quoc Central Party School, the Hanoi Teacher-Training College, the Hanoi University, the College of Art, the Institute of Literature, the Institute of History, the Institute of Culture, etc.

A major part of the curriculum was devoted to the theory and practice of literary art, taught mainly by the Writers' Association. The students of the first course could hear frail 80-year-old veteran writer Dang Thai Mai speak with



an enthusiastic concern for young writers, 70-year-old writer Nguyen Tuan lecture on and share his experiences in writing reportages. They were acquainted with the Party's line on culture and art, the rules of artistic creation in general and of each literary genre in particular: poetry, novel, reportage, theatre... through the speeches of many writers, literary critics and researchers. For each genre seminars were organized on theory or on a number of representative works and authors (for instance, seminars on short stories, on Nguyen Tuan's reportages, on three young poets Pham Tien Duat, Thanh Thao, and Huu Thinh). As people engrossed with creation, the learners eagerly debated — each of them had to give at least one seminar during their years of study. Many papers on short stories, poems and reportages were painstakingly written.

Creative writing is a most important activity of the school for the yardstick of the course's quality was the learners' creation. Implementing its motto "combining school with life, theory with practice", the school encouraged them to create while studying. In three years it organised tours: early in 1980 to the border areas and islands, in summer 1980 to Phu Khanh province, in summer 1981 to Thuan Hai and Lam Dong provinces, in summer 1982 to Nghia Binh and Quang Nam — Da Nang provinces. Each tour gave rise to many poems, reportages, short stories published in central and local newspapers, and sometimes gathered into collections by local writers and artists' associations and cultural services (as in Thuan Hai, Lam Dong, Quang Nam — Da Nang...) Thus creation went along with study which perhaps prompted it<sup>1</sup>. In three years the learners' names appeared one after another in newspapers and reviews, particularly in *Van Nghe* (Literature and Art) *Nhan Dan* (People), *Van Nghe Quan Doi* (Army Literature

and Art), and in novels, short stories and poems issued together or separately by the *Quan Doi Nhan Dan* (People's Army), *Tac Pham Moi* (New Literary Works), Youth, Women's Publishing House...<sup>2</sup>. In literary competitions during this time, the students also won many awards. For the graduation examination (September 1982) the students wrote 184 poems (including long poems), 51 short stories, 7 novellas, 8 novels, and 2 play scenarios.

With only one graduation on its record, the school could not avoid many shortcomings. For instance, the curriculum requires four years instead of three — three years for the foreign languages were really insufficient... An adequate ratio should be found to encourage creation while ensuring study which is the main activity... Notwithstanding these problems, the first graduate group from a new kind of school to train young writers was a great success. Many a writer made steady progress: Huu Thinh, Thai Ba Loi, Chu Lai, Khuat Quang Thuy, Nguyen Duc Mau, Lam Thi My Da, Duong Thu Huong... Duong Thu Huong, for example, the young woman who got the first prize in the short story competition organised by Literature and Art in 1980 published between 1980 and 1982 two collections of short stories, one collection of poems and one cine-scenario after which a film was made in 1982. Many other graduates took up writing, witness Ngo Thi Kim Cuc, a former girl-student of Da Nang who was shy when she entered the school and is now very productive. Do Thi Hien Hoa, a girl-peasant with a poor education who now manages to write. The results of three years of study will stay with the graduates throughout their lives and give rise to various works five or ten years later. Of course, these are but initial results while future results will depend on the efforts of each graduate when returning to his

or her production of fighting job and keeping in close contact with life to write and learn. However, these initial results are most important in stimulating, opening the way and constituting a fundamental turning-point in creation for some young writers.

Huu Thinh, a young poet from the armoured corps, author of the long poem "The Way to the City" awarded a prize by the Writers' Association for the best creation in 1980, says: "The school has helped us fill a dreadful knowledge gap, systematise what we have learnt, and raise our cultural level." Then Vuong Anh, a young poet of the Muong minority, author of three collections of poems and standing member of the Thanh Hoa Literature and Art Association before entering the school, has this to say: "When coming to study everybody was worried that learning would interfere with writing. But up to now most of us have made progress in writing and some wrote fairly well. The more learning the better, the more writing the better."

Under the guidance of the Ministry of Culture and the Writers' Association, with poet Nong Quoc Chan, Vice-Minister of Culture, as director, the Nguyen Du School of Writing bids fair to become a regular, full-fledged college of writing following the example of the Maxim Gorki School in the Soviet Union and the Johannes Becher School in the German Democratic Republic.

DUY LAP

1. The time-table of the school arranged free time for the students to practise writing.

2. According to the statistics of the school, from 1980 to 1982, the works published by the learners amounted to 6 novels, 7 collections of short stories, 73 short stories in newspapers, 7 collections of poems, 130 poems in newspapers, 2 long poems.



## RICE AND PIGS...

(Continued from page 20)

soil by supplying part of the nutrients to the rice plants.

Of course, in the immediate future comparable quantities of nitrogenous fertilizer cannot be made available to all agricultural co-ops in the North nor to all rice-growing areas in the country.

That is why the point is to strive to quickly increase the quantity of organic fertilizer, especially pigsty manure, along with the rational use of the still modest quantity of nitrogenous fertilizer available in the country at present.

The policy of devoting 15% of the cultivated land to stock-breeding is aimed at producing more meat and fertilizer while making the best use of the quantity of rice and area of land reserved for this end. The setting of quotas of meat and fertilizer to be delivered by co-op members suits the present material and technical conditions in Vietnam, allowing the fullest use of the auxiliary work force in each family while saving the co-op unnecessary expenditure. This is an effective method of collective stock-breeding if close supervision can be established over each pig entrusted to the care of co-op members until its delivery to the co-op. Since what the pig does is to convert the amount of protein contained in its food to meat and the excess protein is discarded in its urine and manure, technicians have taught the peasants how best to preserve, store and process this urine and manure in order to retrieve part of the protein. This is done chiefly through the composting of pig manure and litter.

To achieve balance on a still higher level between rice production and pig raising in Vietnam, special attention is being attached to the use of paddy and land for stock-breeding. Every farmer is encouraged to better process pigsty manure and other organic fertilizers to be combined with an economical, rational and scientific use of nitrogenous and other chemical fertilizers.

BUI HUY DAP

# A TANTALIZED EFFORT

Editor's Note: Above is an article about the Nguyen Du School of Writing. Here is an essay written by a student of the school published in the magazine Van Nghe (Literature and Art).

It was midday now. If nothing happened he would be back in the outpost before night fell. But today he had a temperature which had only just fallen when the telephone rang. So he knew that he was to go back because his office needed him — the task groups would have no salt if he didn't. A shiver ran through his body upon thinking of the meals without salt which he had eaten...

Biting his lips he lifted his basket of salt and took his leave of a few comrades from friendly units coming to buy goods like him. His first steps were tottering. Malaria was an "obligation" for every soldier on the battlefield. However, this time he felt nauseous eating rice and resigned himself to sugared soup — which was, however, a precious thing in these difficult circumstances. Once the question of food was settled he was to foot a fairly long stretch, then negotiate a mountain pass. The steep slope, the heavy basket and the afternoon rain began to weigh upon his steps.

"We are all waiting for you," said his chief on the phone. "Now I have nobody to come to your help. Did you have a fever? You will have leave later on, after the operation."

The forest was deserted. By this time convoys of lorries had reached their destination or were nearly home on their return trip. He plodded his way, racked with pain, and perspiring through his back. Besides, his ribs were knocked by his collapsible-butted AK rifle — one did not feel safe

without it but it did cause a lot of trouble! In fact, this road section was secure, having recorded no significant enemy activity for the last month. He curved his back and slackened his basket-straps, which made the salt drip down to his belt and irritate his skin. To relieve his weariness, he moved his rifle-bandolier over his shoulders to put his AK opposite his thigh, then joined his hands behind his back and lifted up his basket. No rest on the slopes, he made up his mind, until he reached the highest slope, the "Breath" as the soldiers called it. So he kept on walking wearily. Facing a fallen tree he scrambled over it. Meeting a hole oozing a filthy red liquid he wearily stepped across, choosing a pool between two rocks to avoid sliding with his rubber sandals. Although he felt a bitter taste in his mouth he licked his lips and said to himself that he would not quench his thirst before reaching the top of the slope. On the right of the road a roe deer sprang across a gaping bomb-crater filled with ink-blue water and disappeared into the bush. Squirrels chirruped here and there. Above the bomb-pit the sun was dazzling. A rack for knapsacks and a heap of charcoal left by someone invited him to stop. Clicking his tongue he consoled himself that once on the top of the slope he would have fulfilled two-thirds of his task. The thought that he could not ask anybody to foot it for him spurred him on. And from the peak of the slope a sprint in less than one



hour would bring him home. Now the salt dripped, wetting the back of his trousers, gluing and itching his skin. Suddenly he pulled up his trousers and discovered a leech which he angrily stamped upon until he saw the earth red with its blood and his. Then he quickened his steps but hit upon a knotty root which made his sandal-straps fly. With his basket of salt jerking to one side, he stooped to set them right with the firm determination not to pause. His headache abated but his weariness increased. Again a fallen tree tempted him to rest but no sooner had he put his load down than he thought better of it and went on his way. His skin crept on seeing a spotted snake crawl under the rotten leaves and disappear into a bush. He urged himself onward with the hope of stealing a march on the afternoon rain which might be dangerous for his feverish body. Soon he heard a spring gurgle in front of him.

As his jacket was wet with sweat he passed his hand behind his back to prevent the basket from rubbing his sore back. The water-bottle on his side gurgled but he adamantly put off assuaging his thirst until he reached the peak of the slope. He visualized the welcome he would receive in his office. The nurse with almond eyes would surely offer him a glass of milk. He would lean his back against the mangosteen tree in front of the kitchen to drink it while watching his mates share the salt before going on mission.

Now he arrived at a flat open space with solid racks for knapsacks. The cleanness and width of the spot attracted him but he firmly went past with a set mind although it was the usual resting-place for travellers. Nearby ran a spring with limpid water which he crossed with his trousers still on. How he liked to bathe in this clear water dotted with plum-flowers! He stopped mid-stream glancing at them then shoving his feet under the gravel. A flight of butterflies soaring up reminded him that he had to go up the slope and bring the salt home. So he shook his feet, washed his face and stepped on to the spring-bank. The ascent usually took him forty

or fifty minutes but today, he surmised, it would take him more than one hour. After only a section he was already gasping for breath and had ringing in his ears. He faced a fallen tree: what a nuisance when he had to negotiate a slope with a heavy basket! Biting his lips he stopped and put the basket on the tree-trunk, turned to hold it up and stepped over the tree. While panting he saw on the trunk two engraved words: "Breath forbidden". With a smile he lifted up his burden and went on.

The thought of the slope weighed heavily upon his mind although he was ascending it. The afternoon rain was also a challenge. There were the sharp rocks which he could not avoid, the slippery roots of ancient trees which compelled him to put down his basket, climb over them and drag it to tax his strength.

At last exhausted he puffed and blowed then had to put down his basket on a smooth rock on the roadside, saying to himself: "I will stay a while just to resume my strength at this usual resting-place..." He wiped his sore and itching back with his handkerchief and treated himself to a draught of water.

Now he went on true to his determination to rest only at the top of the slope...

After a hard walk there appeared an open space. Was it the peak? Pursing his lips he grabbed a branch and climbed over a mound, resolute. Did this clear space portend imminent rain? No, it meant that he was approaching the peak. So he eagerly forged ahead and breathed hard. Here it was! He was overcome with joy when he reached the peak he had thought of since midday and made incredible efforts to reach. He carefully put down his load, stretched himself and unbuttoned his shirt to take in the cool air.

Feeling comfortable—his fever seemed to have gone, he emptied his water-bottle with a real delight. Nothing was more pleasant than leaning against a crag and feeling the fresh air. Letting his hat hang on his chest like a lotus leaf, he soon fell asleep and dreamt that he was bathing in the spring with limpid water, then ascending the slope until his

basket of salt left him to fly and he was flying also...

The noise of a falling dry branch made him wake up with a start. Perhaps he had drowsed ten or fifteen minutes at most because his clothes were still wet.

He rolled up his trousers to have a look at the leech-bite. As blood kept on oozing down to his sandal he mopped it with a tuft of dry leaves and pressed the wound with his finger. "Enough rest," he said to himself then rapidly lifted up the basket.

With ease he went down the slope whistling the tune "There are thirty six kinds of birds in the forest"... After the slope he only had to foot less than one hour along the Ba river. Again he visualized the reception he would receive. The nurse with almond eyes and a smiling mouth would surely punch him playfully. The wind was blowing harder but it was still light. He had to walk faster to be home before the rain. "There are thirty six kinds of birds in the forest."

Like a stone the basket of salt now and then moved on one side, which compelled him to balance himself, but the descent was always easier than the ascent—he ran while walking and felt no weariness. Suddenly he was amazed at seeing on a fallen tree: "Breath forbidden". Weren't they the very words he had seen when going up the slope? He couldn't believe his eyes!

So he had got himself into a bad fix. He looked right and left then at the words on the tree while the spring with limpid water seemed to laugh at him.

Holding his breath he retraced his steps in no mood to sing now. It was his fault for having not taken the right way on the peak of the slope and he decided not to rest any longer as a punishment for his neglect. Now he had to be home before the rain fell and give the salt to his mates to go on mission.

And the open space on the peak of the slope and the afternoon rain again became a challenge for him. This time, to fulfil his task he had to make efforts ten times greater...

TRUNG TRUNG DINH  
School of writing, 1981



# CHRONOLOGY

(October 16 — November 15)

## OCTOBER

16. Opening of a conference by directors of the Central Bank and local banks to discuss the implementation of Decision 172 of the Council of Ministers on credit, currency, and payment in the immediate future.

17. Seminars on children's health and nutrition are held by the Mother and Child Welfare Commission in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

19. Signing in Havana of the Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between the Republic of Cuba and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

20. A delegation of the Commission for Science and Technology of Vietnam, headed by its director Dang Huu, ends its visit to France begun on October 15.

21. A Finnish delegation of land and maritime communications ends its friendship visit to Vietnam begun on October 11.

22. An international seminar on the Mekong River is held with the participation of the four riparian countries and a number of international organizations from October 22 to 27.

24. Organizing of the 1982 national swimming competition in Thanh Hoa province from October 21 to 24 and of the national athletics competition in Hanoi from October 23 to 24.

26. Founding of the Vietnam — Ethiopia Friendship Association.

— Second opening in Hanoi of the exhibition of Vietnam's economic and technological achievements with additional exhibits.

27. A group of Vietnamese film-makers ends its visit to France begun on October 15.

28. In Ho Chi Minh City a conference of the Executive Committee of the Afro-Asian Writers' Association and a meeting of Afro-Asian writers are held from October 22 to 28.

30. The Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Government of the Soviet Union decides to give emergency aid to the Vietnamese people in the typhoon-stricken areas with a quantity of consumer goods worth 1.5 million rubles.

— A delegation of the Hungarian Academy ends its friendship visit to Vietnam begun on October 19.

— Closing of a national conference for the drafting of the history of the Communist Party of Vietnam begun on October 26.

## NOVEMBER

1. Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach ends his official friendship visit to the Republic of Indonesia begun on October 28.

— Closing of the friendship meeting of Indochinese Youth from Hanoi, Vientiane and Phnom Penh in Hanoi begun on October 26.

2. A delegation from Ho Chi Minh City, headed by Chairman of the Municipal People's Committee Mai Chi Tho, ends its friendship visit to India begun on October 18.

3. Opening of a historical science conference on the October Revolution.

— Opening of a conference on Soviet and Vietnamese epics by Hanoi University.

4. Opening in Hanoi of the sixth session of the Vietnam — Czechoslovakia Commission for Economic, Scientific and Technological Co-operation.

5. Ending of a joint 3-day session between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Vietnam Women's Union Central Committee to review the nation-wide movement for silk and cotton growing and weaving.

— A 2-day seminar on "Ho Chi Minh and the October Revolution" is organised by the Ho Chi Minh Museum.

— Vietnam takes part in the Baghdad International Fair.

8. Opening of the 1982 national chess championships in Hanoi.

10. Founding of the Vietnam — Czechoslovakia Friendship Association.

11. Founding of the Vietnam — India Friendship Association.

— The Political Bureau of CPV Central Committee holds a special session which decides:

★ The whole country will hold a three-day period of mourning for Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

★ A high-level Party and State delegation, headed by Truong-Chinh, Political Bureau member of the CPV Central Committee and President of the Council of State, will leave for the Soviet Union to attend the funeral of Comrade Leonid Brezhnev.

12. Signing in Hanoi of an agreement on co-operation in social science research between Vietnam and Laos.

15. A declaration on the baseline used to measure Vietnam's territorial waters is published.



# VIETNAM COURIER

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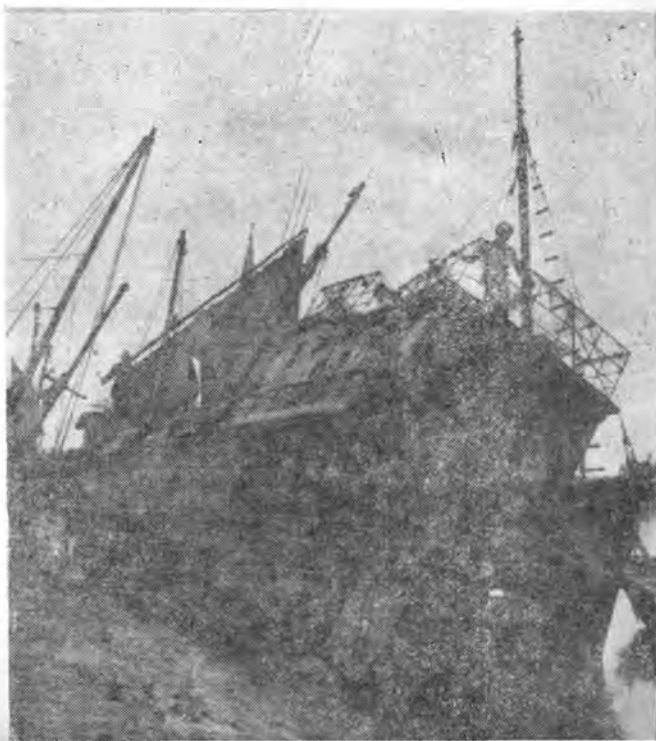
## THE AFTERMATH OF TYPHOON NANCY IN NGHE TINH PROVINCE

On October 18, 1982, Typhoon Nancy, with a velocity of 140 kilometres an hour, caused extensive damage.

The Nghe Tinh Teacher-Training College.



Salvaging rice.



Repairing boats.

Photos: XUAN CAU





# THE FRIENDSHIP MEETING OF HANOI, VIENTIANE AND PHNOM PENH YOUTH FROM OCTOBER 26 TO NOVEMBER 1, 1982

At a plenary session.



Meeting with Haiphong Youth.

Photos: TRAN AM and THU HOAI

**Vietnam  
courier**

**НОВОСТИ  
ВЬЕТНАМА**

**Le Courrier  
du Vietnam**

**El Correo  
de Vietnam**

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