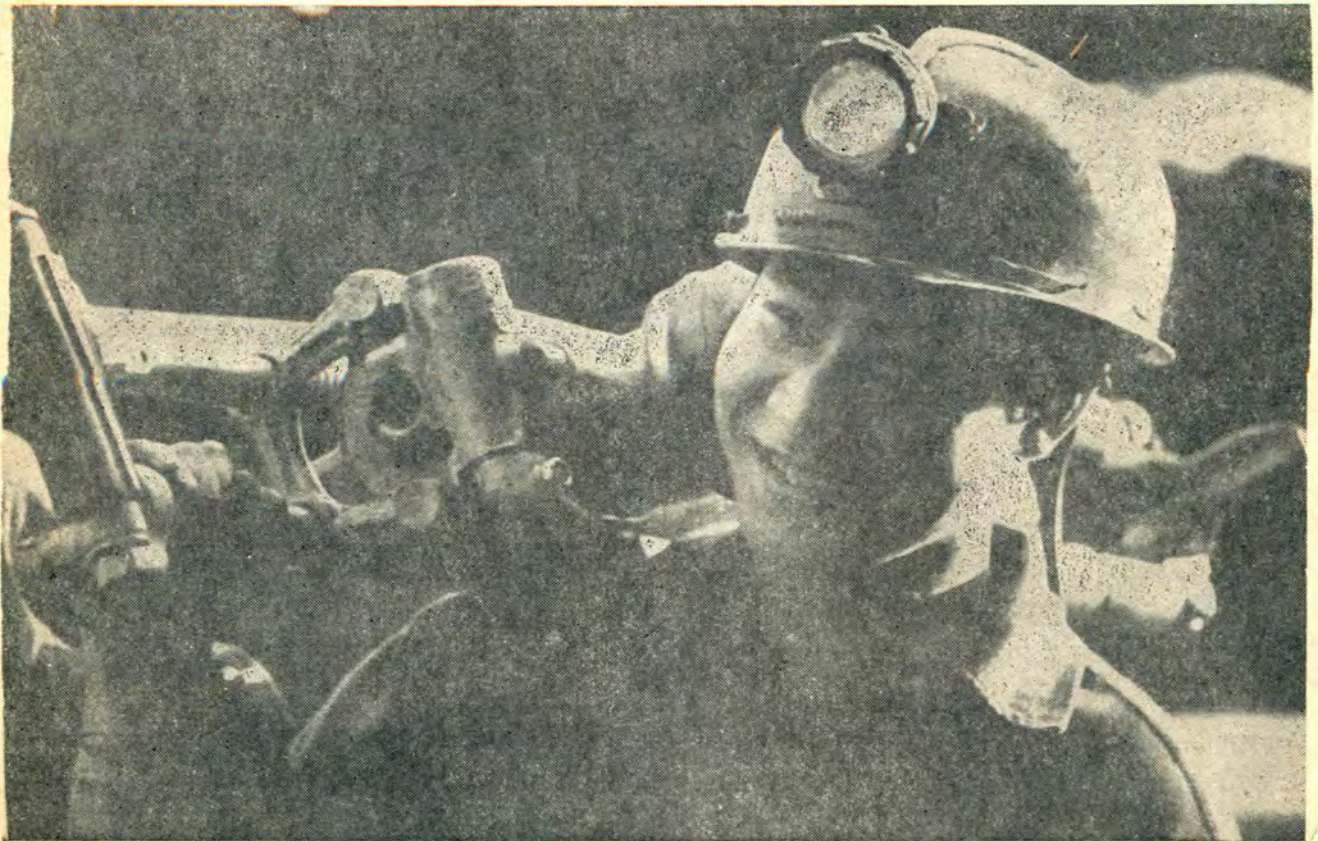


# Vietnam COURIER



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## YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE HOA BINH HYDRO-ELECTRIC CONSTRUCTION SITE

(See article "Blocking the Stream of the  
Da River" in Vietnam Courier No. 2 — 1983)

Young welders.

Photo: KIM HUNG



Pantomime performed during a short  
break.

Photo: DO HAO

Lorry drivers on the night before the  
blocking of the stream of the Da river  
(12 January 1983).

Photo: ANH TON



## Editorial

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Front cover:  
A coal miner

Photo: VNA

**Vietnam  
COURIER**

3 — 1983

The Vietnamese people have just commemorated the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Paris Agreement on Vietnam. They have gone through 10 years full of difficulties and trials but those ten years have proved the great vitality of a nation which is holding firmly to its objectives: national independence and socialism.

For Vietnam the most severe test of the last 10 years has been the collusion between the United States and China, a collusion aimed at opposing all revolutionary currents but, first and foremost, Vietnam. This collusion gave the go-ahead to the mining and blockade of all the ports in North Vietnam by Nixon and Kissinger in May 1972. It gave the green light to the bombing of Hanoi and Hai Phong by B.52 strategic bombers at Christmas of the same year. It also allowed Beijing to occupy the Vietnamese Hoang Sa islands in January 1974, and send 600,000 Chinese troops to invade Vietnam in February 1979. By so doing the Americans and Chinese have combined their efforts in striving to weaken Vietnam, from within and without, to isolate Vietnam and tarnish its image. The "Nanquiao campaign", launched by China, which was the main source of the "boat people" phenomenon, was used by US propaganda machinery, in conjunction with China, to present Vietnam in the eyes of the world as the worst violator of human rights. The noble action taken by Vietnam in sending troops to Kampuchea to save the Kampuchean people from genocide, and to ensure the security of Vietnam in the face of the threat of a Chinese bridgehead, became another matter used by China to slanderously label Vietnam as the aggressor, a "small hegemonist power" serving the interests of the "great hegemonist power" — the Soviet Union.

However, in the course of the last ten years the prestige of the US in the world has dropped, even among its West European allies. The "post-Vietnam period" is one of strong development of the three revolutionary currents, especially of the national liberation movement, with many countries winning back national independence and opting for the road to socialism. This trend has spread from Asia to Africa and now to Latin America. This shows that the US — China collusion has been to no avail.

Parallel with the weakening of the US position in the world, Beijing has suffered repeated setbacks in its expansionist and hegemonistic schemes. If the Chinese war of aggression against Vietnam laid bare the wicked face of China, the Chinese defeat in the war all the more showed to the world her military weakness, which constitutes the primary factor of the deterioration of the US — Chinese alliance. This

has led to amendments to Chinese tactics made public by the Chinese Communist Party at its 12th National Congress: the Chinese are trying to tone down their aggressiveness and give the impression that there are major changes in their home and foreign policies.

In the meantime Vietnam did not collapse as Beijing and Washington wished. The opposite is true. The country has overcome innumerable difficulties over the last ten years.

The US war of aggression caused disastrous, long-term and diversified consequences for nature and man in Vietnam. Under the US-puppet regime, the economy in South Vietnam was a neo-colonialist one, entirely dependent on foreign countries and American aid. It created a life style of consumption, as production could hardly meet the people's needs. Vast areas in northern and southern Vietnam, in cities as well as in the countryside, were destroyed by bombs and shells and affected by toxic chemicals which had serious effects on the ecology and environment in Vietnam. These effects will take many years to overcome, as was pointed out at the "International Symposium on Herbicides and Defoliants in War", held in Ho Chi Minh City in January. The US neo-colonialist regime also disrupted South Vietnam's family and social structures, left behind a degraded culture, innumerable social disasters and an army of unemployed people composed largely of millions of demobbed, wounded and sick puppet soldiers.

The Vietnamese economy is a small-production economy, with backward material and technical bases. The road to socialism, bypassing the stage of capitalist development in a country with such an economy, is a completely new road, without precedent in the world.

Under these circumstances, it is difficult for any country to survive. Fortunately, there exist in Vietnam a number of factors which helped the country come through victorious. First, Vietnam is a nation, tested in struggle, which can endure all privations and hardships. Second, it has a Party enjoying great prestige among the masses, a Party which is loved and respected by the masses, which has a correct method of leadership, which constantly sums up its activities to draw lessons of experience, lessons of success as well as of failure, and dares to admit its setbacks before the masses and corrects its mistakes in order to go forward.

The changes in economic and social management brought about by the 6th Plenum Resolution (August 1979) and approved by the 5th Party National Congress (March 1982) and the specific policies put forth by the Third Plenum Resolution (December 1982), have proved correct. They have helped increase production in industry and handicrafts as well as in agriculture; they have allowed many major capital construction projects to be completed on schedule. In a not distant future our country will have enough energy and building materials for further economic development. Although we still face many difficulties with the system of circulation and distribution of goods, decisive steps are being taken to put the sources of goods under the control of the State, to consolidate the socialist sector in commerce and ensure the stability of the market.

We can now feel in our bones that we will not collapse economically; on the contrary we are advancing with firm steps towards a bright future.

Our enemy is pinning their hopes on the so-called Kampuchea issue. They believe that, owing to our

great economic difficulties and pressure from outside, Vietnam will withdraw its troops from Kampuchea, and a pro-Western, pro-Beijing administration will be set up in Phnom Penh. They are going out of their way to concoct the so-called "tripartite coalition government", to oppose the patriotic forces in Kampuchea and to oppose Vietnam. But this is only a desperate effort to herd three aggressive horses into one stable. This "coalition government" is in fact the Pol Pot regime in a disguised form. It has no future. The latest developments have proved that this assessment is correct. It is true that, under the pressure of Beijing and company, Sihanouk has come to Bangkok to show his attachment to the "coalition government", but this gesture cannot cover up the antagonistic contradictions within that false structure.

All people with a conscience in the world agree with the provisional solution of the right of representation of Kampuchea on international forums: to leave its seat vacant, as the Indian Government will do at the forthcoming Non-aligned Summit. As for Vietnam, it has adopted an attitude full of goodwill. While the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea headed by President Heng Samrin is being unceasingly consolidated and is showing the world its ability and exercising its functions as the leading authority in a revived Kampuchea, Vietnam is ready to accept the "vacant seat" solution on Kampuchea. We already withdrew part of our troops from Kampuchea in mid-1982, and we are ready to withdraw more troops if there is an active response from Thailand. Just as we have gone half-way to meeting the ASEAN countries, together with Laos and Kampuchea, in July 1982 in Ho Chi Minh City, we proposed convening an international conference on Southeast Asia to consider all the problems in this area, not excluding the international aspects of the Kampuchea problem.

We have always shown that we are reasonable, but we have also shown that we are able to face the greatest trials: that was the truth of the last ten years. That is also the truth of the years to come.

We are ready to face the type of many-sided war of destruction the Chinese reactionaries are conducting against Vietnam and the other Indochinese countries, with the complicity of US imperialism. As was pointed out by the "Review of Communism" in its issue of December 1982, the fact that the Chinese have to wage a many-sided war of destruction shows that they are not able to and dare not launch a direct war, like the one when they sent their troops to invade our country and were defeated. This shows that they want "to swallow us, but fail to chew us". This also shows that they want "to squeeze us before they swallow us". Of course, we should not jump to the conclusion that as long as they cannot squeeze us they do not dare to swallow us. Under the present circumstances we opine that there is no change in the nature of Chinese expansionism and hegemonism which is scheming to weaken Vietnam and then annex it and the other Indochinese countries.

While the US warlike imperialists are making a hue and cry about gaining back their position of strength in the world, and the Chinese expansionists and hegemonists are ready to deploy their troops in battle array, we must always enhance our vigilance, strengthen our national defence and at the same time go ahead with economic building in accordance with the line and orientation pointed out by the 5th Party National Congress.

# THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VIETNAM, LAOS, AND KAMPUCHEA

Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea are three separate States lying on the Indochinese peninsula and bordering on the Indochinese Cordillera and the Mekong River. Many branches of social sciences have proved that the three nations are autochthonal ones, living on their present territories from time immemorial with particular cultures, habits and customs, but also with economic, cultural intercourse and interaction.

Worth mentioning is that their very important strategic position in Southeast Asia, a hub of communications from West to East, from North to South, and their abundant wealth and manpower have exposed them to aggression both from West and North.

## Past History

Vietnam's history is one of continual struggle against aggression from China by Chinese feudal courts and sometimes by foreign invaders (like the Yuan) subjugating China and using it as a springboard to overrun other countries. Likewise, Thailand (formerly called

Siam) was often a starting-point of aggression against Laos, Kampuchea and even Vietnam in past centuries.

The invasions from China having been dealt with at length, we here recall a few from Thailand. Late in the 13th century, with the support of the Yuan who then ruled over China, a Sukhothai king started a war and encroached upon Khmer territory. Later on, after merging the Sukhothai Kingdom, the Ayuthia Kingdom founded in 1350 continued the policy of expansion against the Khmer, occupying their capital, Angkor, in 1431 and compelling them to move their capital to Phnom Penh in 1434. In the late 18th century the Siamese courts stepped up their eastward expansion. In 1768 King Taksin annexed the Kampuchean provinces of Siem Reap and Battambang, then in 1781 he launched his troops against Phnom Penh. In 1831 the Siamese again attacked Phnom Penh and Oudong.

Taksin invaded Laos in 1777. At that time the Lan Xang Kingdom was divided into three kingdoms: Luang Prabang, Vientiane and

Champassak. Taksin began to occupy Champassak and compelled Luang Prabang to accept Siamese suzerainty. In 1779 all the three Lao kingdoms became Siamese protectorates and lost a precious statue of Buddha. Coming to power in Vientiane in 1804, Lao King Chao Anou decided to recover the lost territories. With the backing of Vietnam, Chao Anou twice defeated by the Siamese withdrew to Vietnam and mustered his troops for a counter-attack, but failed and died. In 1828 under the pretence of punishing Chao Anou Siamese troops burnt down Vientiane and abducted hundreds of thousands of Lao people to Siam. In 1885 the whole of Laos was occupied up to the Da River basin.

Regarding Vietnam, in 1772 Taksin attacked Ha Tien with 60,000 troops, destroyed the town and killed its population then went to many other South Vietnamese provinces. In 1782 he was overthrown by another king. Although conniving with Nguyen Anh (later on King Gia Long of the Nguyen dynasty) who ruled South Vietnam at that time, the new Siamese king

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*Vietnam wishes to co-exist peacefully with neighbouring countries, first of all with ASEAN countries, and with the People's Republic of China. Vietnam also wants to extend relations to all countries in the world in accordance with the principle of respect for each other's independence, sovereignty and mutual interests, including the United States with which we are ready to normalize relations.*

However, we do not depend on those relations for national building. We have on our side the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, our solid mainstay. We are determined to strengthen the special ties binding the three Indochinese countries, which have been fighting shoulder to shoulder against common enemies for the last century or so, and now have the same objective: socialism. The summit conference of the three countries later this month will be a major step forward in the development of those special relations between the three countries.

We have also many friends among the non-aligned countries, and next March a Vietnamese delegation

*will go to New Delhi to contribute to the non-aligned countries' struggle for the great objectives of our time: peace and world détente; opposition to war and the arms race; disarmament; establishment of a new international order in such major fields as economy, information, etc.*

We are winning more and more understanding from Western capitalist countries, particularly a number of West European and Scandinavian countries.

The image of Vietnam, which had been distorted in the West during the last ten years, has taken its original shape again. And, in the hearts of our friends, of people with a conscience, there still remain kind feelings towards Vietnam. Those feelings which become deeper and deeper with each passing day will give us more strength in fulfilling our two major tasks: building our country and defending our homeland.

VIETNAM COURIER  
5 February 1983

again launched his troops against Ha Tien. In 1784, under the pretext of helping Nguyen Anh fight the Tay Son led by Nguyen Hue, he brought 50,000 troops to invade many Vietnamese provinces: Rach Gia, Can Tho, Sa Dec, Vinh Long, but was heavily defeated by the Tay Son at Rach Gam in 1785, losing 40,000 men. In 1831 while aggressing Kampuchea Siamese troops again attacked Chau Doc and Vinh Long but to no avail.

Late in the 19th century when the British imperialists secured a foothold in Siam (although the country remained independent), France also began to set foot in Vietnam by annexing three eastern provinces of Nam Ky in 1861, then spilled over into Kampuchea and in 1863 compelled the king to accept its protectorate. In 1867 France and Siam signed an agreement following which the latter relinquished its suzerainty over Kampuchea but retained the provinces of Battambang and Siem Reap. In 1884 the Hue Court of Vietnam recognized France's protectorate and in 1885 China signed an agreement renouncing all its rights over Vietnam (June 9, 1885) with France.

Standing firm in Kampuchea and Vietnam, the French colonialists extended their aggression into Laos. In 1893 France brought military pressure to bear upon Siam and sent an ultimatum demanding an end to its rights over Laos. Let down by Britain the Bangkok Court had to sign a French-Siamese agreement (October 3, 1893) acquiescing to the French domination of Laos. In 1907 another French-Siamese agreement forced Siam to withdraw from the two remaining provinces of Battambang and Siem Reap.

Immediately after occupying Kampuchea and Vietnam, in 1887 France set up French Indochina which also included Laos by 1893. This outfit comprised five units: Laos and Kampuchea were two protectorates but Vietnam was partitioned in three, Bac Ky and Trung Ky were protectorates while Nam Ky was a colony. The whole was under a French governor-general seated in Hanoi.

However, right from the time the French landed in the Indochinese peninsula as after the establishment of French Indochina all the three Vietnamese, Lao and Kampuchean nations opposed French colonialism by every means. In this struggle the peoples of the

three countries helped one another as they had done against the invaders from China and Thailand in past centuries.

History has recorded that in the 8th century when Mai Thuc Loan rose up against the Chinese Tang domination in Vietnam he enjoyed the support of Lam Ap and Chan Lap (as Kampuchea was then called).

In the 14th century the Angkor Kingdom sided with King Fa Ngum (Laos) against Ayuthia troops (Siam).

In the 15th century when Le Loi rose up in Lam Son (Thanh Hoa, Vietnam) he enjoyed the Lao tribes' support in arms, food, elephants and could use their territory west of Nghe An province as a springboard. In the 17th century Vietnam sent reinforcements to help Kampuchea against an aggression from Siam.

Late in the 18th century there was very active help between the Tay Son in Vietnam and Kampuchea and Laos: Kampuchean officials and people helped Nguyen Hue against Nguyen Anh while in 1791 Nguyen Hue sent Tran Quang Dieu and Bui Thi Xuan with 5,000 troops to help a Lao king recover Vientiane from Siamese troops.

Early in the 19th century, as said above, Lao King Chao Anou relied upon Vietnam to fight Siamese troops. In the 1860's an alliance was founded in Kampuchea and South Vietnam between the patriotic forces of the two countries under Achar Soa and Pokumpo on the Kampuchean side and Truong Quyen and Nguyen Trung Truc on the Vietnamese side.

The Royalist movement for independence in Vietnam (appearing after 1883 when the Hue Court surrendered to the French) enjoyed the support of the Lao tribes west of Nghe An. Inversely, the Lao patriots Ong Keo and Komadome (1901—1937) were helped in action by the tribes of Vietnam's Central Highlands and the Chao Pha Patchay movement (1918—1922) enlisted the participation of the H'mong in Vietnam's Northern Highlands.

#### **From the Indochinese Federation to the Bloc of Solidarity Vietnam — Laos — Kampuchea**

Their rule established over Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, the French colonialists carried out a

policy of regarding Indochina as a single unit for easier military and political repression and easier economic exploitation. They used soldiers of one country to repress insurrection in another country, sent Vietnamese functionaries to work for the French administration in Laos and Kampuchea, and sent Vietnamese workers to exploit mines in Laos or rubber plantations in Kampuchea. This policy was also one of "divide and rule" familiar to all oppressors: separating Vietnamese from Vietnamese, partitioning Vietnam in three entities and separating Vietnamese from Lao and Kampuchean peoples.

However, the solidarity between the three Indochinese peoples which existed from time immemorial was strengthened since the three countries were put under the common French rule in the latter half of the 19th century. But it was not until the Indochinese Communist Party was founded (1930) that this solidarity and special relationship became a *conscious factor*, thus boosting the strength of each country in the fight for national independence.

In November 1939, the Party pointed out that "Despite the imperialist manoeuvres to separate and rule them and despite many different historic and cultural conditions, the Vietnamese, Khmer and Lao peoples living in the same peninsula do have economic and political relations for all of them are victims of imperialist oppression and exploitation by financial capitalist monopolies, subject to a single political and military repressive apparatus by French imperialism. Hence their national liberation movements are closely related and have to rely upon one another."

The Party led the peoples of the three Indochinese countries through its organizations in these countries. Right since 1930—1932 there were Party committees in Vientiane and Party bases in Thakhek, Savannakhet, Pakse (Laos), as well as Party committees in Phnom Penh, Kratie, Kompong Cham, Kandal (Kampuchea).

The aim of the struggle led by the Party was to liberate the Indochinese nations from all oppression — both national oppression and oppression of man by man.

As to the form of State established after overthrowing imperialist domination Party policies went through two periods:

Between 1930 and 1940 the Party advocated the formation of an Indochinese federation should the Indochinese nations so desire (national self-determination being the supreme principle). Thus the Party Resolution on national policy pointed out in March 1935: "After overthrowing the French imperialist yoke the peoples will enjoy the right to self-determination and can at will opt for an Indochinese Federation or establish a separate State, enter a federation or leave it, choose any political regime. Their fraternal alliance must be based on the principles of sincerity, freedom and revolutionary equality".

The Resolution of the Eighth Plenary Session of the Party Central Committee (June 1941) also stressed that: "When the French and Japanese have been driven out we shall have to correctly implement the policy of self-determination with regard to the Indochinese peoples. Of their free will they will set up an Union of Democratic Republics or separate States."

However, as far back as this Eighth Session of the Party Central Committee, owing to many events in the world and in Indochina the Party realized that the liberation question had to be solved in the framework of each country and advocated the foundation of three fronts against the French and the Japanese in the three countries. These were the Front for the Independence of Vietnam or Viet Minh, the Front for a Free Laos or Lao Itsala and the Front for a Free Khmer or Khmer Issarak.

In February 1951, at the Second Congress of the Indochinese Communist Party, Secretary-General Truong-Chinh clearly said when presenting its Political Theses: "Today, with the development of the revolutionary movements of Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos the three peoples have grown up and formed three separate States. Their revolutionary task remains to struggle against imperialism but from different points."

Therefore, at the proposal of the Vietnamese communists endorsed by their Lao and Kampuchean counterparts, the Second Congress passed the following resolution:

"Due to the new conditions in Indochina and in the world there will be established in Vietnam a Vietnam Workers' Party with a political programme and rules adapted

to Vietnam's conditions; in Kampuchea and in Laos there will be founded revolutionary organizations conforming to the situation in these countries."

Thus was born in February 1951 the Vietnam Workers' Party, then on June 28, 1951, the Khmer People's Revolutionary Party (later renamed People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea), and on March, 22, 1955 the Lao People's Party (later renamed People's Revolutionary Party of Laos).

The building of three separate Parties in the three countries did not mean that they fought separately. Immediately after this Second Congress of the Indochinese Communist Party, on March 11, 1951 a Congress of representatives of the Alliance of the three Vietnamese, Khmer and Lao peoples was convened, attended by delegates of the Viet Minh, Lao Itsala and Khmer Issarak fronts. The resolution of this Congress clearly said that the Alliance of the three peoples is "based on the principles of free will, equality and mutual help" so as to "carry out an all-people, all-sided long-term resistance war to wipe out the French colonialists, defeat the US interventionists and completely liberate the three countries." "to oppose all the divisive manoeuvres of the enemy, and to work for a better understanding, a closer solidarity" and a "thorough help between the three peoples."

This solidarity in fighting led to the success of the 1954 Geneva Conference according to which France had to recognize the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea.

After the defeated French colonialists withdrew from Indochina, the US imperialists took their place. In their gradual invasion of the Indochinese countries, they did like the French from 1861 to 1884, using the territory of one country to aggress another. They used South Vietnam and Laos under neo-colonialist rule as a springboard to attack socialist North Vietnam. To prevent their imminent defeat in South Vietnam, they extended their aggression to Kampuchea with the hope of isolating the resistance of South Vietnam while they were compelled to de-escalate their war (April 1970). Then they opened a campaign on Highway 9, attacked Southern Laos

(April 1971), using the Thieu army, built up according to the Vietnamization strategy with the aim of cutting off the supply of the North to the revolution in the South of Vietnam.

To cope with the US imperialist aggression against the three countries kept on doing what they had done against the French colonialist aggression: closing their ranks in the face of the common enemy.

In March 1965 a Conference of the Indochinese peoples was held in Phnom Penh, convened by Norodom Sihanouk, who then dealt at length with the necessity of strengthening the solidarity between Kampuchea, Vietnam and Laos.

In April 1970 a Summit Conference of the Indochinese Peoples met, with the participation of the leaders of the Lao, Kampuchean and South Vietnam resistance governments and the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam). It was organized in Canton, China.

#### Mutual Help in National Defence and Construction

China, however, nurtured expansionist ambitions with regard to the three Indochinese countries. She only wanted to support a united Indochina under Beijing's protective umbrella and when she realized she could not do that she wantonly sabotaged the revolution in these countries and the solidarity between them. And like the French or US imperialists of yore, China resorted to using one country as a springboard to invade another. Thus she made her stooges in Kampuchea attack Vietnam from the southwest while herself preparing a prong from the north. The reactionary Chinese rulers also strove to undermine the revolution in Laos with the hope of drawing this country into her sway and created a foothold there so as to attack Vietnam from the northwest.

However, the tradition of mutual help between the three Indochinese countries had deepened with the founding of the Indochinese Communist Party. Tested during their confrontation with the imperialist forces, it was now prepared to cope with the expansionists. This mutual help was not restricted to national

(Continued on page 19)



# AGRICULTURE IN 1982

1982 saw marked progress in many respects for agriculture in Vietnam, in the level of production as well as in organizational work, in the cooperatives as well as in the districts. This all-sided advance proves that this is not a chance success but a real step forward in the general upward movement of the national economy.

## Marked Progress in Rice Production

This is the second year since the economy was planned at the State level that food production surpassed the target in the conditions of generally favourable weather which, nevertheless, was not without some vagaries in specific periods and in specific areas (for instance typhoon "Nancy" in Nghe Tinh province). Good rice crops were reported in all parts of the country. Food production in terms of paddy increased by 1.1 million tonnes over 1981 whereas the increase in 1981 was only 760,000 tonnes over the previous year. This is a fairly high rate compared with the average increase of food production in Southeast Asia.

The increase of the gross production of food was primarily thanks to the rapid increase of rice output which averaged 8% annually since the beginning of the Third Five-Year Plan (1980-1985). In 1982 rice output went up by 1.2 million tonnes compared with 966,000 tonnes in 1981 over 1980.

High-yield rice areas have been formed in different parts of the country. In the Winter-Spring crop the provinces in the Mekong River delta which account for 20.1% of the national rice area produced 26.5% of the rice in the whole country. Apart from the two biggest food producers which are the Mekong River delta and the Red River delta, the coastal provinces in Central Vietnam have also made a spectacular step forward, having fundamentally achieved self-sufficiency in food during the past two years. Some districts in this region

have grown three rice crops in a year yielding ten and more tonnes of paddy per hectare. On the fields grown to two rice crops a year, per hectare yield was also as high as 7-8 tonnes.

In Quang Nam - Da Nang province, 15,000 hectares yielded more than 10 tonnes of paddy a year (see "Central Vietnam on the Threshold of the New State Plan", Vietnam Courier No. 2, 1983).

Since the area of food crops fell behind the plan, the increase in food production was due to the increase of productivity and this in its turn was the result of technical improvement in intensive cultivation, particularly in rice cultivation.

In the past two years, some new factors have obviously affected rice cultivation in Vietnam:

First, the product contract system assigned to farmers has increased their motivation in applying new farming methods for intensive cultivation.

Secondly, the policy of economic contracts between scientific workers and organizations and production establishments has strengthened the relationship between science and technique and production, between socialist intellectuals and farmers. Though this is only in the first stage, it has opened up very bright prospects.

Thirdly, the policy of giving more autonomy to the localities has had the effect of enhancing the spirit of initiative of many provinces which no longer passively wait for State supplies but procure for themselves part of their needs in fertilizer, insecticide and fuel through their import-export activities and their economic integration operations, thus meeting better the needs of agricultural production.

These are new factors contributing to the upward trend in agricultural production. However, economic efficiency would have been much higher if more concentrated investments had been made.

The economic integration between industry, distribution, and agriculture, though having shown some progress, still presents many irregularities which limited the initiative of the localities and grassroots in their production programs.

## The Fall in Subsidiary Food Crops Cultivation Should Be Checked

The darkest spot in agricultural production in 1982 was in the planting of subsidiary food crops. Production of these crops in terms of rice equivalent dropped from 2.6 million tonnes in 1980 to 2.5 million tonnes in 1981 and 2.4 million tonnes in 1982.

In the previous Five-Year Plan (1976-1980), the increase of food production was primarily due to the expansion of subsidiary food crops areas. The annual growth rate of subsidiary food crops in those years was 18.2% compared to only 2.5% for rice.

But the situation was somewhat reversed in the current Five-Year Plan (1981-1985).

The drop in the production of subsidiary food crops was first of all due to the reduction of their areas in all regions, though the causes might differ. In the Red River delta for instance, the farmers felt little incentive to grow subsidiary food crops in winter because the State had not enough phosphate fertilizer to supply them and did not purchase all their sweet potatoes and potatoes. Meanwhile, the price of gasoline, fuel and electricity went up continuously, compelling the farmers to think carefully before deciding on what to grow and what not. If some policies were properly corrected, the growing of subsidiary food crops in the Red River delta in winter might receive a new fillip and continue to develop. As a matter of fact, their total production in one specific year reached 300,000 tonnes in paddy equivalent, even though per hectare yield remains comparatively low: 1.12 tonnes for maize, 5.7



tonnes for sweet potatoes, 7.6 tonnes for manioc, 8 tonnes for potatoes... The prospects would be much brighter if an increase of the area was coupled with intensive cultivation to increase per hectare output. It is generally suggested that intensive cultivation should be regarded as the chief measure while the area should be maintained at its present level. In some mountainous or upland regions with a steep gradient, the intensive cultivation of subsidiary food crops would be much more costly than in the plain. Neither is it profitable to expand their area in those regions. Besides, in any expansion program there must also be proper solutions to the questions of processing, transportation and consumption of these crops.

### An Homogeneous Development

The success of agricultural production in 1982 is manifest not only in the increase of food production. Progress has been recorded in all other fields compared with the previous year.

Pulses of all kinds, a strong point of tropical agriculture, are making steady advance in all kinds of soil and in all regions. Their production which had seen continuous decline in the past, recovered in 1978 and has since been gradually expanding at the rate of several thousand hectares a year.

Stockbreeding has also developed in all sectors proportionately with the increase of food production. The number of pigs reached nearly 10.2 million, up by almost 400,000 compared with 1981. The average weight of the pigs delivered to the State has increased quite rapidly thanks to improved techniques and better feeding. The herd of buffaloes was 1.4% above target. The number of ducks—often dubbed "tropical sheep"—has also risen markedly, chalking up a 54% increment in the Mekong River delta compared with 1981.

In 1982 and also in the previous year, agriculture progressed according to a unified plan for the whole country in terms of both production and distribution of crops. The growth in food production has made it possible for the State to secure the biggest food procurement to date which was almost enough to satisfy the demands of the whole country: 2.9 million tonnes of paddy in 1982 compared with 2.5 million tonnes in 1981 and

2 million tonnes in 1980. Likewise, the State has also been able to purchase more meat and fish. At the same time, the areas specializing in the growing of industrial crops for export such as pineapple, coffee, tobacco, natural rubber, has also been expanded year after year.

The new relations of production in agriculture have been further strengthened. The product contract system assigned to the farmers and groups of farmers which has been broadened to embrace other crops beside rice as well as stockbreeding, is creating new possibilities for consolidating the cooperatives. The agricultural cooperation movement in the South, though proceeding at too slow a pace, has nevertheless made steady steps forward. In many localities, the redistribution of land and the organization of various transitional forms are being stepped up. Up to the end of 1982, 21.3% of the total of farmer households accounting for 15.6% of the cultivated area had joined production collectives or on a higher stage, the agricultural cooperatives.

The motto "Let the State and people join efforts" is exerting its positive effect on the expansion of production. The three economic sectors—State, collective and family—in the production of a single product has proved to be a creative policy (for example sericulture is now practised by State-run enterprises, the co-operatives and also private families).

The enthusiasm of farmers can be seen everywhere in the country following a successful agricultural year.

### District Building — Results and Lessons

To build the district along the lines of combining agriculture with industry is a strategic task. There has been substantial progress in the correct understanding of the question as well as in the working out of the right direction and concrete steps for this long-term program.

Some years ago, there were many wrong concepts on the question of district building. In some places, it was conceived primarily as the concentration of the workforce in the whole district to build the material and technical bases. At the cooperatives there was a tendency to rush things and hastily broaden the size of the cooperative even though material conditions for

such an undertaking were not ripe, and this has caused no small difficulty for managerial work and has actually hindered production.

In other places the concept was understood in a simplistic way as just building a number of major industrial enterprises at the district level without consideration for the question of the supply of materials and equipment. Many factories were thus built far from the sources of agricultural and forestry raw material supplies. Meanwhile, the local traditional industries and crafts were neglected. In some districts, the program for district building was made completely dependent on State investments. One district even asked the State to invest as much as eight million dong in capital construction.

In 1980 these deviations began to be corrected. Building of the district was carried on expeditiously but with much steadier steps and with proper measures suited to the practical conditions of the national economy. Today, about fifty districts with different economic structures and in different provinces and regions have been cited as front-rank, e.g. Dong Hung in Thai Binh, Hai Hau in Ha Nam Ninh, Tho Xuan in Thanh Hoa, My Van and Cam, Binh in Hai Hung, Dien Ban in Quang Nam—Da Nang, An Nhon in Nghia Binh, Van Chan in Hoang Lien Soh, Long Phu in Hau Giang, Cu Chi in Ho Chi Minh City...

Generally speaking, these districts have set up and are efficiently running the tractor stations, the technical farms and stations and the material supply companies by which they have established a centre for the technical equipment for the whole district and are directing production in the whole district. The Government has assigned to the districts the operation of 100 tractor stations, 50 repair workshops, 130 plant protection stations, 258 veterinary stations, 168 breeder pigs stations and 28 tree nurseries. A clearer assignment of responsibility has helped these establishments look more closely into the cost-profit aspect of their businesses and to establish closer relations with the local factories and agricultural co-ops. Some districts have streamlined their production system with priority development given to small industries and handicrafts. In these districts, a closer coordination has been achieved between the State-owned factories, cooperatives and production teams. In particular, the agri-

cultural co-ops have vigorously developed side-line occupations among the farmers' families. According to incomplete figures, 70 districts have already achieved a gross value of small industries and handicrafts averaging more than 10 million *dong* per year. In other districts, the value of small industries and handicrafts accounted for more than 40% of the total agricultural and industrial production.

In terms of potential, all the districts have the capability in manpower and land resources to develop all the six groups of plants: food plants, pulses, fruit trees, sugar-giving plants, timber trees and medicinal plants; and four groups of animals: domestic animals, silk worms, honeybees and fish.

A lesson can be drawn from the building of the district level, that is the necessity to strengthen both the district level and the grass-roots.

The cooperatives must be strong in all respects, especially in the rational division of labour, in the comparative reduction of manpower used in cultivation and a proportionate increase of manpower in stockbreeding and handicrafts. Only in this way can there be conditions for the district to develop strongly. Inversely, only when the district is strong and has the necessary number of capable cadres and necessary material and technical bases can conditions be created for the building and consolidation of the cooperatives and the production collectives.

To make good use of manpower, land, forest and sea resources along the lines of intensive cultivation and crop specialisation and comprehensive exploitation of the local economic potentials in accordance with the local natural and social conditions; to continue to build new material and technical bases and make the most of the existing ones in order to meet the demands of both production and life in the district while fulfilling the duty toward the State; to forge ahead by chiefly relying on self-procured manpower and funds, these are the basic measures to quickly build the district along the lines of the Party's resolutions. These are also valuable lessons drawn from practice in 1982.

After HUU THO

## **Vietnam Advances**

# REORGANISATION OF PRODUCTION IN A DISTRICT

Thanks to new relations of production and the application of scientific and technical improvements to intensive farming, the total food output of An Nhon, one of the main rice-producing districts in Nghia Binh province, rose from 41,000 tonnes in 1979 to 52,000 tonnes in 1981. However, as its population increased very rapidly, the per capita food output went down from 366 kg in 1978 to 332 kg in 1981.

An Nhon has 150,000 inhabitants and 10,000 hectares of cropland. Since 1977, it has rationally organized its labour force to develop all-out agricultural production with crops specialization, intensive cultivation and increase productivity with plants and animals as the main targets, parallel to the development of handicrafts. It has also sent part of its work force away to build up new economic zones and applied a program of family planning.

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As a result, in the last few years, An Nhon has been able to devote all its efforts to agricultural production, taking the food problem as its primary task with the growing of three main crops (rice, soya bean and sugarcane), and the rearing of pigs and oxen.

Following the principle of "the population and cooperatives doing the job with the assistance of the State", An Nhon has launched a movement to build small irrigation works and mobilize the financial and material resources of its inhabitants to complete these works in order to guarantee the irrigation of rice and short-term industrial crops such as soya, sugarcane, and peanut. The Nhon Khanh co-op members have contributed over 300,000 *dong* and thousands of workdays to build an electric pumping station with a capacity of 1,500 cubic metres per hour built with a capital of 1.2 million *dong*.

The district gives pride of place to the use of high-yield, pest-resistant rice strains; it now possesses many new rice varieties which meet the requirements of all kinds of soil and all seasons.

To make up for the shortage of nitrogenous fertilizer, the cooperatives encouraged their co-op members to produce more organic manure or even exchanged rice for fertilizer. In the Winter 1981—Spring 1982 crop, instead of putting 6 tonnes of fertilizers per hectare many cooperatives used 7—9 tonnes. From 1980 onward, An Nhon district has resolutely applied the crop rotation system using the formula: winter rice + summer

soya + autumn rice, soya being used as food in daily meals as well as increasing the soil's fertility by enriching it with nitrogen.

In the last few years, though working in unfavourable climatic conditions, An Nhon has always fulfilled its duty of food (rice and pigs) delivery to the State. Its food quota in the last three years increased by 1,000 tonnes.

The district has also tried to boost animal husbandry. The supply of animal breeds and fodder, and veterinary work have been satisfactory. It has encouraged family stock breeding and applied a rational price policy. As a result, there has been an increase in both the pig and cattle population. By mid-1982, there were 84,000 pigs, an increase of 23 per cent compared with 1980, and 17,000 cows and oxen, up 7 per cent compared with the period prior to the start of the cooperativisation movement.

An Nhon has also paid attention to the development of the soya crop which occupies a position second only to rice and is grown in specialized fields of 1,000 hectares upward.

Furthermore An Nhon has traditional cottage industries famous in the region — blacksmithy, palm-leaf hat making, groundnut processing.

After liberation, An Nhon stepped up the development of handicrafts which were neglected under the US-puppet regime, and has gone in for new trades such as machine repair, production of building materials and processing of animal fodder. At present, it boasts eight State enterprises and about 60 cooperatives and production collectives employing 6,000

workers, 2,000 of whom are qualified and 1,200 workers transferred from small trade who process animal fodder, cassava root, make paper and hats, produce peppermint and groundnut oils and raw sugar and manufacture farm tools. In 1981, the value of handicraft output in An Nhon district reached 15 million *dong*, exceeding the target of the State plan, an increase of 17 times compared with 1976. The value of goods delivered to the State accounts for 50%. Thirty-eight of the 60 items of its handicraft production have been sold to the State trade service and supply and marketing cooperatives.

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To facilitate the building of the agricultural — industrial structure of the district, An Nhon has developed its agriculture and handicrafts rapidly. Compared with 1976, its agricultural production increased nearly 20% in 1978 and 45% in 1981. Handicraft production rose from 30% in 1980 to 70% in 1981. In 1981 the total value of handicraft output reached 43% of the aggregate output value of all economic branches. From 1% in 1976, the workforce engaged in handicrafts increased 12% in 1981, whereas the number of farmhands employed in cultivation dropped from 90% to 75% in 1981 and below 70% in 1982, and those engaged in animal husbandry increased from 2% in 1979 to 5% in 1981. Labour efficiency also rose substantially: while a farmhand only worked 0.4 hectare of land in 1978, she tended 0.55 hectare in 1981 and 0.6 hectare in 1982. Land coefficient increased

from 1.37 times in 1978 to nearly double that in 1982.

Parallel with the distribution of the workforce in the district, An Nhon has sent a great number of labourers to build new economic regions. Up to the end of 1981, 1,000 families with 6,000 members including 3,600 farmhands moved to the Central Highlands. In the first half of 1982, an additional number of 3,700 farmers settled there, exceeding the target set by the province. This emigration to the Central Highlands was the outcome of a movement launched by the district to encourage its inhabitants to go and build a new home. The life of the new settlers quickly stabilized as a pioneering force composed mainly of youth had been sent there in advance to build the material bases for the settlers, enabling them to buckle down immediately to land clearance and catch up with planting time.

An Nhon has launched a widespread campaign for family planning and as a consequence, the birth rate in the district dropped from 2.89% in 1977 to 2.05% in 1981 and below 2% at the end of 1982.

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An Nhon is striving to attain the following targets set for 1985: 650,000 tonnes of food grain, or per capita output of 440kg; 1,000 — 1,500 hectares of sugarcane (giving 4 or 5 tonnes of sugar per hectare); 5 million *dong* from the sale of handicraft goods; 25,000 or 30,000 more people to go to new economic zones, and a birth rate of 1.5%.

HOAI NAM

# VIETNAM'S ECONOMY IN 1982 AND ITS PROSPECTS FOR 1983

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** On the threshold of 1983, the ministers of the economic branch granted interviews to the daily "Nhan Dan". Here is the gist of their answers.

## **Nguyen Ngoc Triu, Minister of Agriculture**

A notable change has been wrought in agriculture. From 13.934 million tonnes in 1979, food production rose to 14.4 million tonnes in 1980, 15.1 million tonnes in 1981 and 16.26 million tonnes in 1982. In 1982 the boost was general: important increase in food crops, and notable increase in industrial crops and animal husbandry. Nevertheless, the production of subsidiary food crops was sporadic, the small quantity gathered, not worth selling in the market, was the result of lack of policy governing the marketing, processing, circulation and export of products.

It is to be noted that formerly the boost of rice production was due mainly to the increase in area, but in the last two years, it was the outcome of the method of intensive farming. In fact, formerly rice production increased from 2.1 tonnes to 2.2 tonnes per hectare while in 1981 and 1982 it rose to 2.43 tonnes. This high yield was obtained over an immense area.

What are the factors responsible for this increase? Nguyen Ngoc Triu explained that it was due to the improvement of agricultural technique: use of strains capable of giving high yields, abundant use of fertilizers. But he laid stress on the product contract system and said: "It is the principal motive force impelling the improvement of agricultural technique."

However, he added: "This initial step is not yet steady. Of the three tasks set for agriculture only food production was successful, while the production of raw materials for industry and for export was not up to the mark. Of the three sectors—State, private, collective—the latter two have done good work but the State sector left room for improvement. Agricultural production was good but processing, preservation, collection and distribution of products were not up to requirements. Furthermore, the State policies have not yet made their effects felt."

## **Nguyen Canh Dinh, Minister of Water Conservancy and Irrigation**

The most important target for this branch is to raise the efficiency of irrigation works servicing intensive culture, because till now they have operated only at 40-50% of their capacity. To cope with this situation, a movement for the completion of the irrigation system has been launched.

With regard to the management and exploitation of irrigation works in time to come, Minister Nguyen Canh Dinh said that it is necessary to increase the efficiency of existing works, especially those servicing the high-yield rice-producing areas, to build new works only if they prove to be indispensable, are not too expensive and have a high economic efficiency; and rapidly to complete the construction of unfinished works so that they can operate as soon as possible.

The water conservancy and irrigation branch attaches great importance to the Mekong and Red River deltas which are the two biggest granaries of Vietnam. Regarding the Mekong delta, it has made

many investigations and held many seminars and found that we have good prospects to transform alkaline and salted soil and flooded regions in order to raise the index of use of land (1.1 at present) through intensive farming, multiplication of crops, expansion of area, according to the region. In the Mekong delta the task ahead is to dredge irrigation canals, dig draining ditches, build many small irrigation works and some medium-size works where the need is felt, to continue basic surveys and studies and make preparation for the investment in big works. Insofar as the Red River delta is concerned, as many works have been done previously, it is necessary to concentrate on the management and exploitation of these works, to solve the flood problem mainly by digging draining ditches and making pumps locally. Attention should be paid to the control of flood and protection of crops.

## **Phan Xuan Dot, Minister of Forest Exploitation**

Though notable progress was made by this branch in 1982, its task of management and protection of forests was heavy as the destruction of plants and trees continues unabated. The area of woodland and reserves of timber shrink at an alarming rate. "We shall do our utmost to put an end to this trend in 1983," said the minister.

What must we do to protect our forests and clothe in verdure our bare hills which total 13 million hectares, that is over 40% of the area of land of the whole country? Phan Xuan Dot proposed concrete measures: to reorganize production in the uplands and highlands of northern Vietnam according to the formula of agricultural-forestry or forestry-agricultural combination, to entrust the care of forest to each family, cooperative or forest exploitation farm, to urge the local population to lead a sedentary life, the minority people to give up the habit of clearing woodland for cropping, to persuade them to grow precious plants to exchange for food, or to sell them to the State at advantageous prices, to streamline the policies regarding the management and protection of forests and the building of a ranger force to mete out punishments or rewards to those who destroy or protect forests.

## **Nguyen Tien Trinh, Minister of Water Products**

This branch met with great difficulties in 1982: inclement weather for fishing, lack of materials, fuel and fishing tackle supplied by the State.

The key to success is a change in the method of leadership: the minister and vice-minister will visit all the regions and send experts to help them improve their mode of production, streamline their organization and rationally distribute the labour force. They would give the provinces a free hand to manage their own affairs. Many policies encouraging the exploitation of water products have already been issued.

There are opinions that the investments made in the exploitation of water products were not efficient,



the rearing of aquatic animals left room for improvement. Minister Nguyen Canh Dinh recognized that this is true. "We paid too much attention to ocean fishery and the use of big boats," he said. "Now we have changed our method of production by practising inshore fishery, and rearing aquatic animals. We attach importance to the use of small-scale fishing and rudimentary processes in order to save fuel and foreign currencies. Formerly, the rearing of aquatic animals was not developed because we regarded it as a means to satisfy the needs of the population only. In many regions, no progress has been made as the method of collection of products was not good enough to encourage the rearers. Now the processing of water products has been given due attention in order to raise their export value and to gain bigger profit: cuttle fish for instance must be dried before being sent to foreign markets."

#### **Vu Tuan, Minister of Food Industry**

In 1982, the State plan was overfulfilled by 10%; its total output value increased by 19% compared with 1981.

This is thanks to the policies fostering production and granting the economic bases, chiefly the processing enterprises, the right to find by their own means such raw materials as sugarcane, coconut, tea, tobacco, oil-bearing fruit which are plentifully available in our country. Vu Tuan stressed the need to organize the coordination between industry and agriculture, to link agricultural production to industrial processing; this coordination has begun only with tea, sugarcane and coconut with the setting up of specialized regions and agricultural product processing factories, and the farms supplying raw materials must help each other in economic management and technique without passing through the intermediary of other organizations, in order to guarantee the regular supply of good quality raw materials to the processing enterprises.

We must discuss with the regions to set up special zones for the growing of industrial crops and suggest that the State should work out concrete policies regarding investment, price, collection of products so as to secure for the State the greatest part of raw materials. We must also help the regions build small- and medium-size food processing factories while the central government undertakes to build bigger ones.

#### **Nguyen Chi Vu, Minister of Light Industry**

This ministry has put an end to the alarming drop in production which has existed for three years now (output index in 1978: 100; in 1979: 87; in 1981: 67); in 1982, the total output value of consumer goods increased by 12.7% over 1981 (40% for textiles). One thousand old machines were restored including 900 mechanical looms, and 80-90% of accessories for weaving machines were manufactured locally. In management, we have introduced a system of economic integration between the various provinces to produce a number of commodities. For instance, regarding paper, relations have been established between processing enterprises and local export companies to buy materials from abroad for production according to the State plan. We also instil the love of labour into the workers who have shown a passive attitude in work — as their wages are not sufficient to cope with the high cost of living — by applying the system of remuneration according to the work done and bonus for work efficiency.

We have paid keen attention to weaving (which made substantial progress last year) and paper making. The big textile mills have fulfilled their

production targets and given assistance to the local looms. The Vinh Phu Pulp and Paper Mill has worked in coordination with the local paper mills to recuperate the materials scattered in different regions.

#### **Mai Ky, Vice-Minister of Engineering and Metallurgy**

"Generally speaking, progress was made in 1982 in production, scientific study and management," Mai Ky said. "Compared with 1981, production increased by 13.4%, labour efficiency 9.43% and profits doubled. In engineering, the total output value exceeded that of 1978, the year recording the highest boost. The production of steel and tin also went up. Electronics, a branch newly set up, fulfilled its program of cooperation with foreign countries."

In 1982 the economic bases made great efforts to fend for raw materials and foreign currencies themselves to compensate for the 20-30% shortage of materials. Many studies were conducted on the replacement of imported materials by local ones. The problem of relations between specialization and diversification in production was solved to suit the situation of the market. Economic relations began to be established between the enterprises operating inside and outside the ministry, and with the other provinces and the Mekong delta. Many directors of enterprises set great store by raising technical level and creating conditions for the improvement of the life of their personnel. They correctly apply the principle of distribution according to the work done: payment per production contract; fixation of ceiling for the payment of wages in each enterprise, encouragement of side-occupation.

Mai Ky pointed out: "Our branch gives pride of place to the production of consumer goods and those servicing agriculture. The production of goods to serve agriculture accounts for 28% of the total engineering output value in 1982, and will rise to 31% in 1983. Attention will be paid to the manufacture of engines from 5 to 50 H.P. to serve agriculture and fishery, of mechanical pumps of 8,000 cubic metres per hour, of equipment for the processing of agricultural products. With regard to the production of consumer goods, we shall attach importance to the production of equipment for weaving mills, for the production of sugar, beer, paper and monosodium glutamate."

#### **Pham Ngoc Tuong, Minister of Civil Construction**

The most striking feature of the work of capital construction is that it is centered on the key economic branches and the main undertakings: 22 main works executed by this branch made up 103% of the plan. A close coordination has been established between the ministries and the regions concerned with the construction of key State enterprises under the direct guidance of the Council of Ministers.

The principle of "State and people pooling their efforts" is a new factor speeding up the tempo of capital construction. Most remarkable is the work of transformation and building of irrigation ditches, pigsties, cow sheds, schools, hospitals in districts and communes.

With regard to the targets of capital construction work in 1983, Minister Pham Ngoc Tuong said: "Our branch is devoting all its efforts to the construction of the Hoa Binh hydro-power plant, the Pha Lai thermo-electric works, to the installation of the conveyor belt No. 2 of the Bim Son cement plant, the Hoang Thach cement plant, among the forty key works executed by the State.

D. Q. B.

# THE VIETNAMESE COUNTRYSIDE SINCE THE AUGUST 1945 REVOLUTION

Vietnam is a traditionally agricultural country where peasants account for the great majority of the population. Over the centuries they have been the basic force of the nation. In the centuries-old struggle against nature and in their social struggle for survival they have created a rich literary and artistic treasure which constitutes one of the main streams of a traditional national culture endowed with many democratic and progressive elements.

By the end of the 19th century, the French colonialists, the Catholic missionaries and the indigenous landlord class had concentrated into their hands more than 52% of the cultivated land in the whole country. Meanwhile, the peasantry which occupied 97% of the rural households owned only 36% of the land. Nearly 60% of the peasant households had not an inch of land of their own<sup>1</sup>.

Having little or no production means, the peasants had to work as sharecroppers with land rents accounting for 50—70% of the yield, hire their services to the rich families or subsist on a few yards of communal land (this varied according to the localities but represented overall only 11.9% of the cultivated land)<sup>2</sup>. Apart from high land-rent and interest-rates, the working peasants were also burdened by hundreds of taxes and labour contributions levied by the colonialist administration together with innumerable other tolls imposed by the local authorities.

Crippled by poverty and crushed under multiple layers of oppression, the peasants under the former regime could hardly think of any education or recreation. To make matters worse, the policy of obscurantism and cultural poisoning by the colonialists and feudalists drove them into still greater ignorance and backwardness.

While imposing restriction on the opening of schools and a strict ban on the circulation of patriotic and progressive literature, the colonialists and feudalists thought of a thousand and one ways to encourage gambling, alcoholism and opium-addiction in the countryside. According to the book "French

Colonialism on Trial" published in 1925, "every 1,000 villages had 1,500 retail depositories of alcohol and opium. But also in these 1,000 villages there were only 10 schools".

The August Revolution in 1945 ushered in a period of uninterrupted transition from the national and democratic revolution to the socialist revolution in Vietnam. In this process, deep and far-reaching changes occurred in the life of the Vietnamese peasants, changes which were at the same time the demands and conditions for their own cultural advancement.

## Cultural Advance

There was a total of 15 million illiterates in the country at the time of the August Revolution. They represented 95% of the population in the 8—50 year-old age group in the countryside.

Obviously, this dismal cultural stagnation could not be allowed to continue. The building and defence of the new regime and the new life urgently required a minimum cultural level of the peasants as a starting point for subsequent steps.

"To safeguard our independence, to make our people strong and our country prosperous, every Vietnamese must understand where their rights, interests and duties lie. They must be equipped with new knowledge so that they could take part in national construction. First of all, they must be able to read and write the national tongue. Let those who already can read and write teach those who still cannot... Let those who still cannot read and write strive to learn".

This Appeal for Combating Illiteracy came from President Ho Chi Minh and the task of fighting illiteracy closely associated with the fight against famine and foreign aggression set out by himself at the first cabinet meeting of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on September 3, 1945 quickly won enthusiastic response from the peasant masses and was implemented in varied forms which bespoke their enlightenment and their aspiration for culture.

Everywhere in the countryside there rose the voice of adults reading aloud after volunteer teachers the first letters "i, t" of the Vietnamese alphabet. Letters were written on walls, tree trunks, helmets and conical hats, on the back of a buffalo... Signs bearing the letters of the alphabet were planted on ricefield boundaries, at the gates of market places, at ferries... so that the peasant masses could learn in all circumstances. The result was that after only one year more than 2 million working people in the country composed mostly of peasants could already read and write. In a way, it can be said that the cultural advancement of Vietnamese peasants within a year under the worker-peasant regime surpassed what the 80 years of "cultural enlightenment" and "civilization" of French colonialism had achieved.

Later, during the anti-French resistance war (1946—1954) the peasant masses continued their studies while ploughing their fields or fighting with guns in hands. The literacy classes adopted new slogans such as "Going to classes is to love the country" or "Going to classes to resist the enemy and build the country".

The effective activities of the educational service aided by the thirst for education of the peasants brought important successes. By mid-1950, 10 provinces, 80 districts, 1,424 villages and 7,218 hamlets in the rural areas of the free zone had been freed from illiteracy. After having learnt to read and write, tens of thousands of people, chiefly rural cadres and youth, continued their studies at post-literacy or primary complementary education courses in order to equip themselves with more knowledge to better execute the tasks set by the Party and Government for the rural areas. The curriculum of these courses was broadened and heightened continuously. In his instruction to the cadres and teachers of the Popular Education Department on September 2, 1948, President Ho Chi Minh wrote:

"Where illiteracy has been eradicated, you should take another step forward and teach to the population:

— popular notions of hygiene in order to reduce the sickness rate;

— popular notions of science to reduce superstitions;

— the four calculations to help them work in a more methodical way;

— the history and geography of our country (preferably in vernacular form) in order to enhance their love for the homeland;

— civic duties so that they may become good citizens."

With the victory of the anti-French war of resistance in the North, conditions were created for promoting the literacy campaign throughout the northern countryside. By late 1958 more than 90% of the peasants in the plains and uplands of the North had become literate.

In the following years, along with the vigorous broadening of the agricultural cooperation campaign, the building and consolidation of the new relations of production in the countryside confronted the peasant masses with a new requirement, that of attaining a higher cultural level in order to take into their own hands the organization and management of the collective economy.

In the 1955—1956 academic year, about 100,000 adults attended complementary primary education classes in the countryside. In the 1959—1960 school-year the figure rose to 1.2 million, i.e. a tenfold increase within five years. From 1961 to 1965, an average of 1.5 million people attended such courses every year<sup>3</sup>. In addition to after-hours classes, the district administration in many provinces organized full-time complementary education courses at the primary level for hundreds of thousands of village administrative cadres and managerial cadres of co-operatives. Besides, thousands of peasant youth were admitted to a special category of schools called worker-peasant complementary education schools run by the central administration or the provinces. There they were taught the programs of the junior high schools and later were given technical education of the secondary and even university levels before returning to their native places to take part in the building of agricultural cooperatives and the new countryside.

In the years of the US war of destruction against the North (1965—1972) many revolutionary campaigns were launched in the

rural areas by the Party, such as "The plough in one hand and the gun in the other", "Increase production and stand ready to fight", "Improve management and techniques of agricultural cooperatives", "Reorganize agricultural production from the base along the lines of large-scale socialist production"... These campaigns required that the peasants further raise their cultural standard in order to acquire new knowledge about military as well as agricultural science and techniques.

It was in this period that a movement for complementary education gained momentum among the collective peasants in the North with very diversified forms of organization of classes and schools at the first, second and third levels of general education. 25 provinces opened worker-peasant complementary education schools of the second and third levels. 150 districts organized Labour General Schools of the first and second levels for grassroots cadres. More than 600 villages opened study-and-work schools for the youth. In addition, a network of schools to improve the cultural standard and teach agricultural techniques was also formed, financed by the co-ops and attended by 200,000—280,000 students each year.

After liberation, the South greatly benefited from the rich experiences of the mass education movement in the North in the 50's and 60's. By early 1978, more than 94% of the population of working age had been freed from illiteracy.

As in the North, this was followed by an intensive campaign for further education in the first and second levels embracing both the urban and rural areas.

Along with literacy education for adults, the general education system ranging from the first to third levels<sup>4</sup> and run by the State has seen continuous development in the North since 1954 and has effectively raised the cultural level of tens of millions of rural youth born in the post-revolution period.

In recent years, in the light of the resolution of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee on educational reform (January 1979), a new general education system with a new program embracing cultural education, political and ethical education, labour education, technical and vocational education, physical and aesthetic education, was introduced

and quickly developed in both town and country, in the North and the South. In the 1981-82 school-year the whole country had 313,000 general education classes of all levels with an enrolment of 14 million students. Almost all children of school age are going to school compared with 2% in the pre-revolution days.

The simultaneous development of popular education and general education has made it possible for the Vietnamese countryside even in the conditions of a still underdeveloped economy with a poor material and technical foundation in agriculture, which, moreover, has been heavily ravaged by war, to achieve step by step the objective of popularizing primary education among the entire population. By mid-1981 all the rural areas in 6 of the 40 provinces and cities in the country had completed primary education for the entire adult population. Many front-rank communes in the North have even popularized second level education and are striving to popularize the third level to all cadres and youth.

In the South, within only six years, from 1975 to 1981, 400 communes completed primary education and more than 1,000 others completed second level education for the peasants.

Illiteracy has now been completely eradicated and the initial raising of the cultural standard of the peasant masses has created conditions for stepping up political education and the popularization of science and techniques.

A system of State-run libraries is being set up in the districts. Together with thousands of commune reading rooms established by the agricultural cooperatives themselves, they have provided the necessary means for the realization of these tasks.

Besides, the raising of the general cultural standard of the peasants, especially among the youth, has created necessary conditions for the step-by-step implementation of the policy of large-scale training of cadres<sup>5</sup> for the cooperative countryside set out by the Party. In the North, the number of cadres and technicians in the cooperatives who have finished university or secondary education in agricultural techniques increased by 2.5 times from 1965 to 1973 and 38-fold compared with the total in 1955.

At present, Vietnam has five agricultural colleges with an average of 500 graduates annually.

## Advance in Culture, Personality, Ideology, Ethics, Work and Life Style

Many communal activities, and many folklore compositions which are still preserved vividly reflect the profound attachment of the peasants to their native land and their country, their propensity to work, their altruism in their relations with their co-villagers and their healthy concept of a way of life guided by the principle "stay clean even when hungry and in rags".

However, in the old society the peasants were not immune from such harmful concepts and bad habits as over-indulgence, self-interest, egotism and narrow-mindedness, parochialism, loose working habits, conservatism and sluggishness.

Most harmful was the Confucian ideology which was introduced into Vietnam at a very early period and became the predominant ideology of the feudal regime over many centuries. Together with the precepts of many religions such as Taoism, Buddhism and Christianity which were encouraged by the colonialists, it has made its deep impact felt on the community life in the villages and on the communal and family relationships, begetting innumerable harmful habits and superstitious practices which weighed even more heavily on the already tragic plight of the peasants before the August 1945 Revolution.

Not until the whole social fabric, from the infrastructure to the superstructure of the colonial and

feudalist society, was completely demolished by the revolutionary storm, and the peasant masses under the leadership of the Party became the real masters of the political, economic and social life in the countryside were conditions created for a radical change in the ideology and sentiments of the peasants, the essential factors of the cultural and spiritual life in the rural areas.

First of all, through the crucible of the great struggle over one-third of a century against the French colonialists, the US imperialists and the Chinese expansionist aggressors, for national independence and reunification and socialism, patriotism which has deep roots among the Vietnamese peasantry has experienced a gradual qualitative change.

Unlike in the past when patriotism in the mind of the individual peasant was confined to its narrow sense and could be almost identified with the love for their fields and native place, today the love for the country cannot be dissociated from the love for the working people. The ideal of national liberation is closely associated with that of social emancipation and emancipation of Man. National independence must inevitably lead to socialism.

It has become a powerful motivating force urging one generation of peasants after another to surmount all difficulties and sacrifices, and to fight courageously and work with self-devotion for the victory of the independence and freedom of their beloved homeland.

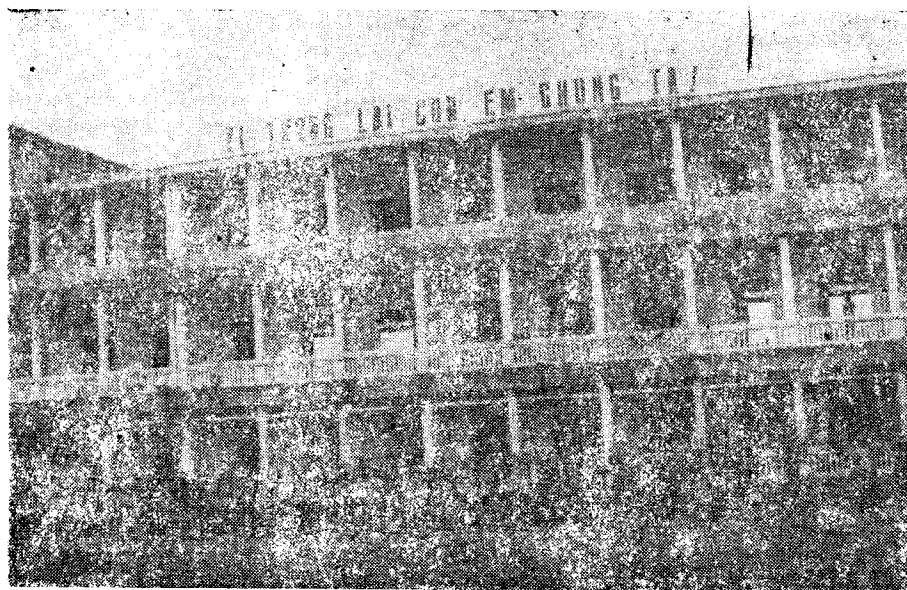
As a parallel development, the emerging sense of collective mastery is also a special feature in the new cultural life of the peasants. In the old countryside, the peasants could at best be the masters of a few plots of land and a small garden on which, with a few primitive tools and traditional experiences, they produced a little of everything to meet the minimum needs of the family. All preoccupations and calculations centered around this narrow framework. From there was born the psychology of "each house cares for its own lamp" and "the mouth eats what the hands produce".

Today, in the cooperative countryside, the peasants have become the collective masters of the production means which have been collectivized on the hamlet and commune scale. This has allowed the peasants to broaden their division of work and their cooperation in labour in order to develop production and improve their own lot, accelerate the accumulation of funds for the cooperatives, and increase the volume of food to meet the needs in national construction and defence.

This profound change in the mode of production has created the objective socio-economic basis for the emergence and development of the peasant's sense of collective mastery.

Of course, this does not mean that the over-indulgence, self-interest, egotism and narrow mindedness,—offsprings of the economy of small farmers—have completely disappeared in the mentality of the peasants who have joined agricultural cooperatives.

Far from it. The ideological vestiges of the small ownership regime reflected in the concept "nobody mourns the common father" still prevails among many co-op members with regard to collective work or in their attitude of dependency on others, negligence or perfunctoriness during collective work sessions. All this has created and is creating not a few difficulties to the consolidation of the co-ops. Therefore, the slogan "the co-op is the house and the co-op members are the masters" put forth



A basic general education school in Hai Chinh commune, Hai Hâu district, Ha Nam Ninh province.

Photo: TRAN THIEM



**A new theatre in Long Phu district, Hau Giang province.**

Photo: LE CUONG

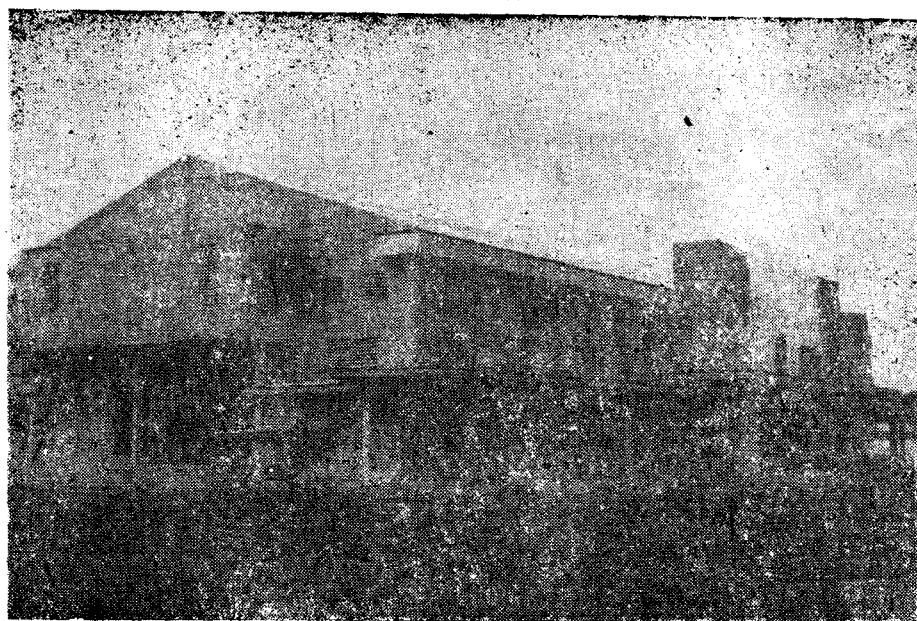
by the Party in the high tide of the agricultural cooperation movement in the North in the early sixties remains a target to be reached by the broad masses of the collective peasantry. This slogan has really become a reality only in the frontrank co-ops.

Experience has also shown that the development of the sense of collective mastery among the broad masses of the cooperative farmers cannot be the result of just ideological and ethical education alone. The improvement of the managerial mechanism of the co-ops in recent years which consists in abolishing the bureaucratic and administrative way of management and the mode of egalitarian distribution of crops and their replacement with a strict system of cost-profit accountability and the principle of distribution according to labour—which closely associates the legitimate interests of the farmers with those of the collective and the State—is opening good prospects for resolving the clash between private and common interests in the agricultural co-operatives, thus creating conditions for cultivating the sense of collectivism among the co-op members.

In addition, the current drive for reorganizing agricultural production along the lines of large-scale socialist production and on the basis of a unified planning on the district, provincial and national scale, is also broadening the range of view of the co-op farmers, enabling them to see beyond the narrow confines of their village or commune.

The process of change is also affecting a deep-rooted psychology of the Vietnamese peasants which is their traditional attachment to their native land born out of the necessity to cling to a plot of communal land, however small, and consequently to their familiar entourage in order to provide against difficult times. This psychology is being gradually replaced by the readiness to go wherever their presence is needed to build "new economic zones" (which mostly grow food or industrial crops) or new industrial centres.

With the new awareness that "in our beautiful country any place can be our native land", within only



five years, from 1976 to 1980, hundreds of thousands of families of farmers totalling 750,000 workhands and 1.5 million persons in the overpopulated areas in the northern delta and the central coastal provinces volunteered to go to South Vietnam, the Central Highlands and some border regions or offshore islands in the North to build "new economic zones", thus contributing to the redistribution of labour on a national scale according to the needs of the building and defence of the socialist homeland.

Like their mode of life the peasants' style of work has also changed.

In the past, the individual farming of small plots of land allowed the farmer to think of no better division of labour than the natural one as is vividly depicted in this pastoral scene: "The husband ploughs, the wife transplants and the buffalo draws the harrow". This mode of production obviously could be only an autarkical one, chiefly to meet one's own needs. In such conditions, as Marx noted, "the farmers exchange with nature more than with society".

The peasant's free-wheeling style of work and loose attitude to labour actually stems from this mode of production.

This small production and this natural division of labour had no interest in the improvement of farming techniques and did not create the premises for it. Moreover, due to their ignorance the small

farmers naturally contented themselves with their traditional experience. This explains their conservatism and natural tendency to sluggishness.

Naturally, it would take time and much effort to completely do away with these negative aspects of small production.

Anyway, the simultaneous carrying out of the three revolutions in the countryside—revolution in production relations, the scientific and technical revolution, and the ideological and cultural revolution of which the scientific and technical revolution is the kingpin—has had the effect of directing the collective peasants into a planned and scientific mode of production which is much more productive than previously. In other words, it is helping the peasants to begin working in a cultured way.

Although the fight between the new and old method of thinking is still and will continue to be a bitter one in the countryside, there has already emerged in the agricultural co-ops a new generation of peasants who are thirsty for new technical knowledge, who want to change the old and backward method of doing things.

Thus, the primitive plough which can turn up only a thin layer of soil has been replaced by an improved type and this, too, is being replaced by a growing number of mechanical ploughs. The traditional precept "water is the first thing, manure comes next, labour comes

third and seed comes fourth" still holds, but it has assumed a new and more scientific basis and content. In many regions the farmers have built irrigation and drainage systems, applied a systematic regime of fertilizing and made a careful selection of seeds, carried out cross-breeding or planted imported rice strains which give much higher yield. They tend and protect their crops with chemical and biological means under the guidance of agronomists.

With the collective strength coupled with the increasing application of advanced technology, the collective farmers have been able to fight water-logging under the slogan "Let us incline the field and pour water out into the river" and combat drought under the slogan "Squeeze the soil for water and replace the sky in making rain." The fetishism before the supernatural force of nature reflected in the popular saying "Pray God for rain so that I can have water to drink and to plough my field" is being gradually relegated to the past.

All that is mentioned above not only has a socio-economic significance but also bears a deep humanistic meaning. The self-degradation of the peasant is being gradually eliminated, and in its place a new sense of mastery, mastery of society, mastery of nature and mastery of oneself, is taking shape.

Just as they do not work as in the past, the new peasant does not live as in the past.

It may be some time before they can attain a plentiful material life, but even today the collective peasants in Vietnam can already eat their fill and no longer go out in rags. The disgraceful scenes of "pale face and dirty teeth" or "a loin cloth and tattered shirt" have become things of the past. Gone are also the petty calculations of an individual peasant as to how to make both ends meet.

In the matter of housing, in many areas where agricultural cooperation has been completed, most of the tumble-down shacks have been replaced by neat, airy tile-and-brick houses. The unhygienic and untidy way of living has made room for an orderly and more hygienic one.

The mass movements of "patriotic hygiene", "clean village and fertile ricefields", of building more curbed wells, bath rooms and public latrines, etc. have made a worthy contribution to abolishing the scene of muddy roads and stagnant water in the old Vietnamese countryside.

The system of medical stations and maternity homes has been extended to all rural areas. Medical treatment with the combination of western and traditional medicine is also expanding and has brought encouraging results. Many dangerous and widespread diseases in the old countryside have been basically eradicated. This, too, is something more than the solution of a socio-economic problem. It also has a profound significance in the cultural aspect because once the sick peasant can safely rely on the medical service of the co-operative or the State, there is no more place for superstitious practices such as witchcraft or faith healing which were very common in the old countryside. In many regions, superstitions and credulity in supernatural powers have almost disappeared among the rural masses.

Parallel with this progress has been the effective transformation and renovation of many traditional customs and habits in the communal life. Many complicated, time-consuming and costly customs and rites heavily tinted with superstition such as in the organization of funerals, weddings, death anniversaries, or rural rituals have been greatly reduced.

Polygamy, infant or forced marriages... products of the feudal regime which caused so much sufferings to peasant families, especially to young women, are forbidden by law and condemned by public opinion.

A new code of marriage, free and progressive, characterized by monogamy, equality between husband and wife, and ensuring the rights and interests of women<sup>6</sup> has been decreed and enacted. On this basis, a movement called "building families of a new culture" born from the initiative of the collective peasants in Ngoc Long commune, Hai Hung province in 1960, has spread quickly, drawing hundreds of thousands of families in the North and has expanded to a number of localities in the South.

Without any doubt, the struggle between the new and the old, between the good and the bad, progress and backwardness, will remain an arduous and complicated struggle in the life and customs and habits of the peasants throughout the period of transition to socialism, and in all likelihood will continue for a long time thereafterward.

In any case, together with the great changes in their political and economic life, the initial triumph

of the new over the old, of progress over backwardness, in the cultural personality of the collective peasants is an undeniable reality.

### Progress in Cultural and Artistic Life

In the course of time, the Vietnamese peasants have created a monumental folklore consisting of legends, fables, humorous stories, proverbs, pastoral songs, dances, paintings and sculpture.

However, under the colonial and feudalist regime, these popular works were looked down upon and in many cases were distorted and parodied to amuse the ruling classes. On the other hand, due to the lack of means for their recording and popularization and also due to the closeness of the community life, many of these jewels of literature were either lost or falsified. The remainder usually is circulated only within small localities. In such conditions, the broad masses of peasants could not even enjoy the flowers of culture handed down by their ancestors, much less the cultural values of the world. It was not until the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was born and especially until the North was completely liberated and embarked on the period of transition to socialism that the legacies of the national culture including folk literature and arts were restored and reappraised.

Since then the rich heritage of folklore has been explored, studied, systematized, selected, renovated, improved and popularized to become the common property of the people in the country.

Take a most recent example: in Lieu Doi commune in Ha Nam Ninh province alone, hundreds of old men and women readily recited by heart for researchers 120 legends, 17 humorous stories, 67 fables, 75 popular poems, 211 popular songs and 1,000 proverbs and local sayings. Most of them are works of high originality in both form and content, reflecting the traditions of struggle and the highly developed military art of the local population in the resistance against foreign aggression and the feudalists<sup>7</sup>. In the past five or six years the research and study on folk literature and art has been gradually expanded to the rural areas of South Vietnam.

In the whole of the country, tens of thousands of proverbs, popular songs and local sayings have been recorded. They are not only a

mirror reflecting the thinking and sentiments of the peasants in the past but also constitute an inexhaustible source of materials in terms of literary and artistic images and motifs of creation for career poets and writers and the innumerable amateur writers and artists among the broad masses of peasants.

The carefully edited collection of Vietnamese legends many of which have high humanistic and aesthetic value has been republished many times, each with a larger number of copies than its predecessor. Thanks to this, in the present countryside of Vietnam, any man or woman or school child could without difficulty come into touch with this precious cultural heritage of the nation just by going to the village reading room or library.

The exploration and collection of folk songs, dances, music and paintings has also yielded spectacular results. The simple but very lively and evocative folk painting art of the peasants in Ho village in Ha Bac province has been restored and developed. Hundreds of traditional musical instruments of all kinds: percussion, wind, string..., most noteworthy of which is the "dan bau", the one-string lute, hundreds of folk dances such as the hat dance, the bamboo dance, drum dance, together with thousands of folk songs in different rural areas (the *roan* in Phu Tho, the *quan ho* in Bac Ninh, the *cheo* in the Red River delta, the *vi giam* (alternate songs of boat rowers in Nghe Tinh, the *choi* in the southern part of Central Vietnam, the *ly* in South Vietnam, etc.) have been explored, corrected, modified and improved.

But probably what most surprises researchers in both the country and abroad is the fact that in a small rural area embracing 49 communes covering less than 250 square kilometres in the former Bac Ninh province (now Ha Bac) around 500 different melodies of the *quan ho* songs have been collected, most of them with very elaborate lyrics praising faithful love and friendship, or depicting beautiful landscapes and scenes of everyday life.

With the advance of the recording, radio, photographic and television industries, a series of selected programs of folk songs and dances have been widely popularized and have met an indispensable cultural need of not

only the peasants but of other sections of the working people as well.

From there has arisen a mass movement for artistic performances during leisure time or new-type festivals in the countryside held on such occasions as harvest time, collective enrolment in the army or the congresses of the agricultural co-ops. The songs and dances have continually improved in quality and so has the performing art. The audience's level of artistic appreciation has also risen markedly.

Also thanks to a higher level of culture and an ever better material and technical basis for cultural and artistic activities, there have been growing possibilities for the cooperative farmers, especially the young ones, to enjoy the flowers of the world culture. All this has increased the capacity of the collective peasants for artistic creation.

This has been evidenced by the stirring and widespread activities of the information and propaganda teams and the innumerable popular art troupes founded in most of the agricultural co-operatives in both the North and the South.

In the mass movement baptized "Let the songs drown the bomb blasts" during the resistance against US aggression as well as in the present mass cultural and artistic movement, the peasants have composed many poems, songs and also complete plays in the traditional styles such as the *tuong* (classical), *cheo* (popular) and *cai luong* (renovated) opera, reflecting the sweeping changes in the countryside and praising the good deeds and good people of the collective peasantry, and at the same time ridiculing or denouncing the negative aspects which are standing in the way of the construction of a new, socialist countryside.

In the coming years, as indicated in the Resolution of the 5th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the perfecting of the socialist relations of production in the northern countryside, in the coastal central provinces and in the Central Highlands, as well as the continued socialist transformation of agriculture in the southern provinces will be stepped up. The building one after another of the districts into units with a developed agro-industrial

economy combined with the building of more cultural establishments such as movie houses, libraries and stadiums in the districts and even in the communes, will make it possible to build, develop and popularize the new culture in the countryside<sup>8</sup>. This is one of the major tasks set out by the 5th Party Congress for the five or ten years ahead.

Thus, with the passing of time, together with the development of agriculture into a large-scale socialist production the collective peasantry will grow both numerically and qualitatively on a national scale. Their working implements will be improved continuously. Their division of labour and their cooperation in agricultural production will assume an ever higher form of socialization.

All this will in its turn give rise to new demands and also will provide new conditions for further raising the cultural level of the cooperative farmers in Vietnam.

PHAM XUAN NAM

1, 2. *Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Year Book: "12 Years of Agricultural Development (1960 - 1971) - General Statistics Department, Hanoi, 1973, page 55.*

3. *Socialist Republic of Vietnam: "Year Book 1979", Hanoi 1980, page 428.*

4. *The first level ranges from the 1st to 4th forms, the second level from the 5th to 7th forms; and the third level from the 8th to 10th forms.*

5. *Instruction No. 97 dated May 15, 1965 from the Secretariat of the Party CC.*

6. *Law on Marriage of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (Now the Socialist Republic of Vietnam).*

7. *See Vietnam Courier, May 1982.*

8. *Political Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam presented to the 5th National Congress of the Party on March 27, 1982 by Le Duan General Secretary of the Party Central Committee.*

The village lies on the road to the district town. From this road one can see the lanes chequering the village in squares. Each house has a large garden with luxuriant vegetation due perhaps to a fertile soil and enough water. Every afternoon boys and girls drive their motorcycles or bicycles less than one kilometre to the district town for a visit to restaurants, coffee-houses and stores with clothes of the latest fashion brought from Ho Chi Minh City. At the same time pedicabs carry local trades-people home from the town market. An animated conversation then ensues. Added to this are the frock-coated Cao daist believers serenely going to mass in their Holy See about three hundred metres away.

Everybody seemed to be getting into their stride. A soldier enthusiastically comes back to his village after the complete liberation of his country, engrossed by the thought that this native place provides him with enough food and a house built since the area was reclaimed and luckily unhit by bombs—not to mention his old mother who is longing for him. For him everything is fine. However, a friction between mother and son makes him realize that the new life which looks smooth sailing is beset with difficulties. His family honours a member who is a "most venerable priest" but was actually a saboteur of the national liberation movement whom a revolutionary fighter like him cannot tolerate. As he asks to remove this portrait, his mother replies, "I don't know how he is a reactionary but the fact is that he does have high religious orders", then she goes without food for days on end to show her reprobation.

As this soldier is made secretary of the local Party committee, his village folk in Long Thanh Bac, Hoa Thanh district, Tay Ninh province wait to see how he deals with this family affair as well as with the shady matters of his native place.

Long Thanh Bac was notorious for the swearing of its inhabitants but ironically has a "School of Virtue" in the centre of the village. This school taught little but got its pupils to pray much. A family desirous to send its children to school had to pay for their tuition and frock-coats. The obligation of wearing coats prevented many boys from going to school so that two-thirds of the village children

were illiterate before liberation. There are youths who drive their motorbikes to do business in the day-time and watch television at night but have to ask others to write love letters for them. They boast of having a "Saigon" right in the village—of course an old-time Saigon with wine, drugs and prostitutes. Small wonder that there are still twenty drug-addicts and that just a year ago a night with less than ten thefts was considered a quiet one.

Once the US-puppets regarded Long Thanh Bac as a strategic hamlet which they did not need to build. They easily controlled it thanks to the lay-out of its houses and its inmates' superstitious beliefs. All they had to do was to dump a few surplus goods and

opportunity to discuss with his fellow-villagers, how to lead a religious life, to pray and to meditate, then unmask those who misuse religion to disturb social order or change a military coat for a frock-coat to sway everybody, thus confounding the bad elements who avail themselves of the people's "faith" to subjugate them, and bringing to light the misfortunes they cause: illiteracy among children and corruption among youth.

After that the Party secretary launches the first mass movement in the village: the whole people doing their bit to build a school, which receives a warm response from children's parents. Says Pham Van Han who is past seventy: "I have not yet done any work

## THE NEW FACE OF A SOUTH VIETNAMESE VILLAGE

luxuries to propagate the "American way of life" in this part of the Eastern Nam Bo countryside.

Building a new life in the village requires many things of many people. The Party secretary—the soldier of yore—launches himself into eradicating the evils of the old society and building a wholesome moral life for the people. The first thing to do is to free them from the shackles of doctrinal divine right in which struggle his family must set a good example. So he entreats his mother to remove the reactionary "most venerable"'s portrait. She agrees not to honour the "bad man" but insists on leaving the portrait for fear that her son will be "struck down by the God of Thunder". Therefore, he has to assure his mother that he will not die so preposterously then invites his neighbours to witness the portrait-removal. The whole village is agog. What daring the Party secretary has! However, his "boldness" proves that behind the portraits and statues of "saints" there is no God of Thunder. He takes this

of great usefulness. Now I will mobilize everybody to build a school for my Long My hamlet." As a matter of fact, the Long My population contributed up to 5,000 workdays for their first school. Within a year the village erects two elementary schools and four infant classes in four hamlets while the "School of Virtue" is turned into an infant class. In these classes the children are taught correct elocution, good demeanour and polite manners, and made to understand the unbecomingness of the superstitious beliefs which prevailed in the village. For his devotion to education the Party secretary is regarded by the children as a teacher.

This teacher also follows a night class for he thinks that like children, grown-up people should learn and that the entire population should know how to read and write. However, it is truly difficult to open a class for such adults here who spend most of their time gossiping in taverns. He nevertheless discusses with the youth and women's organization to set up a



club, an art troupe and a sports team as a means to contact the local youth who lack knowledge but not talent. Says the Party secretary: "In this way the laggards understand us and we understand them—so much the better for our mutual comprehension." Since then it has no longer been difficult to invite the youth and the aged to learn. They are the most zealous in organizing class, finding it more useful than looking after worship. Out of the 116 aged learners in the village the class monitored by old Nguyen Thanh Y accounts for 50. As a result of studying people no longer swear and behave better.

In the past Long Thanh Bac villagers were keen on "union" as they ganged up to play cards, drink alcohol or do business (sic!). They were also so proud of their village that a stranger who inadvertently offended an inhabitant was beaten but dared not report to the police.

At present, union and pride lie in the collective life, a collective life built on a different view of oneself, society and religion.

These endeavours made over the past six years have brought a new face to Long Thanh Bac. The village remains beautiful thanks to its neat and clean lanes, its picturesque houses with climbing plants. Its afternoons remain animated with tradespeople coming home from the town market, white frock-coated Cao daist believers going to their Holy See and the fragrant incense perfume emanating from windows. Unlike in the past, however, life at present is truly wholesome. People have confidence in their labour and intently work for themselves and their offspring. Visiting Long Thanh Bac one afternoon we do not only meet with women returning from market, and believers going to mass but also lads and lasses carrying musical instruments to the club to practise music, men and women in ironed clothes going to adult classes, and people following a special class on education for parents of delinquents.

This afternoon we meet Nguyen Van Tran, the village Party secretary, a demobilized soldier whose mother is a Cao daist believer. He is calling on several among the nearly one hundred youth in the village just back from Dau Tieng work-site where they have outstandingly fulfilled their labour plan.

VU HANH HIEN

## THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP...

(Continued from page 5)

defence but also extended to national construction when conditions permitted.

At the request of the Lao and Kampuchean patriotic forces, Vietnam had sent volunteers to these countries during their resistance wars against French aggression and had withdrawn them after the 1954 Geneva Agreements were signed. We again sent troops to these fraternal neighbouring countries during their resistance wars against US aggression and withdrew them after their victory with the agreement of the revolutionary powers in these countries. Inversely, Vietnamese troops were allowed to use the territory of these countries to conduct operations when they needed to fight the aggressors in Vietnam. Thus, the Ho Chi Minh trail during the resistance war against US aggression did not lie solely on Vietnamese territory but had sections running through Laos and Kampuchea. In the latter country, there were also "sanctuaries" which the patriotic forces let Vietnam use to fight US aggression. During her resistance war against US aggression Laos had a vast liberated zone adjoining Vietnam. For many years there existed there a State administration, which closely cooperated with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to build economy and culture, train cadres, etc. This cooperation was later expanded, and after the two countries were completely liberated and embarked on the socialist path a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation was signed between the People's Democratic Republic of Laos and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in July 1977, further cementing the special relationship between the two countries.

In February 1979, after Kampuchea was liberated from the Beijing stooges, a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation was signed between the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. An agreement on economic and cultural cooperation was signed between Laos and Kampuchea the same year.

Thus gradually a group of three Indochinese countries took shape, established on a patent juridical basis for the three peoples to help one another in national defence and construction.

Since then bilateral cooperation (Vietnam-Laos, Vietnam-Kampuchea, Laos-Kampuchea) and trilateral cooperation (Vietnam-Laos-Kampuchea) has deepened day by day in various fields—military, political, economic, cultural. Trilateral relations include such important branches as communications, water conservancy (research and exploitation of the Mekong River in particular), banking, public health, information... Last year the youth of the three Capitals met in Hanoi. Since January 1980 the foreign ministers of the three countries have met regularly once every six months to co-ordinate their action in the diplomatic field, thus leading to many initiatives to consolidate peace and stability in Southeast Asia.

The communique of the sixth meeting of the three foreign ministers in Ho Chi Minh City (July 1982) let it be known that the three countries had decided to convene a Summit Conference of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea.

This is a very important decision for shaping the group of three Indochinese countries. Regional alliances of countries are many in the world, but the group of three Indochinese countries is a regional alliance of three socialist countries and therefore participates in the international alliance of socialist countries with the Soviet Union as its pillar. Thus, the three Indochinese countries rely upon the all-sided cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries which can be with each individual country or the three Indochinese countries together. With their socialist nature the Indochinese countries pooling their efforts will greatly contribute to the consolidation of peace and stability in Southeast Asia and the world.

VAN SON

In the struggle against social diseases, the Communist Party of Vietnam laid stress on malaria in the resolutions of its 4th National Congress (1976) and 5th National Congress (1982). The question is to consolidate the success scored in the North, step up the anti-malarial struggle in the South and help and cooperate with Laos and Kam-puchea in this field.

In the last ten years, the Institute of Malariology, Parasitology and Entomology has succeeded, with the cooperation of other branches concerned, in wiping out malaria in the northern provinces: the struggle, begun in 1958, ended

South. They contributed to preventing malaria and curing the patients soldiers and civilians alike, in the liberated zones, who then became the nuclei of the anti-malarial campaign in the South.

After the liberation of the South, the Institute set up two agencies, one in Ho Chi Minh City, the other at Qui Nhon. Cho Ray Hospital in Ho Chi Minh City is strengthened with a section for the clinical study and treatment of malaria and study in laboratories (parasitology, biochemistry). Anti-malarial stations have been set up in the provinces and anti-malarial teams operate in the districts. While epidemi-

Many problems have been resolved: struggle against the spread of the disease in a given region, against drug-resisting parasites, against the factors delaying the eradication of malaria in a region. The research done by the physicians of Cho Ray Hospital has made it possible to lower the death-rate from pernicious attacks. In cooperation with the Faculty of Pharmacy in Hanoi, the Institute has been successful in the preparation of SR4 extracted from local materia medica efficacious against the resistant *P. falciparum*. Modern techniques are acquired: the culture of haematozoaires in laboratories, the cold preservation for the establishment of a "bank" of haematozoaires in Vietnam, biochemical techniques of immunization, biochemical measures against malarial vectors. In cooperation with foreign countries, the Institute studies the preparation of a vaccine against malaria.

It has successfully applied the experience acquired in the anti-malarial struggle waged from 1958 to 1975 in the North. It is a precious experience as it serves as a basis for the elaboration of the program to wipe out malaria in the southern provinces and for cooperation with other countries.

Vietnam has joined WHO and is now expanding its cooperation with many other countries.

The Institute is also keen on the training of cadres. From seventy cadres working at the Institute and some dozen others in the provinces at the outset, there are now 300 cadres serving at the Institute, 200 others working at the two agencies in the South, and some thousand cadres at the grassroots. From one doctor of medicine at the beginning, there are now 300 cadres of university or post-graduate level. Our specialists have shown their competency vis-à-vis their foreign colleagues and WHO.

Professor VU THI PHAN  
Director, Institute of Malariology, Parasitology and Entomology

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# CRUSADE AGAINST MALARIA

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in two-thirds of the regions in the North inhabited by 8 million people. Neither the US aggression nor the Chinese invasion could alter this result. All over the North, the plasmodic index, that is the rate of germ-carriers, dropped from 56.4<sup>0</sup>/<sub>000</sub> of the population in 1958 to 2.8<sup>0</sup>/<sub>000</sub> in 1964; 4.3<sup>0</sup>/<sub>000</sub> in 1975 and 4.1<sup>0</sup>/<sub>000</sub> in 1982. There exist now only a few endemic seats of this social disease so widespread under colonialism. This drop in the morbidity rate of 10 times was obtained in the framework of an uninterrupted war, while some countries in Southeast Asia and Africa had to give up their program of malaria elimination.

In the war years, many cadres were sent by the Institute to various theatres of operation in the

ological investigations were made, thousands of tonnes of DDT, hundreds of millions of anti-malaria tablets were sent to the remotest villages from Eastern Nam Bo to Ca Mau Cape.

The results were not long in coming. In general, in the South, the plasmodic index dropped from 150<sup>0</sup>/<sub>000</sub> in 1975 to 33.8<sup>0</sup>/<sub>000</sub> in 1982. In some provinces a spectacular reduction has been recorded: from 74.7<sup>0</sup>/<sub>000</sub> to 4<sup>0</sup>/<sub>000</sub> in Quang Nam—Da Nang province, from 61<sup>0</sup>/<sub>000</sub> to 6.2<sup>0</sup>/<sub>000</sub> in Nghia Binh province, from 390<sup>0</sup>/<sub>000</sub> to 37<sup>0</sup>/<sub>000</sub> in Lac district (Dac Lac province). In the new economic zones, malarial epidemics have visibly receded.

Successes have been obtained in the field of scientific research.

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# SURGICAL OPERATIONS IN A YEAR

In October 1958, six months after the first successful heart operation by Prof. Ton That Tung, at a hospital in the Viet Bac Autonomous Zone, Dr Hoang Kim Tinh success-

fully carried out another operation of this kind: the patient was a 17-year-old Nung girl suffering from stricture of the mitral valve. Twenty-five years have passed and that woman is still healthy.

Dr Tinh was a pupil, then a collaborator of Prof. Ton That Tung during the war against the French. When peace was restored he was sent to manage a hospital at zonal level and then returned to Hanoi to work with Prof. Ton That Tung. From 1964, he worked for five years in Guinea. In 1978 he went to France to attend a one-year refresher course and was elected to the Council of Surgeons in Lyons.

He specialized in operations on the alimentary canal, but, when need be, he can carry out surgical operations in obstetrics and urology.

In his thirteen years in charge of the Surgical Department of the Vietnam—USSR Friendship Hospital, he has conducted thousands of operations without mishap. He was also successful in cases such as cutting the gall bladder, avoiding haemorrhage without circulation tube, simplifying appendicitis and rectum operations, and making an artificial draining duct when Vietnam is not yet in a position to produce faeces bags. In particular, his work to improve the operation to connect the oesophagus and cut the stomach is recognized by many French surgeons who have applied his methods.

At the end of 1982, Dr Hoang Kim Tinh was successful in operating on a case of prostatitis in 39 minutes, which was his 250th surgical operation in that year.

*An essential reference work on Vietnamese literature, civilization and history :*

## VIETNAMESE LITERATURE

by NGUYEN KHAC VIEN and HUU NGOC  
RED RIVER (Hanoi Foreign Languages  
Publishing House.)

Concise but scholarly, this long awaited anthology provides a comprehensive survey of Vietnamese literature from classical times until 1975 when Vietnam was re-unified.

A 200-page introduction places the texts in their historical and cultural context, and gives some insight into the development of Vietnamese writing and literary genres.

Lively biographical notes on the authors and short introductions to the texts are provided.

The translations were done by a team which included Mary Cowan, Carolyn Swetland, Dang The Binh, Paddy Farrington, Elizabeth Hodgkin and Huu Ngoc.

The selection underlines the diversity of influences which have contributed to Vietnam's rich cultural heritage, and has given rise to a thriving contemporary literature.

VIETNAMESE LITERATURE is an abridged English version of *Anthologie de la Littérature Vietnamiennę*, which received the following appreciations:

A truly valuable work... it deserves great attention and study, for it fills a distressing gap in our knowledge of oriental literature.

Robert Friend, (East and West — Rome)

Delightful to read... Of great value for the study of Vietnamese history... The introduction, brief biographies and explanatory footnotes are a great help.

Prof. Thomas Hodgkin (Oxford University)

A literature of extraordinary vitality and exuberance... a tradition of biting humour and satire... a feminist literature unequalled anywhere in the world. A splendid introduction to a rich world literature.

Martin Bernal (Cambridge University)

A timely aid to understanding the age-old spirit of the Vietnamese people... the translators have opted for restraint and simplicity, but with both emotion and tact.

Le Monde (Paris)

... Impossible to quote from it: this work is to be enjoyed as a whole, in its moments of tenderness and revolt, in the unity of its charm.

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— Foreign Languages Publishing House, 46 Tran Hung Dao, Hanoi.

# THE "TONKIN STUDY INSTITUTE" MOVEMENT AND PATRIOTIC INTELLECTUALS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

At the end of the 19th century, when the anti-French "Can Vuong" movement (the movement supporting the monarchy launched by patriotic scholars) was defeated, the French colonialists began their plan of "colonial exploitation" on a large-scale. Vietnamese society became a colonial and semi-feudal one. The forms of social ideology also changed in accordance with the trend of the world, that of bourgeois transformation. Our nation had to tackle two tasks put forward by history: driving out the French imperialists to win back independence for our homeland, and carrying out social reforms to catch up with developed countries in the world. At that time, Vietnamese society was going through a profound class polarization. The national bourgeoisie had not yet come into being. The cause of national liberation and democratic reforms was put under the leadership of progressive and patriotic scholars from the landlord class. Conscious of their responsibility to history, these scholars strived to find ways to save the nation by relying on patriotic people. They came under the influence of "European rain and American wind", that is the influence of democratic bourgeois thinking, and were inspired by "new books and magazines" which infiltrated into Vietnam from the West through

Japan and China. They launched a new movement of national salvation following the line of revolutionary violence drawn by Phan Boi Chau and Phan Chu Trinh's line of moderate reforms. The Tonkin Study Institute<sup>1</sup> was a typical movement representing both lines.

The Tonkin Study Institute was an institute after the Keiogijuku model started by Fukuyawa Yuki-chi in Japan, aimed at carrying out the movement of national salvation in the ideological, cultural and social fields in the line of bourgeois democracy. The institute was founded in March 1907 in Hang Dao Street by some patriotic scholars namely Luong Van Can, Nguyen Quyen, Pham Tuan Phong, Hoang Tang Bi and others. It had 8 classes of nearly 1,000 students. But in November 1907, it was closed down.

The institute got its material base from funds raised by the people. Management and teaching staff were recruited from intellectuals on a voluntary basis, and poor students were given scholarships. The institute had primary, secondary and even "higher education" levels. The *quoc ngu* (Latinized transcription of the Vietnamese language), Chinese characters and the French language were taught at the institute. The teaching programme included general knowledge in natural sciences, mathe-

matics, geography, history, literature and so on. The methods of teaching and study were moulded after Japan and China. Book reviews and speeches attracted a large audience owing to the novelty of the contents and diversity of the topics.

The institute was fairly well organized. There were four departments in charge of the four main activities of the institute: the education department was in charge of teaching, learning and enrolling new students; the propaganda department had the task of spreading far and wide the institute's prestige; the editing department compiled materials for teaching, learning and propaganda; the financial department dealt with the budget of the institute.

The Tonkin Study Institute had a wide range of activities and exerted a great influence on the country's social life. Private institutions of the same kind were set up not only in Hanoi and its outskirts but also in Nam Dinh, Thai Binh, Nghe An, Ha Tinh and even in Quang Nam, Binh Thuan provinces. These institutions maintained close ties with the Tonkin Study Institute from which they got textbooks and many other literary works. The Tonkin Study Institute also coordinated with the

*Dong du* (Go East) Movement (for sending people to Japan to learn the way of modernizing the country), with the *Duy Tan* (Renovation) Movement and with other patriotic organizations. The ideology disseminated by the Tonkin Study Institute gradually became the content of the movements of struggle and helped bring about the "Hanoi Poisoning Incident". (The poisoning of a French garrison in Hanoi by patriotic-minded people in collaboration with certain Vietnamese soldiers stationed there.)

Availing themselves of this opportunity, the French authorities imprisoned or deported to Con Dao island most of Tonkin Study Institute's leaders some months after the institute was closed down.

Being a patriotic movement, the Tonkin Study Institute made public the "Book of New Civilization" as their "programme of action", dealing with a lot of problems and advancing a number of solutions to these problems.

In the ideological field, the Tonkin Study Institute on the one hand opposed dogmatism and the doctrine of "back to the ancients" which held back the development of intellect; it criticized the concept of the pedantic scholars who kept clinging to the jumble of their old and useless bookish knowledge and turned their backs on all the world's knowledge of sciences. On the other hand, it praised the rational mode of thinking of the Western countries in order to "enlighten the people and strengthen the country." However, the knowledge acquired by "contemporary scholars" was limited. It was only knowledge of the

objective world gained from the lessons of "natural sciences" and "geometry" and from translated "new books" such as the "New knowledge of sciences" published in the previous century.

In the field of culture and education, on the basis of reality and practicality the Tonkin Study Institute advocated revising Confucian dogmas, doing away with what was antiquated and accepting what was new, encouraging freedom of thought and speech and condemning all the backward conceptions of Confucian scholars. In order to help the country to catch up with advanced countries the Tonkin Study Institute also adopted a programme of action, in which it appealed for:

— Abandoning the old-style triennial examinations

— Promoting the study of *quoc ngu*, the translating of foreign scientific literature and the revising of old books.

In the social field, the Tonkin Study Institute opposed superstitions and old-fashioned rural customs; exhorted people to wear short hair, dress neatly, use home-made goods, and create a new life with stress laid on love and unity among fellow-country people.

Besides, the Tonkin Study Institute advocated "promoting industry and commerce", developing the economy to make the country strong and rich. In reality, most of the founders and important personages of the Tonkin Study Institute undertook to gather shares, set up trade associations and associations for the production of consumer-goods in the provinces

and cities as well as in Hanoi. A number of people even took part in land reclamation, set up agricultural plantations in some mountainous and upland provinces such as Lao Cai and Phu Tho. Other people were sent off to do clandestine military training and got ready to combine their efforts with the Yen The peasant movement led by De Tham and the Renovation Association led by Phan Boi Chau.

The diversified activities of the Tonkin Study Institute Movement spread to a large part of the country. They were reflected in a number of patriotic writings and poems at that time. Through these writings and poems written mainly by "bourgeois-oriented scholars", we can see an active person: the "patriotic intellectual". The Tonkin Study Institute Movement intended to choose him as its core for the cause of national liberation and renovation.

Those intellectuals were people with deep patriotic feelings. Patriotism became the traditional criterion, but was now seen in a new light: the country belongs to the people, not to the King as in the past.

As it belongs to the people, it had to be run and defended by the people. More than anybody else, the scholar had to be conscious of his obligation as a citizen towards the country. He had to educate people into loving their country and their compatriots to defend their homeland.

These were Vietnamese with all the qualities of the citizens of our times. In the past, much attention

(Continued on page 27)



# WORKS BY PAINTERS FROM NATIONAL MINORITIES



**"Sunset in a Mountain Village." Silk by Lo An Quang (Thai)**

**Photo: DO HUY**

Works by painters from national minorities were recently displayed in Hanoi. The exhibition showed 90 works in oil, lacquer, silk, gouache and sketches by 22 painters (5 women) from Bahnar, Tay, Nung, Nhang, Thai, Ede, H'nu and Hoa national minorities. It is the third of its kind to date.

In the former society national minorities were handicapped in many fields. Not only were they ruthlessly exploited and oppressed by the colonial, feudal and imperialist administrations, but also their traditional culture was despised. They had no chance to be freed from illiteracy let alone to acquaint themselves with new culture. The revolution has opened a brand new horizon for them. Now they are fully cared for, educated and professionally trained. Painters from national minorities have studied in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (after the liberation of

the South) and graduated from both secondary schools and colleges of art. Of late, in some mountainous areas such as Ha Tuyen, Hoang Lien Son, Son La, Gia Lai-Kontum, a number of classes have been opened to foster and guide painters from local national minorities in their artistic creation.

Their works introduce to us the landscapes in the highlands, the people and life of the national minorities under the brush of their very daughters and sons.

Taking pride of place in the exhibition hall are the works by Suman from Ede national minority, a lecturer at the Hanoi College of Art. The painter depicts the festivities, productive work and family life of his national minority

in the Central Highlands. By their original description, composition and colour-blending these works remind the viewer of the wooden statues of yore.

Painters from national minorities delight in drawing landscapes: a spring in the forest, a morning in the village, a house on stilts in the peath-blossom season... They have a concrete, faithful view, a fine image of people and things, a natural and simple rendering. However, their paintings still have awkward traits, ungainly effects of colour, a monotonous and simplistic expression of the face and interior of characters, but no doubt these will disappear with more training.

**VU TRONG TRI**

# EPIC POETRY IN TAY NGUYEN

In addition to myths and legends, the folk literatures of Vietnam's ethnic minorities are noted for narratives dealing with broad themes and problems of concern to the communities of ancient times. Most worthy of note is *khan*, a genre of poetry in Tay Nguyen (Central Highlands) characterized by its epic and national traits.

*Khan* constitutes the most representative genre of folk literature in the Central Highlands, which form the backbone of Central Vietnam—vast stretches of hilly grassland where nearly thirty different minority ethnic groups, who are called proto-Indochinese by anthropologists, live and whose great sense of honour and pride is aptly symbolized by the snow-white *epang* flower and the gigantic *knia* tree.

*Khan* made its appearance in the period described by Hegel as "the era of heroes", which saw the final stage of the classless primitive commune and the emergence of the slave-owing society.

This transition gave rise to heroic circumstances and formed heroic characters, and man's patient effort to free himself from the state of savagery received high praise. The suffering and privation endured by one man, his love and hatred, his exploits and glory, belonged as much to himself—the hero—as to the community which he represented.

After harvest time *khans* were told in the evening by minstrels who travelled from place to place and were good at mimicry besides having a good voice. Their performance was a combination of storytelling, dance, music, drama, and ritual.

"Dam San"—the most famous *khan*—was published in book form for the first time in 1929, in a French translation by a colonial administrator. It has been widely discussed and has become one of the best known works of minority folk literature in Vietnam.

The story begins with an introduction by H'nhi, a rich young woman, who was looking for a husband for both herself and her sister. "The fame of our family is known to all deities, in all mountains. From east to west, people speak about H'nhi. They say that H'nhi is like a tree with many branches, that H'nhi has many relatives. But why should we remain single? Why haven't we found a husband?" Both H'nhi and her sister, H'bhi, had been married to a man who had died. According to a "succession" practice related to matriarchy, they could now propose to Dam San, a nephew of their late husband.

They sent a match-maker to talk to him. Dam San at first declined the offer of marriage. But he eventually accepted. He went with the match-maker to the house of the brides, riding on an elephant.

A confirmed opponent of "succession", Dam San intentionally neglected his wives' affairs. When criticized for his irresponsibility, he would sulk and go back to his home. Only after being punished seven times by God, who each time bashed him on the head with a pipe until he nearly died did Dam San agree to stay with H'nhi and H'bhi, on condition that he would not have to "go on foot" and would be provided with "many elephants and servants."

Then H'nhi was kidnapped by M'tao Gru, leader of a hostile tribe. Dam San mobilized his troops and made war on his enemy, killing M'tao Gru and freeing his wife. He seized all the land of his rival and made the whole enemy tribe his slaves.

Dam San led his people to clear the jungle for cultivation. He made a request to heaven for seed, and assigned "hundreds of thousands of persons" to dibbling, planting and erecting watchtowers to guard the crops. Dam San soon became very rich. "His house is so long that the sound of a good gong placed at one end will fade before it can reach the other end. The front of the house is as long as the breath of a horse in full gallop. The village resounds day and night with rice-pounding. The gleam of lances is as bright as the light of torches. In the courtyard, clothes lines are weighed down by multicoloured yarn and fabrics. The interior of the house is dark for the light is intercepted

by meat and game, and the floor is littered with brass utensils. On all sides the house is richly decorated with carvings. The steps are as broad as a sleeping mat, big enough for two men to go up with a jar of alcohol and two others to go down with another jar, without touching. The property bespeaks the wealth and power of its owner."

One day, while Dam San was out fishing together with other braves, his house was raided by M'tao M'xay, another powerful tribal chief, and H'nhi was carried off. Another war broke out, much more violent than the previous one.

"He (Dam San) uses his lance with such a force that it hisses like a storm, and a watch-tower is smashed by the displaced air. He runs around three mountain ranges, ruining grassland in three cantons. He throws his javelin with one hand and catches the enemy's with the other, advances and retreats. His javelin shines like a comet, but it fails to hit his foe. Dam San is very tired now and feels as though he were in a dream and talking to God.

"Dam San: 'Oh God! I'm going to die. Many times I hurled my javelin at my enemy, but I could not hit him'. 'God: 'Take a rice pestle and throw it into his ear!'"

"Dam San wakes up. He picks up a pestle and throws it into his enemy's ear. M'tao M'xay's armour falls off and he runs away. He tries to hide behind a sty, but Dam San reduces the sty to splinters. He runs around a buffalo shed, but Dam San destroys the shed, too. He collapses in a heap and calls for mercy.

"M'tao M'xay: 'Spare my life. I'll give you buffaloes and elephants.'

"Dam San: 'What use do I have for your buffaloes and elephants? By taking my wife, you've acted as if you'd cut off my leg.'

"This said, he pierces his enemy with his lance and cuts off his head."

Once, while cutting wood in the jungle, Dam San inadvertently felled a *smuk*, the tree which sheltered the spirits of H'nhi and H'bhi. The sisters die as a result.

Grief stricken, Dam San protested to God. He seized God by the hair and threatened to kill him unless he released his wives' spirits. God gave in, and H'nhi and H'bhi came back to life.

Dam San wished to make the Sun Goddess his wife. He came to her with the request, but was turned down. On his trip back, heedless of the advice of the Sun Goddess, he set out at sunrise. The ground melted under his feet and he perished in the swamp of Sun Yrit.

Dam San's soul migrated into the body of H'ang, his elder sister. H'ang gave birth to a boy who was named after Dam San, and who later married H'nhi. Young Dam San grew up into a man "as strong and rich as his uncle."

The poem ends with an appeal made by young Dam San to his people, in an atmosphere of peace and prosperity:

"Dam San: 'Brother villagers! Members of my household! Servants! We shall celebrate the New Year in a big way, so that we may have a happy life, that our land may be green for ever, that we may never be short of water, that our banana trees and sugar cane may grow lush and sprout many shoots. Bring the sacrificial buffaloes and pigs! Beat the gongs and make them resound far and wide!'"

Dam San dominates the whole story as a man of action. His eventful life is directed towards three principal objectives: marriage, fighting, and production, which are the goals all heroes strive for, and which involve three kinds of relationship—people-to-people, community-to-community, and man-to-nature relations. Many contradictions arise from the interaction of these relations, and their resolution brings Dam San to the position of a rich, powerful chief and makes his commune a strong, prosperous one.

This is an epic poem in praise of a noble ideal—the construction and defence of a powerful, rich, and happy community. For the achievement of this ideal, the exploits of one man are magnified, the aim being not to create a superman but to depict a popular hero with whom anyone can iden-

tify. Dam San is the pride of his people. "Everyone takes pride in such a magnificent chief."

Highlands epic poetry includes many other *khans*, like "Xinh Nha" of the Ede and the Bahnar, "Dam Di", "Khin Du" and "Dam D'roan" of the Ede, etc.

"Xinh Nha" is the story of Giaro Kot and his wife, H'bia Da. The happy couple was blessed with a son, whom they named Xinh Nha. Came the "ear-blowing" ceremony, held hopefully to bring about the quick growth of the child. Among the guests were Giaro Bu, a rich man from a neighbouring village, and his wife.

Giaro Bu, whose envy for his neighbour's wealth was compounded by his wife's constant nagging and unending insinuations, deliberately provoked Giaro Kot and killed him in a fight. He also made H'bia Da his slave.

Xinh Nha was saved by the servants and adopted by Xinh Yue and his wife. One day, God gave him an iron spinning top. He whipped the top into a storm, which broke the threads in the handloom of B'ra Tang. The top spun on, playing great havoc, until B'ra Tang, on God's advice, caught it in her long hair. B'ra Tang fell in love with Xinh Nha and revealed to him the identity of the man who had wrecked his home. Xinh Nha felled a giant tree with which he made a lance "with intent to avenge his father and mother". God also gave him an elixir, which made him very strong.

In his search for Giaro Bu, Xinh Nha met H'bia Blao, who was Giaro Bu's slave. Xinh Nha fell in love with H'bia Blao and secured her assistance in killing his enemy and saving his mother.

The story ends with the wedding of Xinh Nha and H'bia Blao.

"Dam Di" is the story of Dam Di and his betrothed, H'bia Blao. The girl's brother, Chi Mre, was a treacherous man. He broke his sister's engagement and ran away to sea with her. Dam Di and his brothers made war on Chi Mre and defeated him. They put the torch to their enemy's village and took all his slaves and his property.

Dam Di and H'bia Blao were married in a festive atmosphere:

"Dam Di's village has got rid of all enemies. Only gongs and drums are heard now, and feasts often last whole months, even years."

"Khin Du", the longest of the known *khans*, is about a war waged by a tribe for three generations—from Khinh Du to his grandson, Dam Thi—to free Khinh Du's wife, H'bia Blao.

It can be seen that personal honour is the main subject in *khans*. It is personal honour that prompts Xinh Nha to kill the Giaro Bus—people with "beak-like" mouths and evil hearts". Personal honour also causes Dam Di to fight Chi Mre and his allies, people who go back on their word. Again it is personal honour which motivates the fight by Khinh Du and his grandson against people who "seize gourds from a man's garden and abduct his wife from his bedroom".

More important still is the existence of the community. Enmity between individuals is a pretext for tribal wars, and once "the wicked ones" are removed, harmony between the tribes is restored.

*Khans* invariably end with a happy scene. "Maize and millet thrive... Cattle in great numbers graze on rolling hills, looking, from afar, like so many ants and bees. One fine morning when mist is chased away by the sun, Xinh Nha sends his slaves into the jungle to fell the biggest *knia* trees with which to build a mausoleum for his father—Giaro Kot—near Mt. Blo" (Xinh Nha).

"Guests from far and near villages eat their fill and drink to their heart's content, their chests and bellies bulging from their unbuttoned shirts. They eat and drink for a long time and there's always meat and alcohol galore. The guests end up in a drunken slumber from which nothing can wake them. They lie in a heap on the floor, adding a gay note to the house" (Khin Du).

"There are innumerable servants and slaves. There are so many gongs. The fame of chief Dam D'roan, like the wings of an

eagle, spreads over nine hills and ten streams" (Dam D'roan).

Heroes in *khans* are magnified to the dimensions of demigods, and description is very effective thanks to picturesque metaphors.

Here is H'lung in "Dam D'roan": "Her hair, tied in a knot like a bird's egg, hangs on her slender neck. It is as black as a hawk's eye and shines like molten lead. Her pliant body is like a sugar cane leaf swaying in an evening breeze. Her eyes are as bright as the morning sun. Her feet dance on the grass as lightly as in a dream. Her hands can transform thread into flowers and make vegetables sweet. O H'lung, even flowers are envious of thy beauty, and even the wind likes to flirt with thy skirt."

And here is the picture of a handsome young man: "His back is like a slab of granite. No wind, not even a storm, can topple him. His legs are as smooth and firm as rattan. His eyes, shaded by scimitar-shaped brows, shine as if they had drunk up a whole jar of alcohol; they pale even the sun which is about to cross the canal. O Dam D'roan, thou hast a heart as dangerous as a *pung*<sup>1</sup>. Thy voice rumbles like thunder in the east and lightning in the west."

But love gets the best treatment of all: "O H'lung, far from thee my heart swoons like a rain-soaked wilted leaf. It is like a sick buffalo to which grass has become tasteless. My heart is filled with sorrow. It is like a bee which has become indifferent to nectar, a bird which has given up singing, a brook which music has deserted, a stone abandoned in the river" (Dam D'roan).

*Khan*, in a word, is the product of a heroic period. It combines various art forms into a highly developed genre of folk literature. Its qualities vary from story to story, but there is every evidence that it was the peak of a distant literary past.

#### ĐUC THANG

1. A mythical fruit believed to cause hallucinations.

## THE "TONKIN STUDY INSTITUTE"...

(Continued from page 23)

was paid to training ministers and generals for the King. Now that they were "citizens", they had to understand the fundamental principles of social life; they had to be brave, understand clearly the meaning of the words "unity and patriotism"; understand the social situation; know how to organize; respect the collective, their rights and the duties and be ready to sacrifice for the homeland as was stated in the *Quoc Van Doc Ban*<sup>2</sup> of the Tonkin Study Institute. Of course the image of the citizen here was still that of a person who was born from the conception of the "scholar" of the "four walks of life", but not yet a citizen of the bourgeois society as in Rousseau's conception.

The new scholar had to work to schedule, have a high sense of discipline and avoid harangues. A new scholar not only should engross himself in reading books or commenting on literary works but also should do business, farming and join in social activities.

As any patriotic movement of that time, the Tonkin Study Institute Movement failed because it was not led by a truly revolutionary class, the more so since the scholars were still affected by the old ideology, though they resolutely wanted to do away with it.

However, the problems put forward by the Tonkin Study Institute Movement, and the generation of patriotic intellectuals, educated and fostered by it, had a positive significance and contributed to creating a good basis for the future cause of national liberation.

CHUONG THAU

1. In Vietnamese: Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc.

2. A Vietnamese Reader.

## STANDPOINT OF THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY

Witnessed by foreigners, including the correspondents of the Washington Post, *Suddeutsche Zeitung* and *Il Messaggero*, the Chams, followers of Islam, staged a demonstration in a large street along the bank of the Bassac river in Phnom Penh, displaying banners in Khmer and Arabic and shouting slogans in Cham and Khmer in protest against the "tripartite government" of Khieu Samphan, Son Sann and Sihanouk rigged up by Beijing with the collusion of Washington and the ASEAN countries. This "government", though headed by Sihanouk, is in fact directed by the Khmer Rouge.

The demonstrators were dressed in Cham traditional costume: the women wore dark sarongs and tight waisted tunics and had their short-cut hair covered with a colourful shawl embroidered in gold thread; the men wore a shirt, a sarong and headwear in white linen also embroidered in gold thread while dignitaries wore broad-brimmed turbans. The short demonstration, held in an orderly manner made a good impression as it showed the great discipline and skilful organization of the Chams who, in the past, had been anxious to safeguard their beliefs, mother tongue and customs from the plot of assimilation by the extremist chauvinists among the majority people — the Khmers.

A meeting was held at the National Theatre in Phnom Penh. Among the presidium members were the Vice-President of the National Assembly, the General Secretary of the United Front for the Building and Defence of Kampuchea, the head of the Islamic clergy and the head of the Buddhist

clergy. Never has such a great show of strength been organized in Kampuchea in support of the stand of the Islamic community.

Before a large crowd, a hakem took the floor denouncing the heinous crimes of the Khmer Rouge who sought to annihilate Islam by destroying many of the 113 mosques and turned the rest into pigsties, dungstores or warehouses. They killed all the Moslem dignitaries at central level and almost all the local notabilities and submitted the Muslims to a savage persecution by compelling them not to go to mass and to eat pork, which is forbidden by their religion. The stubborn were beaten, jailed and finally put to death. Islamic gospels were burned or used as toilet paper. Many of the listeners dabbed their eyes when a Moslem woman told of the cruelties visited on her family by the Khmer Rouge. A resolution was approved at the meeting condemning the formation of the "tripartite government" of so-called "Democratic Kampuchea" which in these last four years has taken asylum in China and Thailand. An open letter in Arabic called on the Moslem community in the world not to be fooled by the men who had mercilessly killed their coreligionists in Kampuchea.

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Immediately after the rally of January 18, 1983 of the Islamic Kampucheaans as the Chams in Kampuchea call themselves, I visited many Cham villages around Phnom Penh and in Kandal province. For the information of our friends who have no opportunity to make on-

the-post investigations of the sufferings experienced by the Chams under the Khmer Rouge regime, I report here the stories told by some of them.

Mrs Khá Tichach, 35 years old: "I was born into a fishing family of *phum Kompong Trálach, srok Sala Lepram, Kompong Chhnang* province. My native village was thus in the zone liberated by the Khmer Rouge in 1971, that is four years before they occupied Phnom Penh. Already at that time the Khmer Rouge had looked daggers at us and were not willing to allow us to perform our religious duty freely. They prevented us from going to high mass on Friday, and scoffed at us when we said prayers five times a day. As they had not got control of the whole country, the Khmer Rouge did not obviously show their cloven hoofs as destroyers of our race and creed. Before the situation worsened, my family and I left for Phnom Penh.

"On April 17, 1975, the Khmer Rouge drove us out of the capital. We returned to our native village. Two weeks later, persecution began there. Our religion was banned. The Kampucheaans were prevented from going to pagodas and many bonzes were arrested. But we Muslims were the most ill-treated. We were forbidden to perform our religious services in mosques and at home, to speak Cham and we had our gospels confiscated. Those of us who grudgingly obeyed their orders were arrested, jailed and killed. This was the case of my brother-in-law, Yu Sháp, 27, accused of being a Lon Nol soldier. Yu Sháp was jailed, given a few grains of maize a day and left thirsty until death.



"More painful was the case of my eldest brother, Hin Hay, 30, and his wife. When he passed by the cell of his brother-in-law and heard the latter crying for water, he gave him a bowl of water taken from a pool nearby; a warder seized the bowl and tied him to a mango-tree and burnt him alive. Hearing him cry in the burning pyre, his wife came up but was arrested by the same ruffian who fastened her to a tree and broke her head with a bamboo stump. As she was still alive he cut her throat with a sugar palm branch.

"Then the torturers came to the house of Koloh Hasak, my sister and Yu Shâp's wife, who was five-months pregnant; they disembowelled her and took out the foetus. Then they tore the body of her son, aged three, asunder.

"A few days later, my father was beaten to death with an oar by a Pol Pot soldier who threw his corpse into the Tonle Sap. My mother and my younger sister were led away, my mother was killed and my sister raped before being put to death. My four brothers, Toloh Yousos, Toloh Hamath, Toloh Youhap and Toloh Osmar, were also murdered. Thus within one month, after the 1975 harvest, the Khmer Rouge killed 14 members of my family.

"Only my husband, my two-month-old daughter, my younger brother and I were alive. We escaped to Krwanh mountain, Pursat province, took shelter in the house of an acquaintance of ours and lived there until 1979. At the coming of the Vietnamese soldiers the Khmer Rouge drove us deep in the forest under the pretext that the Khmers and Chams would be killed by the Vietnamese, but we were liberated by them."

*In the mosque of Samaki quarter, Takhmau township.*

Photo : S.P.K.

At Takhmau town, Samaki *srok*, my Kampuchean colleagues helped me to talk to Toloh Sabith, a woman who had a more bitter experience with the Khmer Rouge. Under the Pol Pot regime, she was pregnant and lived with her husband, a pedicab driver, and four children at Pursat town. She and her dear ones were led from village to village in Kompong Chhnang province where they were forced to till land. They lived separately and met on rare occasions, a few minutes each time. In 1976 four of her children died of hunger and exhaustion. In 1977, her husband was killed on the grounds that he was spying for the Americans.

In fact he was forced to forsake Islam and Cham customs. She could not ask the Khmer Rouge when he was killed and where he was buried. She also did not dare to weep as many people who wept over the death of their dear ones were also killed, because, it was claimed "they did not show a positive attitude against the enemy of the revolution".

Then she was shifted to another "people's commune" 5 kilometres away, while her eldest daughter was retained to prepare manure at the old one where she died in 1978 from a high fever. This 37-year-old woman is thus alone at *srok* Samaki where she works as a fishing-net weaver in a production collective.

"All through the Khmer Rouge regime, I only prayed to Allah at night when I was sure not to be seen by the ruffians," she said.

According to Hakem Tuluos Math, Samaki *srok* was formerly called Preak Tapeu. From 4,000 members of the Cham nationality before the advent of the Khmer Rouge there remains now only 800 souls including children born after liberation. One of the most tragic deaths witnessed by the Chams was that of Hakem Hadji Idris, 65, a great Muslim scholar who had studied 15 years in Mecca. Pol Pot soldiers had burnt his house at Sa'ang town, near Takhmau as they found in it many prayer books. They hung him from a tree and poured boiling water on his body until death. This



torture took place in Koh Ko island, in the Bassac river, opposite Sa'ang in September 1978, the year when the Muslims were killed en masse.

The Pol Pot clique also massacred Muslims of other nationalities, witness the list of prisoners killed at Tuol Sleng prison in Phnom Penh: the 35 Muslims put to death there included an Indian, Mr Muhamadu Krya, a Pakistani, Mr Nousa Jayidd, an Arab, Mr Kankhal Saïd. They were dairy people, mechanics, tailors, traders and even students.

Living in Kampuchea for four centuries, the Chams have fought stubbornly to safeguard their religion and ethnic identity. Formerly, they rose up many times against the hard rule of the Khmer Kings who had pursued a policy of assimilation. Concealing his iron hand in a velvet glove, Sihanouk had allowed if not encouraged his men to oppress the Chams and even organize pogroms against them. In order to blend the majority with the minority people, he coined a new term "Islamic Khmers" for the Chams and "Loeu Khmers" for the minorities living in the highlands. From the ethnographic point of view this is meaningless because "Khmer" is the name of one ethnic group and "Cham", the name of another one. But flouting this simple notion, he called the Chams "Islamic Khmers" in his policy which was based on forced assimilation. This policy was applied in a more perfidious manner by Lon Nol and then by the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary — Khieu Samphan clique.

Dr. Tin Yousos Abdoulcoyaume, a well-known Islamic personality, said: "Many of our Cham people call themselves Islamic Kampuchean or Kampuchean of Cham origin. This is completely different from the term used formerly by Sihanouk, as Kampuchea is a country inhabited by many ethnic groups: the Khmer majority and other ethnic minorities, including the Chams. All of them live in the People's Republic

of Kampuchea and are equal before the law. In the ethnographic field, the Chams and Khmers do their best to strengthen their solidarity in the United Front for the Building and Defence of Kampuchea. In the religious field, we are consolidating the solidarity between the Muslims and the Buddhists. A scene never witnessed before in the history of our country is that the Buddhist bonzes and Islamic clergymen and the dignitaries of both religions pay frequent visits to one another and take meals together.

"Never have we observed such care as that given to our Cham community and Islamic religion by

the Kampuchean people's power," said Venerable Him Mohamath Toh, in Chrang Chamrès commune. We trust President Heng Samrin; we don't trust Sihanouk either as King or head of State. Today he colludes with the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary — Khieu Samphan clique which left no stone unturned to destroy Islam. We cannot believe in Sihanouk despite his repeated explanations in this respect."

This is the firm declaration of the Islamic Kampuchean or Cham community to the Kampuchean people and the people of the world.

Phnom Penh, February 1983

VU CAN

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## MAKING AN ACCOUNT OF POL POT'S CRIMES

*In November 1982, an account of Pol Pot's crimes in Svay Rieng province was made. According to figures supplied by 34,737 families, 92,326 members of their families died, and 2,217 others were missing under Pol Pot's regime. Thus, the average rate is three dead or missing persons per family. All the names of dead or missing persons were clearly recorded. Of the total number 53,959 were peasants, 36,922 workers, 2,278 intellectuals, 234 bonzes, and the rest were students and people from other social strata.*

*The account of Kandal province, a province surrounding the capital of Phnom Penh, is a terrible one. According to the reports of 67,000 registered families, the number of dead persons reached 220,598. As in Svay Rieng province, the average rate is three persons killed per family. Among them 10,929 were*

*peasants, 66,163 workers, 7,327 intellectuals, 23,417 pupils and the rest were people from other social strata. In this province, the number of workers killed is higher, as there was a score of textile, cigarette, paper, car-tyre and bicycle factories.*

*Battambang is a large province with a college and some factories for rice husking and sack making. Here, according to reports made by 2,737 families, the number of victims is put at 7,255, among them 1,373 workers and 1,251 intellectuals.*

*In Pursat province, accounts were also made of 38,576 families: 90,502 persons were killed, among them 3,584 workers, 3,165 intellectuals and 374 bonzes.*

*This work is now being conducted throughout Kampuchea.*

# NEW SUCCESSES IN AGRICULTURE

At the beginning of this year, everywhere in Kampuchea, people were busy bringing in the crop of rice planted on 1.5 million hectares. It was the fourth crop of rice since liberation, surpassing the set plan, and was an increase of 2.5 times compared with 1979. In Kampuchea, this main crop represents 80% of the agricultural output for the whole year. In 1982, the area under plantation was a remarkable one. In many areas in the provinces of Kratie, Kompong Cham, Takeo, Kandal and Battambang, the average rice yield was from 1.5 to 1.8 tonnes of paddy per hectare. In Takeo in particular, a new rice strain, the IR36, was used, so the rice yield reached 2.7—3 tonnes per hectare.

Everybody knows that nearly 3 million Kampucheans were killed by the Pol Pot—Ieng Sary—Khieu Samphan clique—a huge work force—and the survivors were forced to do hard labour until they were exhausted and suffering from serious illnesses. Two-thirds of the farmland were left untilled. Many scientific research bases, seed and stock-breeding stations were destroyed and the core of scientists and technicians killed. Besides the difficulties left by the genocidal clique, the people living near the Kampuchean—Thai border were constantly harassed.

Faced with such a situation, the People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea set for itself an immediate task: to restore and develop the economy, first of all to develop agricultural production so that starvation would be eliminated forever. At the same time, it worked out policies encouraging the Kampuchean people to promote production. The revolutionary

power also helped with the supply of seeds and farm machinery and lent money to peasants to buy farm implements. It also encouraged them to build irrigation works and boost crop multiplication.

Battambang, the province which has 300 kilometres of common border with Thailand, has often been shelled by artillery from Thailand, suffering damage both in lives and property. The people who are living along the border have built shelters to stay on and till their land. The provincial People's Committee lent money to solidarity production groups, and supplied them with machines, petrol, and seeds, helping them restore and reclaim farmland and combat drought. Lacking draught force, the people have combined the use of machines and their own strength to restore 283,000 hectares of farmland, surpassing the set plan and attaining an increase of 5 times compared with 1979. The solidarity production groups in Battambang have undertaken to sell more than 60,000 tonnes of paddy to the State. As a result, Battambang is leading the whole country in agricultural production.

The people in Battambang, Takeo, Kompong Cham, Preyveng, Svay Rieng, Siem Reap and in the mountainous provinces of Rattanakiri, Stung Treng were faced with many difficulties, but in this crop, both the transplanted areas and output surpassed the set plan. The Kampuchean peasants paid great attention to developing industrial plants such as jute and tobacco. In 1982, the area under industrial plants doubled compared with 1981. Most notable was the national rubber department. It took care of over 37,000 rubber trees. The area of trees under exploitation, increased 1.5 times and

the quantity of dried latex was up by 3,000 tonnes compared with 1981.

Peasants have been encouraged to raise domestic animals such as buffaloes, oxen, pigs and poultry. Meanwhile, the revolutionary administration has created every condition for fishermen to boost fishing in Tonle Sap. In 1982, an increase of from 6.8% to 22% was recorded among buffaloes, oxen and pigs. As for fish, 65,600 tonnes of fish were caught—an increase of 40% compared with the previous year.

These successes in agriculture bespeak the vitality of the new regime in Kampuchea. New relations of production have been formed in the *phum* (village). 106,000 solidarity production groups have been organized, each comprising from 10 to 15 families, helping each other to expand the cultivated areas and to grow an additional dry crop in order to promote food production. Members of solidarity production groups make their own decisions in production as well as in the distribution of products. After liberation, the surviving fishermen, who had been driven to mountain areas and forced to do hard labour, planting rice and building irrigation works, returned to their native villages. They organized themselves into 1,500 solidarity production groups. By their own efforts and with the assistance of the State, they bought boats, motor-boats and fishing nets...

The State has also promulgated policies on the distribution of agricultural products, the development of the family economy, the restoration and reclamation of farmland, and on credits.

The Kampuchean agricultural branch has paid attention to training a contingent of managers, scientific and technical cadres and building the material bases for an all-round development of agriculture. In 1982, 452 managers and technicians were trained for the various provinces. From the centre down to local levels, 29 seed and animal strain stations, and experimental stations; 2 agricultural machine repair stations and 7 fish powder and animal fodder processing factories have been built.

KHAC TINH

# CHRONOLOGY

(16 January — 15 February)

## JANUARY

17. The Vietnamese Foreign Ministry sends a note to its Chinese counterpart demanding that the two sides "refrain from all armed actions and other hostile activities and from opening fire along the common border from 5 to 15 February 1983, so that the people on either side of the border may celebrate the Lunar New Year Festival in peace."

19. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam issues a statement "warmly welcoming and completely supporting the new initiatives of the Political Declaration adopted by the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty Organization member States on January 5, 1983.

— Signing in Vientiane of an agreement on aid and loans for 1983 between Vietnam and Laos.

— The Vietnamese Marx-Lenin Institute holds a seminar on the struggle between the two roads— socialist and capitalist— and the struggle against tendencies, ideologies and actions alien to socialism.

20. *Vientiane*: Closing of the 16th meeting of the Mekong Interim Committee attended by Laos, Vietnam and Thailand.

— The UN Food and Agriculture Organization decides to give emergency aid to Vietnam (and five other countries in Africa) which have been struck by natural calamities.

21. Signing in Hanoi of a protocol on goods exchange and payment for 1983 between Vietnam and Poland.

— The Institute of Mathematics and the Institute of Computer Science and Cybernetics organize a seminar in Hue from 18 to 21 January. 12 papers on theoretical and applied mathematics are read by international mathematicians.

22. The 2nd meeting of the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Buddhist Sangha is held in Ho Chi Minh City.

24. An agreement on cooperation for the 1983-1987 period between the Journalists' Associations of Vietnam and the German Democratic Republic is signed in Berlin.

— Signing in Vientiane of minutes according to which Vietnam will help Laos develop hydrological and hydro-electric projects.

25. The 8th Conference of the Vietnam Fatherland Front Central Committee opens in Ho Chi Minh City.

— *Ho Chi Minh City*: The Ministry of Education holds a conference on professional orientation and on rational employment of graduate pupils for the 22 southern provinces.

— A delegation of the Communist Party of Vietnam pays a visit to the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen from January 19 to 25.

16. *Hanoi*: Ending of the 17th session of the Sub-Commission for Scientific and Technological Cooperation between Vietnam and Czechoslovakia begun on 12 January.

## FEBRUARY

2. The Art and Culture Commission of the Party Central Committee holds a conference to discuss measures for the implementation of the Third Resolution on Art and Culture of the Party Central Committee.

— *Hanoi*: An exhibition on the struggle to defend political and economic security and against the embezzlement of State property is co-organized by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Culture.

4. Signing in Hanoi of protocols on goods exchange and payment for 1983 between Vietnam and the German Democratic Republic.

5. On behalf of the Vietnamese Government the Huu Nghi (Friendship) border post returns to China 35 Chinese captured while illegally intruding into Vietnamese territory.

6. The statistics branch holds a meeting to review its work in 1982 and work out orientations for 1983.

7. The Vietnamese Commission for the International Year of Information and Communications is set up.

— *Hanoi*: Opening of an exhibition of sculptures and paintings by senior artists.

— Signing in Moscow of a protocol on radio and television cooperation for 1983-1985 between Vietnam and the Soviet Union.

8. The Health Minister of the French Republic pays a friendship visit to Vietnam.

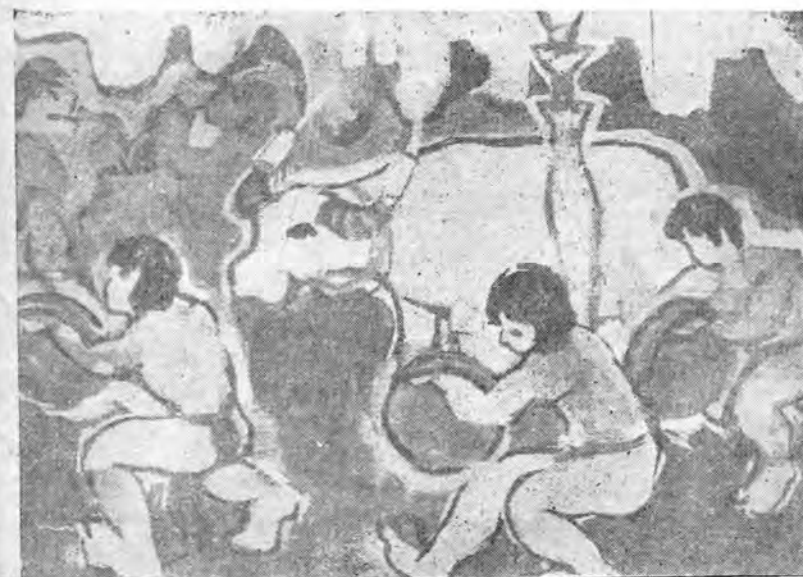
10. Signing in Hanoi of a protocol on goods exchange and payment for 1983 between Vietnam and Bulgaria.

— The Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Vietnam passes a resolution on celebrating the 165th anniversary of Karl Marx's birth and the 100th anniversary of his death.

13. On the occasion of *Tet* (the Lunar New Year Festival) Vietnamese Party, State and Army leaders pay visits and share *Tet* with the people of various localities, offices and branches.



**PAINTINGS BY ARTISTS  
FROM  
ETHNIC GROUPS**



*Clockwise from top left:*

**"My Family's Happiness".** Water colour by Suman (Ede)

**"Bathing in the Rain".** Silk by Mai San (Nhang)

**"Drinking Wine through Pipes".** Oil by Ka Kha San (Thai)

**"The Buffalo-sticking Ceremony".** Pastel by Vi Quoc Hiep (Tay)

Photos: DO HUUY





## THE 5<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF VIETNAMESE - SOVIET YOUTH IN HO CHI MINH CITY

*Activities of 650 young Soviet and Vietnamese delegates in Ho Chi Minh City from 2 to 7 February 1983.*

Soviet friends are welcomed at Hanoi International Airport on 29 January 1983.



At the art festival in Ho Chi Minh City.

Ms. Maja Triburdanidze, world chess champion and a Soviet Grand Master, playing against Vietnamese players in Ho Chi Minh City.

Photos: MINH DIEN

**Vietnam  
COURIER**

**НОВОСТИ  
ВЬЕТНАМА**

**Le Courrier  
du Vietnam**

**El Correo  
de Vietnam**

Báo đối ngoại

**TIN VIỆT NAM**

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

Tòa soạn: 46 TRẦN HƯNG ĐẠO, HÀ NỘI

Điện số: 53 998

In tại Hà Nội

Chỉ số 12272