

Ever since the foundation of the Communist Party of Vietnam and especially since the reconquest of national independence in August 1945, the contemporary history of Vietnam has been inseparably linked with that of its revolutionary Party.

Hence the importance of the national congresses of the Communist Party of Vietnam which determine the Party's strategy and orientation for the intervening periods.

This book presents Vietnam and her problems on the eve of the 6th Congress in the period 1976-86

On the Eve of the VIth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam

VIETNAM 1976-1986

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I. THE ROAD OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF VIETNAM AND CONTEMPORARY VIETNAM

Ever since the foundation of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) in and especially since the reconquest of national independence in August 1945, the contemporary history of Vietnam has been inseparably linked with that of its revolutionary Party. Hence the importance of the CPV national congresses which determine the Party's strategy and orientation for the intervening periods.

THE PERIOD OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

The Indochinese Communist Party, the forerunner of the CPV, was founded by Ho Chi Minh in 1930. Vietnamese, Lao and Kampuchean feudal, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois patriotic movements having been crushed one by one, it fell to the ICP to lead the struggle for national and social emancipation. Under the banner of Marxism-Leninism, the way forward for the Indochinese (2) revolution was laid down as that of a national democratic revolution led by the working class evolving straight into a socialist revolution without passing through the stage of capitalist development.

1. Called the Indochinese Communist Party (1930), then the Vietnam Workers' Party (1951), before being called the Communist Party of Vietnam.

2. Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, the three countries of former French Indochina.

Almost immediately after its foundation, the Party led the workers and peasants in a vast movement, the Nghe-Tinh soviets (1930-31), which was drowned in a bloodbath by the French colonial rulers.

The First National Congress held in March 1935 on foreign soil (Macao) fixed the immediate tasks: to consolidate and develop Party membership, build a broad union of the masses and struggle against imperialist war.

Notwithstanding the failure of various insurrectionary movements, in particular the Nam Ky rising of 1941, the Party, by founding the Viet Minh Front (League for the Independence of Vietnam), succeeded in mobilising the people against the Franco-Japanese yoke (1); after the August Revolution of 1945 the independence of Vietnam was proclaimed, putting an end to eighty years of colonial domination. But soon the country was faced with the reconquest by the French.

At the Second National Congress, held in 1951 in the Tuyen Quang jungle during the resistance, the ICP decided to dissolve itself and found the three national communist parties of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, a symbol of the maturity of the Indochinese revolution. The Vietnamese Party took the name of the Vietnam Workers' Party. This Congress drew up a political line which enabled the Vietnamese people to carry on their war against French colonialists supported by US interventionists up until the victory of Dien Bien Phu and the signature of the Geneva Agreements which re-established peace in Indochina and liberated the northern half of the country.

1. The Japanese fascists had entered Indochina at the end of 1940 and maintained the French colonial apparatus until March 1945.

The Americans took over from the French and created a neo-colonial state south of the seventeenth parallel, building it into a military base with a locally-run client administration.

The Third National Congress of the Party, held in Hanoi in September 1960, was directed towards the building of socialism in the North and the struggle for national reunification. In particular it passed resolutions on the directions and tasks of the first five-year plan (1961-65). It was thanks to this Congress' correct line that our people were able to defeat US aggression. The second resistance war, from 1960 to 75, was far more intense than the earlier war. The US giant used all its most powerful and sophisticated technology—short of nuclear arms. They brought in an expeditionary corps of 500,000 GIs to support a Saigon army which was twice that size. They poured twice as many bombs over Vietnam as had been used during the whole of the Second World War. Finally Washington had to sign the Paris Peace Agreement and withdraw its troops from Vietnam. With the fall of the Saigon regime in 1975 the 30-year-long resistance war came to an end. In April 1976 the whole country took part in the elections for a National Assembly which formed a unified government and adopted the name of Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

THE STAGE OF TRANSITION TO SOCIALISM

The Fourth National Congress of the CPV held in Hanoi in December 1976 adopted the name of Communist Party of Vietnam. The political report adopted by the Congress lays down, in particular, that

"The Vietnamese revolution has entered a new stage, the stage in which the whole country has become independent and unified and fulfils a single strategic task of carrying out the socialist revolution, advancing rapidly, vigorously and firmly to socialism. The Vietnamese revolution is a continuous process of revolution advancing from the national people's democratic revolution to the socialist revolution. Our Party has always since its founding carried the two banners of national independence and socialism. This is the line, the strength and the sign of victory of the revolution in our country. Now that our motherland has recovered complete independence, national independence and socialism have become one.

Only under socialism will our motherland have a modern economy, advanced culture and science and a strong national defence, thereby ensuring our country's eternal independence, freedom, and ever more prosperous development.

Only socialism can bring about the unification of our motherland at the highest and fullest degree.

On the basis of that national affirmation of socialism the Fourth Congress drew the broad lines of economic development over a long strategic period, to begin during the 70s and remain in force throughout the 80s.

- to rapidly create the material and technical basis of socialism.

- to take the economy of our country from small-scale production to large-scale socialist production with a modern industrial and agricultural structure.

- to give priority to the rational development of heavy industry on the basis of developing agriculture and light industry; the intensification of agricultural production being regarded as the foremost task of the 1976–80 five-year plan.

- to redistribute the social work force to the various out together with the improvement of waste land, mainly in the hilly and mountainous regions which make up two-thirds of the area of our country; this will necessitate an important movement of population towards these regions in the years to come.

- to organize the district (the intermediate level between the province and the rural commune) as the core multiple agro-industrial unit, one of the basic links of the national economy.

- to take account, in building the economy, of the needs of national defence.

- to develop simultaneously a flexible central economy and the regional economy.

- to promote rapid technical and scientific development, regarded as a fundamental link for the whole period of transition to socialism.

- to transform the neo-colonial structures of the South in order to gradually achieve full national integration under socialism.

- to lay particular emphasis on the problems of economic management.

The objectives of the 1976–80 five-year plan were fixed. Despite attempts by enemies, external and internal, to undermine it, an undoubted and stable popular consensus exists from South to North.

National reconstruction started off well. Although the take off was very painful, the economy obtained honourable results for 1976 which were to be subsequently wasted by objective and subjective difficulties. Abroad people expected a nation which had defeated US imperialism to make a fairly rapid and perhaps spectacular economic

comeback, forgetting that Vietnam is a Third World country with all its inherent weaknesses. To this was added the heavy inheritance left by the war and the twenty-year division of the country in two parts, the burden of national defence, enemy sabotage, and repeated natural calamities (1). In the South there were 20,000 bomb craters, two-thirds of all hamlets destroyed, 5 million hectares of forest devastated, 20 million villagers chased from the countryside, 362,000 war invalids, 1 million widows, 880,000 orphans, 290,000 drug addicts, 300,000 prostitutes and 3 million unemployed. In the North, two-thirds of rural communes had been bombed, a thousand of them razed to the ground, the whole road infrastructure damaged, the infant industrial system almost dismantled. Society, especially the South, was marked by the impact of the war, while the situation was rendered more complicated by the maze of ethnic minorities (including a million H'loa, of Chinese origin) and religious sects with elements linked to foreign powers. The economy had been abruptly cut off from very important foreign aid.

These trials and difficulties culminated in 1978-80. Unprecedentedly great natural calamities ravaged a region containing six million people. Yesterday's allies, Kampuchea (of Pol Pot) and China (of Deng Xiaoping), launched offensives against the south-west and north of the country. With the help of Khmer popular forces, the Vietnamese troops pushed Pol Pot's forces back and crushed them. The Chinese 'human wave' tactics failed. Beijing had to

1. A widespread drought in 1977 (causing a deficit of several million tonnes of rice), floods and typhoons in 1978 (6 million people affected), droughts, insects, typhoons, floods in 1985 (1 million tonnes of rice loss).

draw its troops back from Vietnam's frontier region, having lost a tenth of the troops involved.

To remedy the extremely serious economic situation, important measures were taken, in particular the 6th Party Plenum held in August 1979 laid down adequate rectification measures whose effects made it possible to emerge from the difficult 1979-82 period. These laid down:

a) In agriculture, compulsory deliveries to the State were stabilized and the excess could be either sold to State trading services at agreed prices or freely offered on the parallel market, buying prices of agricultural produces were revised so as to stimulate production and increase procurement, and payment in the cooperatives should be given to each according to his work...

b) In industry producing current consumer goods, the ways of organizing production should be diversified (State, cooperative and individual in the North; State, cooperative, mixed State-private capital, private, and individual in the South, especially in Ho Chi Minh City). In other words, to maintain the state sector and, under its supervision, the other four sectors, not over the whole country but only in certain towns in the South. For crafts and small production, including services and repairs, if the individual worker is capable of supplying the clients' needs, he should be encouraged and given effective aid, not 'collectivised'.

c) In commerce, beside the state sector and under its supervision, there is the parallel market where individual peasants and craftworkers and agricultural and handicraft cooperatives can freely offer their excess products or the products not controlled by State trade. Exports should have the right to be remunerated and the right to use foreign currency according to fixed norms and modalities.

in order to stabilize living standards the supply of necessities should be ensured according to the norm in fixed rations, provisions, foodstuffs and necessary consumer goods to workers, employees and masses; the system of payment of salaries by piecework and by task should be maintained; general wage control and application of material incentives (bonuses, rewards, according to gradually increasing norms) in order to stimulate the development of ideological and political work.

The 6th Plenum modified certain objectives of the seven- or five-year plans, defining the basic characteristics of the present stage in order to rectify certain utopian and voluntarist practices and struggle against bureaucracy and other negative social manifestations.

The implementation of the dynamic resolutions of the 6th Plenum gave birth to new economic and social measures whose "unblocking" effect was felt in agriculture, industry and other social and economic fields. These resolutions were given concrete form in various Party and Government directives on the application of the contract system in agriculture, the readjustment of buying prices of agricultural products, the improvement of State enterprise management with the aim of gradually abolishing budget subsidies; other directives dealt with family planning and increasing salaries...

In grappling with the 3rd five-year plan the country had to face severe economic problems which "to some extent were aggravated or provoked by our own errors and shortcomings".

The Fifth Congress of the Party in March 1982 drew up a balance sheet of the implementation of the line defined by the Fourth Congress reaffirming the correctness of the orientation of the socialist revolution and socialist

economic construction and began the Fourth Congress for the long period of transition to socialism. On the other hand it underlined the weaknesses and inadequacies in economic and social management over the previous years which showed themselves in manifestations of "subjectivism, idealism, conservatism, inertia, bureaucracy, lack of realism, irresponsibility, sloppiness in concretising and executing Party line, lack of summarizing and discussing the implementation of the economic policies, economic and social management".

Faithful to its traditions and its sense of responsibility towards the people, the Central Committee made a severe self-criticism, thus showing courage and clear-sightedness. It also analysed the measures capable of making best use of our strong points while allowing us to overcome our weak points. These measures had been partly determined already in 1970 by the resolution of the 6th Plenum discussed above.

The Fifth Congress fixed the main social and economic tasks for the 1981-85 period and the eighties as a whole as follows:

1. To meet the most pressing and essential requirements of everyday life, gradually stabilizing and eventually improving to some extent the people's material and cultural life. First of all, we must solve the problem of food supplies, and make efforts to meet the requirements in clothing, study, medical care, housing, transport, child care, and other essential consumer needs.

2. To continue building the material and technological infrastructure of socialism, with the emphasis on boosting agriculture, consumer goods production and exports while at the same time improving the technical basis of the other economic branches, and making preparations for a more

vigorous development of heavy industry in the next stage.

3. To complete the socialist transformation in the southern provinces; to continue improving the socialist relations of production in the North; and to consolidate the socialist relations of production in the whole country

4. To meet the requirements of national defence and to maintain security and order.

These four objectives are aimed at totally transforming the economic situation of the country. For this we must create a new productive force and reach a higher productivity of social work even before we can have at our disposal any relatively well-developed large-scale industry. The congress also drew the broad lines of social and economic policy.

The major event of the period ushered in by the Fifth Congress was the 8th Plenum of the CPV Central Committee (1985) which, developing the theses of the 6th and 7th Plena (1) and in the dynamic spirit of the 6th Plenum of 1979 (2), opened the way to a revolutionary reform in the field of economic management. The bureaucratic method of centrally-controlled management with its system of administrative subsidies was abolished and a system of socialist accounting and profitability based on rational planning mediated through three levels, the centre, region and base, with the emphasis on encouraging initiative at grassroots level.

To understand the revolutionary nature of the resolutions of the 1985 8th Plenum we should go back in history to the war years before 1975. The building of the economy

1. Issued from the Fifth Congress and held in 1984.

2. Issued from the Fourth Congress.

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only really began after the end of the anti-French resistance with the drawing up first of short-term and later of long-term plans. But the national economy was disrupted by the US aggression after 1964. In this context, to carry out socialist construction in the North at the same time as the liberation of the South, the Vietnamese State depended on increased aid from the USSR and other socialist countries. Agriculture and industry were both pushed forward simultaneously using the slogans "All for the front", "All for victory". The only means of developing production was by supplying the production units—in the first place industry—with all the means of production (equipment, capital, raw materials, foodstuffs, consumer goods). The factories had to produce the goods whatever the cost. Planning only existed for form's sake. The State assigned tasks to production units, gave them the means and was handed over the finished goods. All the enterprises had to do was to balance the State allowances and their own expenses in the way as the administrative organs do. Thus economic management through administrative subsidies came into being.

This system was necessary in war conditions when the State was receiving a large amount of foreign aid. It should have been abandoned as soon as the war was over, when the country, now reunified, was embarking on the stage of socialist construction. But conservative ideas and the tendency to rely on foreign aid delayed the reorganization of economic management. Effective for the years of war, the old system of management became a hindrance to all economic activities.

The 8th Plenum laid down that "the elimination of the system of economic management by administrative subsidies is an urgent need, the decisive link for converting

the economy to a balanced form of management and socialist profitability based on planning". The essential contents of the new management is found in the following points :

a) In the enterprises all reasonable expenses are used in the calculation of the net cost price. The price covers all effective and reasonable expenses. The producer enjoys satisfactory revenue. The State accumulation fund will gradually rise. The State will cease buying and selling at low prices and covering unjustified deficits. Prices are fixed on the basis of planning. Since agricultural production remains the mainstay of the economy, the price of paddy is the basis from which other prices are calculated. Throughout the State pricing system the mechanism of single prices will be adopted.

b) The real wages should be enough to maintain the worker and ensure the reproduction of the work force in harmony with national economic potential. The salary is paid in money ; payments in kind are abolished. The amount is related to productivity, quality and work efficiency. Salary levels and scales will be revised as will fines and bonuses. The minimum salary will be fixed according to the new system of unified basic salaries for the whole country.

c) Financial autonomy is given to production, trade and service units. All production, trade and service activities are subject to the system of balanced management. The State budget will no longer cover unjustified deficits. Enterprises are responsible for their productive activity and for any losses they may incur.

d) Banking activities should be rapidly converted to the system of balancing books and socialist profitability. To turn capital to account is the first criterion of all credit operations. Monetary circulation should be improved,

available assets mobilised and their rotation accelerated. The *dong's* position in economic activity should be strengthened together with discipline in using monetary assets. Embezzlement, wastage, and the formation of "black accounts" should be punished.

However, owing to poor preparation, the resolutions of the 8th Plenum did not bring the desired results. "The economic situation developed satisfactorily up until the third quarter of 1985. But from the fourth quarter, through shortcomings and errors in improving the price-salary-money system, market prices were subject to complex fluctuations with a disastrous effect on numerous social and economic activities. The resolutions of the 8th Plenum of the CC and Resolution 28 of the CPV Political Bureau are entirely correct, the fault lies with the Council of Ministers". (Report of Vo Van Kiet, Vice-President of the Council of Ministers, Director of the State Planning Committee, delivered before the National Assembly, 7th Legislature).

The Council of Ministers made a severe self-criticism on this subject. The Party and Government are working flat out to revive the economic situation, still in the spirit of the 8th Plenum. It must be underlined that the importance and bearing of the 8th Plenum resolutions go beyond the problem of prices, salaries and money. The final objective is to plan all socio-economic activities, to be in control of goods, workforce, the land, and other natural resources, to make better use of the material and technical infrastructure, produce more to meet society's needs, and stabilise and gradually improve people's living conditions. The work is expected to take a fairly long time.

THE ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT AND THE YEARS 1976—86

We have underlined the fact that, after the first years of national reunification, Vietnam in 1979—81 suffered an alarming economic decline and numerous difficulties.

A look back at the last months of 1980 makes possible a just appreciation of the efforts made to overcome obstacles which at first seemed insuperable.

At the beginning of 1981 the Vietnamese economy presented a fairly negative aspect. The production of foodstuffs was a long way from meeting the needs of the population. Industrial production in 1980 only reached 87% of the 1978 figure. The value of exports only covered 27% of imports. The bureaucratic subsidy system obstructed economic and social management. In their daily life the working people suffered difficulties which hampered productive work. There was also the evil impact of world price fluctuations, the policy of embargo and the war of sabotage waged by Beijing in collusion with Washington.

Thanks to the economic line drawn by the Fourth Congress given concrete expression by the resolutions of the 6th Plenum in particular, our economy began to move in a positive direction, especially in production of foodstuffs. These increased for three years in succession notwithstanding climatic problems. 1983 was the first year for decades when we did not have to import food to meet our needs. The *khoan* (1), the contract between the cooperative and the peasant cooperative member, has brought about a real improvement in the countryside. The product-based

1 See "From Contracted Work to Contracted Produce in Agricultural Cooperatives."

contract, by linking the worker's interest and responsibility directly with the final products, encourages everyone to devote himself wholeheartedly following a division of labour determined by the collective and in the general framework of cooperative organization. The cooperative members, on their own authority, can use their working hours, land, manure, to the maximum... If they respect cultivation techniques it is of their own will, putting technical improvements into operation so as to reduce costs as much as possible and harvest everything down to the last grain of rice.

Hard-working peasant households with sufficient manpower can enjoy a more comfortable life and sometimes even prosperity. New economic zones are created on waste land to absorb the unemployed in the towns and reduce overcrowding. An Ha (1), for instance, set up 30 km from Ho Chi Minh city, is making a success of sugar cultivation and has been able to install a sugar refinery, a paper mill, and a distillery.

In agriculture, the emphasis has been placed on tropical crops which can serve the export market. Apart from the 20,000 hectares of coffee already existing (beginning of 1981), 50,000 additional hectares have been planted during the last five years, largely in cooperation with the Comecon countries (2). The State has also launched a movement to reconstitute the vast coconut plantations decimated by the US war. In only a few days, over Tet 1976, the population of Tam Quan planted 50,000 coconut palms; today

1. See "The New Economic Zone of An Ha"

2. See "Rehabilitation and Development of Coffee Cultivation in Vietnam"

the green palms are once more shading revived villages (1). Pineapples (half the fruit export crop), bananas, oranges, lychees, longanes, mangoes and other fruits are covered by a unified plan for cultivation and processing on a national scale (2).

In the field of industry and handicrafts, reforms on the method of remuneration, the latitude offered at regional level to factories, companies and private initiative, have brought a marked improvement from the years 1982-83. The annual increase has reached more than 11%.

Socialist industrialization constitutes the central task for the whole period of the transition to socialism (3). Many key works have been, or are in the process of being constructed: the cements works of Bim Son and Hoang Thach, the Bai Bang paper mill, the Pha Lai thermal power station, Thang Long Bridge, the Song Da and Tri An hydro-electric centres, the agro-hydraulic network of Dau Tieng, the oil and gas exploiting complex of Vung Tau—Con Dao, etc. Let us emphasize the size of these projects for a Third World country. The hydro-electric project of Song Da (Hoa Binh) includes a reservoir 230 km long (9.45 billion cubic metres of water), a dam 125 metre high and 640 metres long, a power station of 8 turbines each producing 240,000 kw. (annual production: 8 billion kwh); in addition it has made it possible to minimise the disastrous effects of the annual Red River Delta floods. Thang Long Bridge which crosses the Red River is one of the biggest in South-east Asia (two fixed platforms, total length: railway 5,500 metres, road 3,500

metres). The Bai Bang paper mill has a potential capacity of 55,000 tonnes.

External trade has seen a certain improvement. The total value of exports has risen from 1,097 million dong in 1980 to 2,854 million dong in 1984. Peasants and handicraftsmen also contribute to exports. The rice-growing province of Thai Binh, for example, which was not export oriented, now used 10,000 or so hectares for industrial crops for export. It sells jute and its derived products (carpets, sacks, etc.), rush mats, chili, garlic, oils, basket-work, meat, chickens, feathers and articles from handicraft and small industry (leather gloves, badminton rackets, ping-pong bats, lacquered goods...) (1). A small forgotten townlet like Hoi An has reached relatively easy circumstances by exporting swallow's nests, cinnamon, sandalwood, pepper, bamboo shoots, fishing products... (2).

The large room for manoeuvre left to regional administrative units have encouraged some brave initiatives. This is true of Haiphong which was one of the first places to experiment successfully with *khoan* (the contract system) in agriculture and the new economic management. (3) Long An has innovated in goods distribution and circulation. (4) Quang Nam and Da Nang have turned over a new leaf: after 21 years of the US presence the province and the town have gradually rediscovered their proverbial character as a people hardworking, tenacious, inventive. (5) The capital, Hanoi, and the biggest urban area in the country, Ho Chi Minh City, are not being left

1. See: "Binh Dinh's Coconut Palms"
2. See: "Vietnamese Fruit for Export"
3. See: "Socialist Industrialization in the Eighties"

1. See "Export Goods from Thai Binh"
2. See "The Old and the New in Hoi An"
3. See "Experience in Economic Management in Hai Phong Port"
4. See "Distribution and Circulation of Goods in Long An"
5. See "Da Nang Revisited"

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behind. Hanoi is carrying out a transformation from a town of consumers to an industrial centre. (1) Ho Chi Minh city is in the process of changing, called to play the leading role in the economic development of a vast southern region. (2)

In the cultural and social field the progress made is much clearer and more substantial than in the economic. In the South, not many years after the liberation of Saigon the evils left behind by neo-colonialism such as prostitution, drug-addiction, (3) have been mostly overcome; illiteracy was eliminated from the middle of 1978. Fifteen million children went to school or pre-school classes in the 1985-86 schoolyear, that is 4.5 million more than in 1975. General technical teaching centres and secondary schools combining teaching with work experience, and the attention paid to a professional orientation, reflect the concerns of the educational reforms to link the schools to life. (4) In 1985 Vietnam had 93 tertiary schools and classes and higher schools with 18,720 teachers and 115,000 students. (5) In the South village medico-sanitary clinics, almost unknown under the old regime, are multiplying to form a ubiquitous network following the model of what has already been done in the North. WHO and UNESCO have recognised the remarkable successes made by Vietnam, despite the war, in the fields of instruction and public health. (6)

1. See: "Hanoi: from a Consumer City to an Industrial City"
2. See: "Ho Chi Minh City and the Economic Development of the Region"
3. See: "Curing Drug-Addicts in Ho Chi Minh City"
4. See: "General Education in the SRV"
5. See: "Higher Education and Secondary Vocational Education"
6. See: "Achievements in Public Health Since the August 1945 Revolution"

In the international sphere, Vietnam has continued, since 1975, to hold a secure position as a country in the Indochinese peninsula, a country of Southeast Asia, and a member of the world socialist system. In 1977 it was admitted to UNO and in 1978 to Comecon.

The decisive factor in our independence as well as in our economic construction remains the support and aid coming from the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries.

Washington and Beijing want to make Indochina a hot spot in the world. Vietnam with Kampuchea and Laos, are obliged to work to safeguard peace and security for themselves and for the whole area. Its policy of dialogue to resolve differences has made a good start, its desire for peace and an overture can no longer be doubted by States and people of goodwill.

Such is Vietnam on the eve of the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

Under the leadership of its revolutionary Party, it conquered independence at a cost of three decades of self-sacrifice and struggle with the support of all progressive people. The war ended, it remains one of the countries with the lowest-per-capita income in the world. But it has the necessary premises for economic development, varied natural resources, abundant and skilled work force, substantial aid from the socialist countries which are also large markets for its export goods. Its efforts at reconstruction in a socialist direction have met, and will continue to meet, with many obstacles,

They have been marked by shortcomings, failures but also by gains and successes in the painful progress between 1976 and 1986. Under the leadership of a party which has proved its worth over more than half a century, the Vietnamese people will know how to draw the lessons of experience out of its successes and failures in order to advance towards the final end, that of socialism, for "only under socialism can the age-old dream of the working people for liberation from oppression, exploitation, poverty and backwardness, a life in plenty, with an assured tomorrow, civilized and happy, come true".

The Sixth Congress will be a landmark in this forward march.

February 1986
NGUYEN VAN DAM

II. ASPECTS OF VIETNAM 1976-86

Excerpts from the press (*Vietnam Courier*, *Nhan Dan* and *Dai Doan Ket*). The articles published in the years 1980-85 on the achievements of the period 1976 - 80.

1. AGRICULTURAL ASPECTS

FROM CONTRACTED WORK TO CONTRACTED PRODUCE IN AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES

NGUYEN YEM

In the North, agricultural cooperation was basically completed in 1960, and further consolidated in 1965 when most cooperatives adopted a more advanced, "higher level", system (public ownership of all means of production and distribution of profit according to work done). Contracted work made its appearance: for a set amount of work, the farmer received a set number of workpoints; 10 workpoints amounted to a work-day.

In the beginning, as the cooperatives were small and lacked equipment, the production brigades took charge of all the farm work. They distributed the farm-hands according to the work to be done, with due attention to individual skills and strength: the men would take on the heavier jobs such as tilling, while the women did the lighter ones (rice transplanting, weeding). Contracted work was a step forward compared with the method of working

for a daily wage as formerly applied, but it had the disadvantage of being based upon the number of work-days irrespective of the quality of the work. Co-op members thus tended to work to get as many work-points as possible, which incited them to scamp their work and shorten their working time.

To put an end to this state of affairs, the "work-point computing" system was applied which introduced a measure of quality control of the daily work done by each farmer—length of work, respect of technical norms—in evaluating his work-points. This measure initially had some effect, but was not successful in the long run. Firstly, agricultural work is not codified by strict regulations like industrial work, and consequently it is very difficult to control it, particularly when the cooperative still lacks mechanized equipment. Then as the team members are all neighbours or relatives they are indulgent towards one another and mind only their own business. Their slapdash work makes it necessary for the cooperative to employ other workers to control and rectify it, thus causing an inflation of work-points, squandering both labour force and materials, and reducing the value of the workdays.

Since 1970, small cooperatives have merged into large ones covering several hamlets and even the whole commune. The infrastructures have developed (storehouses, drying yards, engineering stations...). The fields have been re-drawn. A new distribution of labour has been introduced, and specialized teams have made their appearance (tilling, irrigation, seed selection, manuring, plant protection). The production brigades undertake to do the remaining work. In this period, the agricultural cooperatives accumulated a rich experience in management; they conducted pedological surveys, elaborated projects and experimented with the new process of production, and on this

basis, determined economic and technical norms for the entire production process in order to consolidate the contract system.

On the basis of this preparatory work, the cooperative signs contracts with the specialized teams and discusses with them the number of days needed for each job after taking into account its volume and quality. For the remaining jobs, the production brigade applies the "three-point contract" system; the three points are:

- Contracted produce. This consists in allocating a certain cultivated area to each production brigade, and setting a quota of produce to be collected which varies according to the nature of the crop and the fertility of the soil.

- Contracted costs. This is based on the technical norms of each crop and on the means available from the cooperative to calculate the expenses defrayed by the production brigade to obtain seeds, fertilizers, petrol, insecticides, and to repair the implements needed for production.

- Contracted work-points. This is based on the norms set for labour, for each job handed out by the cooperative, and fixes the work-points necessary to produce the crop contracted and to be paid to the producer after the harvest.

According to the regulation, the production brigades may receive a reward amounting to 80–100% of the surplus of the contracted produce or may be fined 50–70% of the deficit.

After agreeing upon a "three-point contract" with the cooperative, the production brigade signs contracts with individual peasants or groups of peasants.

The system of contracts with specialized teams is definitely superior to the "work-day" system or the "work-point computing" system because it marks a step forward in the division of labour, and to some extent facilitates the

introduction of mechanization and new farming techniques, thereby contributing to step up the development of production and to strengthen the relations of production.

The system of "three-point contract" signed with the production brigades has a lot of good points; nevertheless it has a fundamental flaw since it is the production brigade and not the farmer who disposes of the crop. This leads to the peasants working carelessly. They only care for their work-points and not for the quality of their work. The result is that the production brigade has to control the work, which renders the managerial apparatus more cumbersome. Furthermore, this control is ineffective since in present conditions agricultural production cannot be standardized.

In the last few years, besides two rice crops, many co-operatives have grown winter crops (vegetables and subsidiary food crops) which require intensive cultivations. After fulfilling their duty towards the State, many co-operatives use the land put at their disposal to grow the winter crop on their own initiative and sign separate contracts directly with the farmer. This method has yielded good results and has been tried for rice cultivation. In many regions this form of contract (for rice cultivation) which began in 1978 and 1979 was applied extensively in 1980 and became the norm in the 1981 spring crop.

In order to popularize this new farming method, the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam issued Instruction 100 CT/TW on 13 January 1981 to "improve the contract system and apply it to each peasant team or individual peasant". The gist of this new system is that the cooperative signs the "three-point contract" not with the production brigade but

directly with each peasant team or individual peasant in order to bind them to the final produce.

According to this new system the cooperative continues to sign contracts with specialized teams dealing with specific technical tasks such as mechanical tilling, irrigation, seed selection, management, distribution of fertilizers, pest control, etc. With regard to the production brigades, after agreeing on "three-point contract" with the cooperatives, they sign contracts with each peasant team or individual peasant. These do the final work (tending the crop and harvesting) as these jobs enable them to exercise their skills and make use of the material resources and labour of their family members. The area allotted to them under the "three-point contract" is discussed with the production brigade. The contracted production quotas are also fixed at a meeting and kept constant for several years to gain the confidence of the farmers and encourage them in their work by guaranteeing the "three benefits": benefit to the State, to the collective and to the individual. The peasant team or individual peasant now receives the entire surplus produced over the fixed quota, or is fined the entire deficit, except in the case of natural disaster or exceptional circumstances.

At present our agricultural cooperatives are not yet technically developed, they tend a great variety of plants and animals, and lack material and technical bases; their production work is done almost entirely by hand and depends largely on the whims of nature; the level of their managerial cadres is still low. In this situation, they are urged to opt for one of the two styles of work—old or new—according to their concrete conditions.

As the interests and responsibilities of the farmers are thereby closely related to their final produce, the new forms of contract have become an incentive to work,

within the framework of the cooperative and its division of labour.

With this new form of contract the co-op members can make the best use of their labour and land, fulfil the norms in a voluntary manner, apply technical innovations to their work, save production costs, improve the quality of their work, raise economic efficiency and spare control work, for the cooperative. Thanks to these types of contracts, production is increased, the co-op members' incomes rise and consequently the cooperative can increase its accumulation of capital and supply greater quantities of farm produce to the State.

In practice, these new types of contracts strengthen the relations of production, bring the farmers closer to their cooperatives, consolidate their collective mastery, streamline the managerial apparatus of the cooperative and promote technical innovations.

In a word, they are an improvement over the former "three-point contract". In the new contractual incentives system, the "contracted work" system continues to work, with the difference that "it is bound to the final produce". In this way, the co-op farmers can draw benefits from their work-days and at the same time derive a profit from the surplus of their "contracted produce". Practice has shown that this system has definite advantages as it is more suitably related to the present technical and managerial level of the cooperatives.

In future, when agriculture is mechanized and the managerial standards of the co-op cadres are raised, the type of contract used will change again. But the principle of binding the interests and responsibilities of the farmers to their final produce will remain for a long time.

1981

REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF COFFEE CULTIVATION IN VIETNAM

TRAN PHU THANH

Nearly twenty years ago Vietnam began exporting coffee. This commodity was soon rated by experts as having a particular flavour, a sweet taste and an attractive colour.

Biologists and agronomists have agreed that coffee, which was introduced into our country nearly a century ago, is suitable to many soil and climatic areas of Vietnam.

Year after year, however, our exported coffee has fallen too short of our customers' demand. According to the latest reports of responsible economic branches and of the Ministry of Agriculture, coffee area and yield steadily decreased between 1976 and 1980 from 16,399 to 11,599 hectares and from 0.95 tonne of grain per hectare in 1976 to 0.45 in 1979.

Appropriate concern and encouragement has not been given to the development of coffee production. While striving to extend acreage, many localities and State farms did not pay attention to fostering existing plants. Worse still, in some places coffee was replaced by other crops and fruit-trees. Planning for coffee-growing with regard to

labour, technical means and irrigation potentialities was not developed. A good policy was lacking to encourage workers to increase production and raise their own productivity by devoting themselves to tending the coffee plant. Nor was there a policy to help cooperatives and individuals develop coffee production. What is more, production organization and managerial apparatus were still beset with irrationalities.

The above-mentioned weak points are being removed step by step to put coffee production on a larger socialist scale. After many years of research, the first works have appeared in the study of coffee ecology and the planning of coffee plantation for export. According to an inquiry by the Ministry of Agriculture, coffee has decreased in area and yield in a number of localities, but it has on the contrary risen to over one tonne of grain per hectare in others with similar soil and climatic conditions. In other places it has stood at 2 tonnes year after year. Therefore, more input will certainly give higher yield to the existing 19,815 hectares.

Research and experimentation have shown that coffee thrives on basaltic soil which abounds in Dac Lac, Nghe Tinh, Binh Tri Thien, Lam Dong, Gia Lai-Kontum and Song Be provinces where plantations can be enlarged to a total of 200,000 hectares. In the next five years, besides tending the existing 20,000 hectares, we will plant 50,000 more hectares with coffee, partly in cooperation with fraternal countries in Comecon. On the Central Highlands, tens of thousands of people are opening a campaign to grow coffee under our third five-year plan. We shall build scores of State farms in four areas in co-operation with the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic and

Bulgaria. Our army also takes part in this important and difficult task.

Fifty thousand hectares is a small area for a big-coffee producer, but in the conditions of Vietnam it requires a tremendous effort and a homogenous co-operation of various economic branches.

At present, our State already has a policy and overall measures to encourage coffee production. Our investments being still small, we set great store by co-operating with the socialist countries to build large-scale coffee plantations and by developing coffee-growing with modest investments and quick returns in favourable places. Our policy is to develop coffee growing in all the three economic sectors: State farms, co-operatives and peasant households so as to promote the compound strength of the State and people. However, priority will be given to build State farms into advanced production units with a high level of specialization, intensive farming and application of advanced technique, with high labour productivity and coffee yield, good managerial organization, thus setting a model in the areas specialized in coffee growing.

Implementing the above-mentioned policy and measures, many localities such as Dac Lac and Gia Lai-Kontum have sped up coffee planting. Many localities have applied technical achievements and taken valuable initiatives like that of adopting new strains. Nghe Tinh and Gia Lai-Kontum have grown lots of varieties of coffee with early harvest and high yield. The State farms have also widely used hole-borers, which is 40-50 times quicker than by hand and ensures timely planting. The use of polyethylene bags in coffee nursing has brought down the production cost of saplings, saving labour, land, irrigation water and time

† In the immediate future, apart from investing into enlarging the area, we shall build a coffee-processing mill to make ground and instant coffee. Our goal is to carry out intensive farming along with expanding area so as to boost coffee growing in the years to come thus ensuring a large amount of exportable coffee. On the other hand, we shall strive to bring average coffee yield to 0.6 tonne per hectare in the shortest time possible.

1981

BINH DINH'S COCONUT PALMS

MIN TONG

Binh Dinh, well known throughout Vietnam for its coconut palms, was merged with another province, Quang Ngai, to form Nghia Binh province.

Travelers to the region should make sure they stop off at Tam Quan. Standing beside huge heaps of coconuts, women beckon over to us, inviting us to taste their fruit. With a swift movement of her chopper, a woman uncaps a coconut and pierces its white pulp before handing it to us. We suck mouthfuls of the delicious, sweet milk, so reminiscent of this land and its people.

* * *

Tam Quan township lies beside a small river whose limpid water ebbs and flows with the tide. Whatever way we turn, we see row after row of coconut palms, over to the sea, up to the mountains, down to the southern districts of Phu My, Phu Cat, An Nhon, Tay Phuoc, etc. Only in the hinterland are the trees less numerous.

In Tam Quan coconut palms bear fruit after four years. How beautiful they are then! Each nut is so full and heavy that three men can drink their fill from it. The trees cluster in the sandy soil near the water, for they

like water but not flooding. The fruit are picked every month and a half. A broad chopper slipped under his belt, the picker moves from tree to tree, climbing them with a ladder, beginning with the young ones. He climbs up five or six metres above the ground, presses his chopper against a nut in the lowest bunch and shakes it a little. A gurgle reveals a ripe fruit. The man then hacks off the bunch. After that, he trims the tree-top, cuts down the withered leaves and looks for any mice. At last he slides down.

When the trees are more than ten metres high, the picker has to climb the tree by a ladder. From high up he carefully lowers one branch after another on a rope. On the ground, helpers load the fruit down to boats or tie them into rafts to let them go downstreams.

The smaller coconuts are sold to make refreshments. Oil is pressed out of the yellow, green or red-skinned ones. We visited an oil-making centre at Cuu Loi hamlet, near Tam Quan. Coconuts there were piled high in a corner of a large yard, some already with green buds. A group of lads sitting on the ground peeled off the husks with big knives. They were then handed over to the girls. One of them broke them open with a knife, and poured their milk out. Another scraped the pulp. The thick white scrapings soon piled up. Under the strong hands of the grinders operating an instrument bristling with sharp teeth, they were crushed and fell into a closely-woven basket. When the basket was half full, they were thoroughly trodden with some water added. Soon tiny streams of a milky liquid trickled into the big jars. After one night, the oil came out and rose to the surface, shining like fat. That oil was then skimmed and simmered to purify it. Five coconuts usually gave one litre of oil.

During the war of resistance against the French colonialists, the provinces in the Fifth Interzone, the Central Highlands and Southern Trung Bo greatly depended upon. Binh Dinh's coconut oil, much of which was produced from Tam Quan coconuts. As there was no kerosene, their oil was used for lighting. Coconut oil is also a delicious substitute for fat, and a precious raw material from which to make soap. In Tam Quan, Bong Son and Phu My there are hundreds of small enterprises turning out various kinds of soaps and cosmetic oils.

Green coconut leaves make good roofing when skilfully arranged into a thick layer. Most of the houses in Tam Quan, Bong Son and Phu My are made of coconut trunks. Old coconut trees, once sawn into planks, reveal glossy brown veins much sought after to make furniture.

Coconut milk also has medical properties. According to the people of Binh Dinh coconut milk is better than any tonic. Filtered and asepticized, it can be injected to restore the health of weak patients. After a long illness there is no better tonic than pigeon stewed in coconut milk. You take a large and glutinous coconut and place a gutted pigeon inside it, and simmer it. Several hours later, the meat softens and mixes with the coconut pulp and milk, producing a delicious and fragrant dish. Slice coconut flesh cooked with shrimps or meat also makes a tasty and nutritious dish. The people of Binh Dinh like to eat coconut with rice cakes. Boiled cassava ground with coconut scrapings and spiced with salt and sesame seeds provides sustenance for a labourer from morn till noon.

All the year round, visitors to Binh Dinh are treated to coconut jam. On New Year's days glutinous rice cakes are cooked with a coconut filling. A local recipe is to cook rice with coconut milk to add taste. Bonzes like to eat jack—

fruit, rice noodles, peanuts and soya beans boiled in coconut milk, making a frugal and healthy meal. As for children, they prefer the "phoi" (meaning "lung" in Vietnamese), a kind of sweet and spongy white excrecence secreted from inside the fruit. Condensed and salted coconut milk ranks among the best sauces.

Coconuts hold a special place among agricultural products for they give us both oil and fibre. Beaten, steeped then beaten again several times before being dried, coconut fibres become as fine as silk threads and can be made into rope. It seems that all parts of a coconut palm can be used: for ropes, sandals, buttons... and fuel. During the war of resistance against French aggression our soldiers in the Fifth Interzone wore such buttons on their clothes. The shells can be used as bowls for the children.

Many handicraft articles produced from coconut palms are sold on market days in Binh Dinh. Coloured carpets and ornaments brighten up the stalls. On display are nets for volley-ball, basket-ball and table-tennis, hammocks, ropes of various sizes and bags of many colours. Also on sale are beds, wardrobes, tables and chairs made of polished coconut wood. There are very attractive tea cosies made from elaborately decorated coconut husks. The old folk usually wear coconut sandals with wide, elegant straps, while women choose high-heel sandals with pink and purple glass beads on their straps to wear at wedding parties and festivals.

Coconut palms stretching over many districts provided the people of Binh Dinh with strong bases from which to fight the country's enemies.

In 1954, when the French colonialists rushed their troops against Quy Nhon, De Gi and Tam Quan, our guerillas turned the coconut plantations into forbidding obstacles. In the streets, big coconut trees were laid across the road piled high with tables, chairs, wardrobes and beds to check the advance of enemy troops. Meanwhile, the guerillas laid in wait like gibbons in the trees hurling hand grenades at unsuspecting enemy soldiers who died before even knowing where their adversaries came from. The survivors, looking up, would see nothing but grimly indifferent coconut palms.

During the war of resistance against US aggression Tam Quan was a fiercely contested area. To contain the guerillas, the Americans bulldozed tens of thousands of coconut palms, turning a once rich area into a no-man's land. But that did not stop the soldiers and people of Tam Quan and Binh Dinh from achieving resounding feats. In Tam Quan - Bong Son area alone tens of thousands of US and South Korean aggressors fell in the coconut plantations together with hundreds of planes of various kinds.

Today, the coconut palms by Tam Quan station still bear enemy bullet marks. It was there in the spring of 1965 that little hero Tran Van Hoc laid down his life. The enemies had used a large force to encircle a squad of liberation fighters. The youngster was sent to the station to bring the latter out secretly, but when he withdrew he was wounded and caught. Recognizing Hoc, a local thug savagely tortured him and threw him into a dark dug-out where he left him for three days and nights. On the fourth day the thug marched him off through the township past weeping crowds. Handcuffed, Hoc plodded with swollen feet, but with a glint in his eyes and a smile on his face. Finally, the hero was tied to a young coconut palm in Tam Quan station and killed.

During the struggle for the country's independence and freedom, Binh Dinh's coconut palms witnessed countless similar examples of heroism. Over the past thirty years they also underwent no end of trials. The Saigon puppets called Binh Dinh their 44th province—the worst one as regards security—and launched raid after raid against it. Hundreds of thousands of tonnes of US bombs, explosives and toxic chemicals were dropped on the coconut plantations.

On 1 April 1975 the whole of Binh Dinh province, including the town of Quy Nhon, was completely liberated. Immediately after the end of the war, the people returned to their villages. Once their houses were rebuilt, they sought to replant their precious coconut palms. Most of those remaining were riddled with bullets. The revolutionary authorities launched many drives to replant coconut, mango, cinnamon and other well-known fruit-trees which grow in the province. At the beginning of the 1976 Lunar New Year, Tam Quan alone planted fifty thousand coconut palms.

The population of Binh Dinh are determined to turn their coconut plantation, once devastated by US bombs, explosives and toxic chemicals in Hoai Nhon, Hoai An, An Lao, Phu My... districts into prosperous economic zones. The green foliage is returning to the villages, and all day long swarms of busy bees hover about the newly blossoming coconut flowers, producing a sweet brown honey, yet another valuable product of Binh Dinh.

1981

THE NEW ECONOMIC ZONE OF AN HA

THIEN ANH

Thirty kilometres west of Ho Chi Minh City lies a new economic zone of the city's Fifth Ward. Here the soil is saline and was left unused throughout the war years. Right after the liberation of the South, a contingent of young volunteers dug a canal to bring fresh water to the area, thus paving the way for the building of the An Ha farm. In the An Ha canal, 20-tonne boats ply back and forth, berthing at An Ha market where local products—sugar, sugarcane, fish sauce—are exchanged for goods from Ho Chi Minh City.

The farmers' houses string out for two kilometres along the canal, amidst verdant orchards, their roofs covered with climbing plants. Regularly spaced they have fibro-cement roofs and bamboo-and-palm leaves partitions. They were built in the first days of the existence of the farm, for the pioneer families.

We called at the first house, a three-bayed one, quite spacious for a dwelling in a new economic zone. On a low cupboard beside sitting-room furniture made of good-quality wood a transistor radio was conveying the music

programme from Radio Ho Chi Minh City. The outbuildings included a brick kitchen, a big water tank and a shed for five pigs, two oxen and two goats. There are also a fish-pond and an orchard with about 300 pine-apple plants... The family of Mr Hai Cao — the owner—has six of its member working for the farm. They had come to An Ha in the very first days. "When I was in the City," Mr Hai Cao said to us, "I drove a cyclomotor (1) from 4 a.m. till mid-night but our family was always deeply in debt."

Another newly-arrived family said they thought it lucky that their application had been quickly granted. During the war they had moved from Central Vietnam to Saigon where they lived from hand to mouth collecting and selling scrap. The husband proudly said that four of the seven members of the family were working on the farm, with the three children going to school. An Ha has two basic general-education schools with an enrolment of 420 pupils.

"Gone were the hard times," he added. "Now we have some savings. But what we find most heartening is the fact that the children's future is ensured — something we had never thought possible."

* * *

The centre of the farm has the look of a miniature "agro-industrial complex". Besides making fish sauce, its budding industry also turns out sugar, paper and alcohol from more than 600 hectares of sugarcane — an excellent

variety with a tall and upright stem with a high sugar content. With some equipment made in Saigon a factory treats 200 tonnes of sugarcane a day, turning out white powdered sugar. (The handicraft mills around Ho Chi Minh City only produce treacle and unrefined sugar.)

The management pays particular attention to the technique of production and the quality of products. According to Le Kim Hung, a responsible cadre, many engineers and technical and managerial cadres have been offered jobs at the farm or have signed contract with it. This has enabled An Ha to score much success. Following the example of the sugar mill, a paper mill turns out 700 kg of paper a day: type-writing paper, mimeograph paper, flowered paper, wrapping paper. It hopes to produce newsprint and writing paper by the end of this year. Raw materials are plentiful: waste from the sugar factory, rice straw and stubble from the production collectives in the surrounding areas. Three and a half tonnes of straw will give a tonne of paper pulp, and a tonne of paper pulp 650 kg of paper. A kilogramme of first-grade paper will sell at 40 *dong*. In the same way the distillery gets its raw materials from the sugar factory. The woman engineer in charge let us know that 220 litres of molasses will give 30 litres of alcohol purchased by the State at 36 *dong* a litre. Production costs are about 100 *dong* including ferment, fuel, etc.

"An Ha farm begins to show profit," said Chin Tan, the manager. "However, we will always remember our first days here. The State invested 8 million *dong* in the farm. We netted 1.5 million *dong* from our first crop of sugarcane; and we have retrieved our investment after two more crops. Now we can stand on our own feet."

* * *

1. Three-wheeled passenger vehicle driven by a small engine.

A five-year plan (1981-1985) to develop An Ha has been drafted. Part of it has taken concrete form. The remaining projects include a 200-bed polyclinic for the farm-workers and also for the people of Binh Chanh district; a brick-kiln producing one million bricks a year; a pigsty for 200 breeders; a sawing-mill and a carpentry workshop; a pastry and confectionery enterprise. In 1983 the drilling of well to provide fresh water to every family will be completed.

Bidding us farewell, a female employee of the farm's planning bureau said:

"Come and see us again. You will see even more progress. We are up to our ears in preparations to welcome here 200 more families from the City..."

1983

VIETNAMESE TROPICAL FRUIT FOR EXPORT

NGUYEN CHU

Vietnam has a wide range of tropical fruits: pineapple, banana, litchi, longane, mango, guava, jackfruit, etc., which, either fresh or processed, are much appreciated on international market. However, these fruits are not grown in a planned and concentrated way, with little technical investment and low productivity. That is why so far fruit processing for export has not much developed. In the last few years, a plan has been worked out to speed up the growing, storage and processing of fruit in the whole country.

Pineapple accounts for half the volume of exported fruit, followed by banana and orange. The growing of pineapple and banana benefits from favourable climatic and soil conditions nearly over the whole length of the country, i.e. more than 16 degrees of latitude. They can be grown in the uplands of Northern and Central Vietnam as well as in the Central Highlands. Orange in particular thrives in some regions in the north of Central Vietnam and the uplands of northern Vietnam.

Individual farmers formerly and co-op farmers at present are not accustomed to raising fruit trees in concentrated fashion. They regard it as a sideline occupation and an intercalary crop. Hence fruit gathering and processing on a large scale cannot be done easily. This shortcoming is

now being removed. Some State farms have specialized in fruit growing while the State has raised the buying prices of fruit and thus encouraged the farmers to grow it on large areas.

In 1970, the first year of the second five-year plan, and the first year of national reunification, the area under pineapple was 12,800 hectares yielding 110,000 tonnes of fruit. Four years later, in 1980, this area had doubled (38,000 hectares) and output had risen to 320,000 tonnes.

Orange was grown on 4,200 hectares in 1970 and 15,4000 hectares in 1980 (3.60 times over). Output was 24,200 tonnes in 1970, and only 80,400 tonnes in 1980 (3.37 times over) due to the aging of the trees. The planting of new trees is thus imperative.

Banana was grown on 32,300 hectares in 1970 and 63,200 hectares in 1980. Output was 440,000 tonnes (fresh) in 1970 and 809,000 tonnes in 1980. Of late, the production of banana has increased a little, reaching 1.2 million tonnes.

Though the planting and harvesting of fruit have made some progress, its collection and processing still leave much room for improvement. In 1980, the fruit processing factories (canning and freezing) collected only 27,000 tonnes of pineapple (fresh) or 8.44% of total production, 3,100 tonnes of orange (3.62% of production) and 10,500 tonnes of banana (1.3% of production).

Due to the shortage of materials, lack of investments and delay in the application of modern technique, the canning industry in Vietnam is far from matching the growing potentials.

The establishment in 1964 in Hanoi of the first export fruit enterprise marked the birth of the fruit canning industry in Vietnam.

A little later, due to the American air and naval war against Northern Vietnam, this enterprise was evacuated to the countryside. In that same period, four more fruit processing factories were built in the provinces of Vinh Phu, Hai Hung, Ha Bac and Ha Tuyen.

Before 1975, the processing of fruit for export was still primitive and was not yet an important foreign currency earner.

In the last few years, this industry has produced such items as sliced pineapple, pineapple tidbits, pineapple juice, banana juice, stewed longane, stewed litchi, etc.

Many export items have received gold medals at international fairs: Nam Ha sliced pineapple (Leipzig 1976), Hanoi pineapple juice (Leipzig 1970), Hai Hung canned litchi (Leipzig 1980), Son Tay sliced pineapple (Plovdiv 1978), and Vinh Phu pineapple tidbits (Plovdiv 1981).

In the coming years, it is expected that Vietnam will export each year 20,000 tonnes of pineapple, 10,000 tonnes of orange, and 20,000 tonnes of banana. A programme has been elaborated for the development of so far neglected fruits such as litchi, longane and mango. This programme also deals with the production of fruit syrup, spirits and wine, which are in much demand even on the home market. According to this programme, Vietnam will step up cooperation with the Soviet Union, Hungary and the GDR¹ in many respects: the development of fruit plantations², fruit canning and cold storage.

2. INDUSTRIAL AND ARTISANAL ASPECTS

SOCIALIST INDUSTRIALIZATION IN THE EIGHTIES

DAO DUY TUNG

Socialist industrialization is the central task throughout the transitional period in our country, the keystone of which is the building of a system of heavy industries to serve as the infrastructures of socialism. Lenin wrote, "The only possible economic basis of socialism is a large-scale mechanized industry. Who forgets this is not a communist." He also wrote, "The material bases of socialism can only be a large-scale mechanized industry capable of transforming agriculture."

The question is how to carry out socialist industrialization in a given country. The Soviet Union did it by concentrating right from the outset on building a whole system of heavy industries. The situation in the Soviet Union at that time demanded that effort and it had the capacity to make it. After the first five-year plan (1928-32), the Soviet Union already was provided with the basis for large-scale

industry and after the second five-year plan (1933-37), it became a major industrialized country in the world, second only to the United States.

How should socialist industrialization be carried out in the conditions of Vietnam? The 4th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (1976) laid down the line for building our socialist economy as follows: "To step up socialist industrialization, build the infrastructures of socialism, and take the economy of our country from small-scale production to large-scale socialist production. To give priority to the rational development of heavy industry on the basis of developing agriculture and light industry, build industry and agriculture in the whole country into an industrial-agricultural economic structure; build the central economy while developing the regional economies; combine the central economy with the regional economies into a unified national economic structure; combine the building of productive forces with the setting up and perfecting of new relations of production; combine economy with national defence; strengthen the relations of division of work, cooperation and mutual assistance with the fraternal socialist countries on the basis of socialist internationalism, at the same time develop our economic relations with other countries on the basis of firmly maintaining our independence and sovereignty, and mutual benefit; turn Vietnam into a socialist country with modern industry and agriculture, advanced culture and science, firm national defence and a civilized and happy life." (1)

1. Communist Party of Vietnam — 4th National Congress, Political Report of the Central Committee, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1977, pp.58, 59.

That is the guideline for the whole period of transition to socialism in our country, and also for the present stage. In implementing this line we have divided the process of socialist industrialization in our country into several stages. In the present stage—the eighties—as was pointed out in the Political Report of the Central Committee to the 5th Party Congress, we shall have to “concentrate on a vigorous development of agriculture, to regard it as a priority, to take it a step further to large-scale socialist production, to strive to boost consumer goods production and to carry on the building of a number of important branches of heavy industry; to combine agriculture, consumer goods industry and heavy industry in a rational agro-industrial structure. These are main orientations of socialist industrialization in the coming stage.” (1)

The Political Report further said: “That is precisely ‘to give priority to the rational development of heavy industry on the basis of developing agriculture and light industry, and to create a new productive force in this first stage. This is also to lay the basis for later stepping up of socialist industrialization. At this later stage the main aim will be to build a modern agro-industrial structure with a comparatively developed heavy industry as its core.’” (2)

To determine the contents of industrialization in the stage ahead is a crucial point in the concretization of the Party line. Whether or not we can achieve the four socio-economic objectives set by the 5th Party Congress (3) effect

1. Communist Party of Vietnam - 5th National Congress, Political Report, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1982, p.52.

2. Op. cit. p.52.

3. Op. cit. pp.42, 43: The overall economic and social objectives of the eighties are:

....

ad change in our economy, and solve two urgent and fundamental tasks (accumulation and improvement of the people's life) depends on the carrying out of the industrialization programme, in other words, on the correct handling of the most fundamental relationship in our national economy: that between industry and agriculture in the stage ahead. It is the most fundamental relationship because agriculture and industry are the two basic branches producing both means of production and articles of consumption. It has a bearing on all other activities.

In the handling of the relationship between industry and agriculture in the eighties, we have several options

— We may immediately concentrate on building a relatively developed system of heavy industries by building a number of iron and steel mills with capacities in the range

...
— To meet the most pressing and essential requirements of everyday life, gradually stabilizing, and eventually improving to some extent the people's material and cultural livelihood. First of all, we must end the grain and foodstuffs shortage, and make efforts to meet the requirements in clothing, study, medical care, housing, transport, child care, and other essential consumer needs.

— To continue building the material and technological infrastructure of socialism, with the emphasis on boosting agriculture, consumer goods production and exports, while at the same time improving the technical basis of the other economic branches, and making preparations for a more vigorous development of heavy industry in the next stage.

— To complete the socialist transformation in the Southern provinces: to continue perfecting the socialist relations of production in the North; and to consolidate the socialist relations of production in the whole country.

— To meet the requirements of national defense and to maintain security and order.

of three or four million tonnes a year, a system of heavy-engineering industries and a sizable chemical industry. But, in the present conditions, this option is impractical:

— We may concentrate on developing only agriculture while neglecting or giving very little attention to the development of consumer goods industries and heavy industry. This, in practice, would not allow us to take our agriculture to large-scale production while leaving idle industrial potentials which could be turned into our account;

— Or we may give equal attention to heavy industry and agriculture, concentrating on neither.

All the three options mentioned above are not compatible with the practical conditions of our country in the stage ahead. That is why our Party has opted for the following: 'To concentrate efforts on strongly developing agriculture, considering agriculture to be in the forefront; take agriculture one step further toward large-scale socialist production while making great efforts to promote the production of consumer goods and continue the building of a number of important branches of heavy industry...'

We have made this option because it conforms to the present situation in our country and in the world — a situation which allows us to effectively carry out our industrialization programme and solve in the best possible way our two fundamental and urgent tasks in the stage ahead.

Some have argued that to concentrate on developing agriculture is a difficult undertaking, and that a number of Third World countries have been able to develop their economies by concentrating on oil and other mining industries. Our road, they say, should also pass through the mining industries. This, indeed, should be a good way

to proceed. We have rich sub-soil resources and some of our ore reserves have proved sizable. But their mining would demand very big investments and even so, we cannot begin it right away. Oil is also an important resource for industrialization. Our country and the Soviet Union have put in fairly important investments, but obviously we cannot yet extract large amounts of oil in the years ahead. In the long run this is a great prospect for our country. But in the present decade, while we have large labour and land potentials and a certain number of industrial establishments should we do nothing but wait for oil and other minerals to be extracted? No, decidedly, we cannot do so.

Our Party, before deciding on the best way to socialize industrialization, has taken into consideration the following factors:

a) Our most precious asset is our labour force (the developed countries have large infrastructures which are in fact the embodiment of past labour).

b) What can attract the most labour in our country are our land, forests and sea

c) Other potential areas in which to deploy our work force are the various crafts and trades of our people, including sideline occupations in the countryside, handicrafts, small industries and consumer goods industries.

d) The most important motive power behind our economic construction is the system of socialist collective mastery.

We all know that labour and land (in the case of Vietnam at present this includes the sea and the forests) are the two most important factors for agricultural production. However, our present mode of production makes for very low productivity. We still have a large surplus

work force and plenty of crop-land, forest-land and sea areas which remain unexploited. Yet, we are short of food and have achieved no accumulation. That is why, there must be a better combination of labour with land, forests, sea and trades and crafts according to a new mode of production which will take our agriculture to large-scale production and produce more material wealth. Marx dealt with this question in the conditions of capitalist production. He wrote, "... by incorporating with itself the two primary creators of wealth, labour power and the land, capital requires a power of expansion that permits it to augment the elements of its accumulation beyond the limits apparently fixed by its own magnitude, or by the value and the mass of the means of production, already produced in which it has its being." (1)

On the basis of the above analysis, the 5th Party Congress affirmed that "... the most important task, which can and must come first is to achieve collective mastery in the interests of a rational and effective use of labour and land, and a vigorous expansion of local industries and trades at all points of production, in every locality, and throughout the country; the purpose is to provide jobs for all working people, to exploit all available land, to develop all branches and trades in both quantity and scope, to achieve better social labour productivity, a higher gross national product, and a wider variety of product." (2)

To concentrate on developing agriculture, considering it to be in the fore front, and taking it one step further on

1. Karl Marx, *Capital* Vol. I, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, p. 604.

2. *Communist Party of Vietnam — 5th National Congress, Political Report*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1982 pp. 44—45.

the road to large-scale socialist production, absolutely does not mean to develop agriculture alone; instead it means to develop agriculture in close and correct combination with industry. As has been pointed out by our Party, in the stage ahead "it is necessary to combine agriculture, consumer goods industries and heavy industry into a rational industrial-agricultural structure". More concretely, this means:

The development of agriculture must be combined with the development of consumer goods industries, in both scope and depth. These industries must comprise the food industry, the light industries, the small industries and the various crafts in both town and country.

Agriculture (including forestry and fishery) and consumer goods industries are two very important branches of production. They not only produce commodities to meet the needs of the people but are also indispensable to socialist industrialization, especially in the initial stage of the transitional period in our country. This is because in order to carry out production, in order to industrialize, we need both means of production and commodities, i.e. farm products and consumer goods. Lenin said: "Of course, it is wrong to speak of accumulation being 'independent' of the production of articles of consumption, if only because the expansion of production calls for new variable capital and consequently, articles of consumption." (1)

Our Party has consistently pointed out that agricultural development is aimed at ensuring food for the whole of society, supplying raw materials for consumer goods industries and goods for export. It says, "To boost consumer goods production is a crucial policy orientation to meet the

1. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House 1963 p. 85.

material and cultural needs of society, broaden the domestic market, create an important source of exports, and expand the market abroad. To boost consumer goods production is to increase the value of agricultural produce, provide the State with commodities for exchange with the peasants, stimulate agricultural production; broaden the division of labour, create more jobs, develop the economy, increase social labour productivity, the national product and national income in the present stage." (1) The Party further points out, "Small industry and handicrafts in our country have a great potential as an important section of the consumer goods industry. They are being transformed and reorganized into a component of the socialist economy, and will hold an important position in the national economy over a long period, especially in this first stage." (2)

That is why, there must be an accurate inventory and classification of all the crafts and trades and a rational division of labour and cooperation throughout the country. Along with the comprehensive development of agriculture, we must make the most of the major industrial establishments of both the centre and the localities, of small industries, handicrafts and individual craftsmen in order to develop consumer goods production.

On the combination between agriculture, consumer goods industries and heavy industry in the stage ahead, our Party has pointed out, "To develop agriculture and consumer goods production is to lay the foundation for the development of heavy industry. On the other hand, to develop agriculture and consumer goods production, we must

1. *Communist Party of Vietnam — 5th National Congress, Political Report*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1982, pp 49 — 50.

2. *Op. cit.* p. 50.

fully use available industrial capabilities, build in a rational way the essential heavy industries to supply electric power, coal, petrol, fertilizers, insecticides, basic chemicals, ordinary tools, semi-mechanized and mechanized tools, making materials, etc." (1) The primary and immediate aim of the development of heavy industry in the present stage is to help accelerate the development of agriculture and consumer goods industries. In case of deficiencies on the part of our own heavy industry, we should export goods produced by our agriculture, consumer goods industry and even heavy industry, in order to cover imports of what is needed to give a boost to our agriculture and consumer goods industry.

In this way, we shall combine agriculture, consumer goods industries and heavy industry into a rational industrial-agricultural structure in the present stage.

Pending the construction of a developed system of heavy industries we should never lose sight of that objective and should create all possible conditions for its realization in the future. That is the firm and principled stand of our Party in the building of socialism. Accordingly, in the present stage, we must make active preparations in all fields, especially in geological surveying, so that when conditions permit we can start building a number of key branches of heavy industry, especially the engineering and steel industries.

This is because we always bear in mind that the infrastructures of socialism can be nothing but a large-scale mechanized industry capable of transforming agriculture and re-equipping the whole national economy. We cannot resign ourselves to the fact that our country, with a

1. *Op. cit.* p. 51.

population of 50-60 million inhabitants, is not producing 5 - 10 million tonnes of steel annually. We need to have steel for everything, from making nails and wire to building bridges, roads, houses, machinery, automobiles, railway engines, ships, etc. At present our per capita steel production is only 1.13 kilograms. Without steel, there cannot be socialism. Moreover, we must always bear in mind our needs in national defence. If in ten years' time we could have planted 500,000 hectares with soyabean, 200,000 - 300,000 hectares with rubber, hundreds of thousands of hectares with coffee, etc., and have lots of farm products for export, that would be a good condition for the building of a system of heavy industries.

In a word, we should overcome the following incorrect views about socialist industrialization:

- Either to regard socialist industrialization simply as aiming at taking agriculture to large-scale production, and overlook its overall content; or inversely, to fail to realize that to take agriculture to large-scale production is also an objective of industrialization;

- Or to concentrate only on developing agriculture while neglecting or making light of the building of some necessary branches of heavy industry in the present stage and pay little attention to preparing for future large-scale industrialization;

- Or to look for another road, which disregards the present conditions of our country. This reflects a failure to see what we should and could do in priority in order to produce more material wealth for society.

1983

BLOCKING THE FLOW OF THE DA RIVER

On 12 January 1983, at a quarter past 1 p.m., at a point one kilometre upstream from the town of Hoa Binh, the waterflow of the Da River left its natural age-old course and was diverted into a channel dug deep in the rocks on its right bank. The digging of this more-than-one-kilometre channel began two years ago, and on 10 January 1983, more than 70 tonnes of explosives blasted the dykes blocking both its ends so that the flow would be partially diverted to that channel. Two days later, the main flow of the river was blocked. A ceremony for blocking the Da River was held on that day with the attendance of Pham Van Dong, Chairman of the SRA Council of Ministers, and E.A. Kozlovski, Soviet Minister of Geology. By that time, the width between the 2 banks had been reduced to only 10 metres. For several days, heavy-duty trucks, among them 20 Soviet-made Belaz lorries of 27-tonne capacity each, had been driven day and night without a let-up to dump blocking materials into the river, including 1,600 huge rocks and weighing 5-7 tonnes each and 1,450 concrete blocks in the shape of pyramids weighing 10-15 tonne each.

The blocking of the river marked an important period in the building of a great hydrological project which began in late 1970 and has accelerated since 1975. This will enable the construction of the first major installation of the whole system of the Hoa Binh hydro-electric

project – the clay and rock dam 128m high and more than 800m long. After that, other major installations will be built: the spate diversion channel with a capacity of 35,000 cu.m. per second, the underground hydro-electric plant with a set capacity of 1,920,000 kw generating on an average 8.4 billion kwh annually and the system of locks leading to a reservoir 230 kilometres long in Ta Bu. If everything goes as planned, the first of the eight turbines of the plant will be put into operation in 1987 and the whole project will be completed in the nineties. Next comes the Ta Bu hydro-electric plant with an even greater capacity. By then the Da River will be totally harnessed with the completion of this project.

The Hoa Binh hydro-electric project will not only provide significant electric power, a prerequisite for the industrialization of Vietnam, but also reduces considerably the danger of disastrous floods which threaten the Red River delta every year since the Da River is the Red River's largest tributary, making up half of the water of the Red River. In the dry season, moreover, the water from the reservoir will be channelled into the Red River and its delta. This will bring great benefits for riverine transport, fish raising and also for the climate of the North Western part of Vietnam.

For the blocking of the Da River, up to 12 January, 1983 16,900 Vietnamese workers and engineers together with 350 Soviet experts had to dig and move 15 million cubic metres of rock and clay, fill 210,000 cubic metres of concrete, build 50 km of roads on the construction site, dig 1,000 metres of tunnels, build 250,000 square metres of administrative offices and residential quarters, 60,000 square metres of storehouses, workshops and yards, and transport 350,000 tonnes of materials and equipment to

the construction site. During this time 3,000 hydro-electric workers have been trained, not to mention drivers and mechanics.

In 1983, the bulk of work to be realized will double that of 1982. For the first six months 6,000,000 cubic metres of rock and clay will be moved to raise the height of the dam to 43 metres as a precaution against floods in the rainy season of 1983.

The prospects for the project are bright as we enjoy devoted assistance from the Soviet Union in both technical matters and equipment. Lenin's well-known motto "Communism is the Soviet power plus nationwide electrification" is being realized in Vietnam.

1983

THANG LONG BRIDGE OVER THE RED RIVER

NGOC THAO

Thang Long is the former name of Hanoi. It means "Soaring Dragon". This beautiful and evocative name has been given to a huge bridge now under construction north-west of the City about 11 km upstream from old Long Bien Bridge.

Building work officially started on 26 November 1974 and to be completed in 1985. The bridge will be one of the largest in Southeast Asia. On 25 January 1984, a ceremony was held at the worksite as the first motor vehicles crossed the 15 steel spans of the bridge over the reddish waters of the largest river in North Vietnam.

In the early seventies, it became extremely urgent to build another bridge across the Red river in Hanoi, for the Capital's only bridge, Long Bien Bridge (or Paul Doumer Bridge as it was named in colonial days) had been constructed at the turn of the century, between 1898 and 1902. Now, 80 years later, it has become old and obsolete, particularly since many spans were damaged in the US air war of destruction against North Vietnam. Besides, the Hanoi population has increased six times and motor traffic over the bridge 15 times. The antiquated bridge now is bearing a traffic four times its planned maximum capacity.

In face of that situation Vietnam signed with China an agreement for the building of Thang Long bridge, which was to be about the size of Wuhan Bridge spanning the Yangzijiang. Work started in November 1974 but the Chinese side deliberately slowed down construction and then withdrew all its experts four years later. Only a few pillars had been built and there remained no reserves of materials, particularly steel and high-grade cement. Construction came to a halt.

It was at that moment that the Soviet Union lent Vietnam a helping hand. For the Soviet experts the technique used here was no novelty because the Soviet Union had helped China build similar bridges. The difficult point was that within a very short time the Soviet side would have to design and manufacture the needed structures and send them to Vietnam: as everybody knows, the Soviet economy is a strictly planned one. While fully observing the technical requirements specified in the original blueprint, the Soviet experts agreed to many changes regarding the building technique in order to further improve the quality of the bridge, relieve the difficulties facing Vietnam, and boost the pace of construction.

To pave the upper deck the Chinese design used concrete slabs which would allow the passage of pneumatic-tyred vehicles under 18 tonnes and tracked vehicles under 60 tonnes at reduced speed, but the Soviet design uses steel flooring which enables tyred vehicles up to 30 tonnes and tracked vehicles up to 80 tonnes to cross at unlimited speed, while providing two additional lanes for pedestrians. On the lower deck the two lanes formerly destined for pedestrians will be enlarged and consolidated for motor vehicles up to 13 tonnes.

From the USSR tens of thousands of kilometres away shipments of materials for Thang Long Bridge have been

coming to Vietnam. More than 54,000 tonnes of high-grade cement, 38,000 tonnes of steel and other equipment and materials have been sent to the work-site on schedule. Hundreds of Soviet experts have been working selflessly shoulder to shoulder with their Vietnamese colleagues in harsh climatic conditions.

With Soviet help, the ranks of Vietnamese bridge-builders, steeled in the hard war of resistance against US aggression, have steadily matured and have mastered complex problems of management and technology. Many technologies have been and are being applied for the first time in Vietnam: caissons in the building of pillars; assembly of whole spans without support; automatic welding... These achievements will open the way for Vietnamese bridge-builders to progress. The number of skilled workers at the work-site has increased five times, that of technical workers seven times, of scientific and technical cadres three times, and of economic management cadres twice.

By now 230,000 cubic metres of concrete and 100 kilometres of tubular piles more than half a metre across have been planted into the riverbed, over 53,000 tonnes of steel plates and other structures have been brought into place in preparation for the last stage of construction. The year 1985 will witness the completion of Thang Long Bridge, through which about 45% of the river-crossing traffic will pass.

Like other works to be built in the framework of the Vietnamese-Soviet cooperation plan, the "Dragon soaring over the Red River" will be yet another monument to the militant friendship between the two nations.

1984

OFFSHORE OIL EXPLOITATION AT VUNG TAU

TRAN QUAN NGOC

It takes two hours to drive from Ho Chi Minh City to Vung Tau, a picturesque coastal town in the Vung Tau-Con Dao special zone, one of the forty administrative units of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. It was called Cape Saint Jacques under French colonial rule. Under US neo-colonialist regime, it was a resort frequented mostly by businessmen, functionaries of the puppet administration and US officers and men. At that time, this town lived entirely on profits from the "services" it provided, including prostitution.

The South was liberated in 1975. In 1980, an agreement was signed between Vietnam and the Soviet Union on cooperation in the exploitation of oil and gas, followed at the end of 1981 by another agreement providing for the setting up of the "Vietsovpetro" Joint Enterprise.

Since then, construction has been going apace to turn it into an oil exploitation centre in Vietnam. With material and technical assistance from the Soviet Union, the first wells have been drilled about 100 km southeast of Vung Tau, and have recently begun operating.

We boarded a Mi-8 helicopter to go to the stationary drilling platform No. 1. Soon after it took off, from 100 metres above the ground, we saw the work yards of the "on-shore production and service complex". That used

for the assembly of the reinforced-concrete bases of oil rigs was as large as a small airfield. There stood enormous black and repainted steel pipes. At the end of their long necks like those of giraffes, powerful cranes were lifting and moving shining sheets of steel, steel tubes, and huge crates. Wharves extended over hundreds of metres along a sandy beach several kilometres long. Five years ago this region was just a stretch of mangroves. It was turned by the unflagging efforts of Army Regiment 318 and of workers and engineers of the ministries of construction and transport and communications and of the oil department into a large and beautiful harbour.

Sitting at my side on the helicopter was the Vice-Director of the Vietnam-Soviet joint enterprise, in charge of geological matters. A dynamic-looking man about 45 years old with wavy jet black hair, he pointed his finger at some five-storeyed buildings below: "By the end of this year, 1985, a dozen such buildings with all proper conveniences will have been completed. They will house mess-halls, clubs, kindergartens and schools as well as apartments for the thousands of members of our staff and their families."

From the helicopter which was making its last circle over the area, we saw houses and office buildings of the Vung Tau-Con Dao special zone together with charming hotels rising above the rows of coconut palms.

This helicopter flies a daily shuttle service between the mainland and the oil installations out at sea. This time it was piloted by Xuan Truong, an airman of great skill. The following story had been told to me by his friends: Once, his plane was about to land on the drill ship, the *Mirchink*, when a storm broke out. In spite of the high waves, which made the ship pitch and roll, he made a

beautiful landing and was cheered by the Soviet crew of the ship. He was the "bellwether" of our helicopter pilots here whose ranks have swollen day after day. Safe flights can now be made at night as well as in the daytime.

Mirchink was a great Soviet geologist. The ship named after him is 150 metres long and 24 metres wide with a power plant of 17,000 h.p. It can drill at any depth on our continental shelf. A 70-metre-high drilling-rig installed on the ship can sink wells 5,000—6,000 metres deep. For the ship to stay stationary at sea, no anchor need be cast. Screw-propellers are in action here and there round its hull. The effects of waves, wind, weather on the ship are immediately monitored by a control centre which, with the help of computers, regulates the rotating speed of the propellers to keep the ship stable. As the ship's machinery is thus kept constantly in operation, it is called a "dynamically-positioned drill ship". On the high seas, its coordinates and those of the oil well it drills are determined most accurately, with an error not exceeding 0.2 metre.

The drill ship *Mirchink* is equipped with a wonderful "diving chamber" which allows the divers to work at a depth of as much as 300 metres for control or repair of drilling equipment. The diving chamber is filled with helium at a pressure which increases gradually as the caisson sinks under water. This process lasts 2 or 3 days. Then the divers get out of the caisson and work. When they return to the surface, the air pressure is gradually decreased, over a period of 7 or 8 days. The operation is carried out very cautiously. Of course, during that time, the divers enjoy a normal life: the chamber is furnished with four beds and sanitary facilities. Each day, they receive five hot meals from the drill ship.

Divers are selected as carefully as would-be astronauts and undergo elaborate training. It is fortunate that over the last few years we have been able to train enough of them to serve this new industry in Vietnam.

Our first stationary oil rig has been commissioned. The equipment, made in the Soviet Union, was sent to Vietnam in big crates called modules and weighing up to hundreds of tonnes. They had been assembled at the manufacturing works and were lifted onto the platform by powerful cranes. Twenty-three of these modules equip our Oil Rig No. 1. The bases of the first oil rig were assembled entirely by Soviet technicians and workers; those of the second, partly by our men under the guidance of the Soviet experts; and those of the third, entirely by our workers and engineers. Ardanov, Director General of the Vietsovetro Joint Enterprise said to us, "Many of the Vietnamese welders and mechanics have what may be called golden hands. With their dexterity, industriousness, and eagerness to learn, they will go very far."

Of course, much remains to be done before we can master the techniques for oil exploitation. But in this respect we enjoy a fundamental advantage: our devoted Soviet friends are eager to teach us the new techniques so that we'll eventually be able to do everything ourselves. This is one of the most precious symbols of the friendship and cooperation between Vietnam and the Soviet Union. A responsible cadre said "The most important task of our enterprise is to train within the shortest possible time a body of competent technicians and skilled workers capable of taking charge of whatever equipment we have now. We must also have enough trained personnel for tugs, service ships, crane ships, fire-fighting ships, etc., and for serving on the "*Ekhabi*" mobile drilling rig."

I have several occasions to visit this big drilling rig which can be lifted or lowered on three 134.4 metre-high steel legs. When the rig is drilling, its three legs rest on the bottom of the sea. If the rig is to be moved, the three legs are raised and the whole platform rests on the surface of the water, looking like a ship with three steel towers pointing skyward.

Like the drill ship *Mirchink*, the *Ekhabi* drilling rig has recorded brilliant achievements. Right in its first drilling operation on our continental shelf, it struck oil. In March 1985, Chairman Pham Van Dong made a visit to the *Ekhabi* to watch the burn-off. He congratulated Soviet and Vietnamese technicians and workers, and compared the oil to a "Sleeping Beauty" who after a slumber lasting millions of years has been waked up by Soviet and Vietnamese "Princes Charming."

Thus the first joint Vietnam - Soviet enterprise for the exploration and exploitation of oil and gas on Vietnam's continental shelf are advancing with steady steps. Other projects will be built offshore and onshore. We are beginning to exploit crude oil on an industrial scale. Larger-scale exploitation will start before long. And a plan is afoot for the installation at Long Thanh (on the highway from Vung Tau to Ho Chi Minh City) of oil-refining and petro-chemical works with a yearly capacity of 6 million tonnes.

1985

THE BAI BANG PAPER MILL

THANH KHANH

At the end of 1980 the Bai Bang Paper Complex produced its first roll of paper, bearing the trade mark "Bai Bang Paper". This is a Swedish-financed and equipped project. One of its main features is the close association of the industrial process with the supply of raw materials, which includes large plantations of paper-pulp trees to be exploited according to a carefully drawn plan. The industrial process covers all the stages from planting the trees to packing the finished products.

More than four years ago, the first groups of workers of various trades—construction, concrete mixing, carpentry, masonry, assembly...—set up their makeshift houses at the Bai Bang construction site. At the same time, thousands of workers from six afforestation centres together with the populations of Bac Quang, Ham Yen, Phu Tho, Tuyen Quang etc., began clearing land to make way for nurseries for bodhi, eucalyptus and pine-trees which they planted over area covering more than 50.000 hectares. Most of the work was done by machines.

Under an agreement signed between the two governments, Sweden will sell raw materials to Vietnam for the

first few years of the mill's operation, until the local raw materials are available. The first batch of trees is nearing maturity. New trees will be planted to replace those felled, and this process will continue throughout the year and all over the plantations.

The complex is built beside Highway No. 2 at the foot of Mount. Elephant, some 20 kilometres from Viet Tri town. It includes an electric station and water supply system, a pulp factory, a paper mill, a caustic soda factory and an engineering workshop totalling 19 main buildings and more than 20 ancillary works. The Swedish SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency), the WP and the Skai have taken charge of transferring the equipment and drawing up the blueprints, and provide the expertise. The main body of the building force is the Viet Tri Building company. Assembly Plant No.3, which comes under the State Corporation of Assembly Works, deals with the installation of equipment, adjustments and tests.

The complex has been transferred to the Vietnamese Ministry of Light Industry and the first-phase operation began three weeks earlier than scheduled in the agreement signed over five months ago between the Swedish experts team, the Ministry of Light Industry and the contracting company. Meanwhile, around the plant roads are being widened and new bridges built in preparation for the large-scale exploitation of the surrounding forestry plantations.

The complex plans to produce 10,000 tonnes of paper of various kinds in 1981.

The production of the first roll of paper at Bai Bang crowns a major effort of thousands of Vietnamese workers who received invaluable assistance from Sweden. It is encouraging thousands of other workers engaged in afforestation for the complex and hundreds of assembly workers who have by now completed more than half of the second phase assembly job. Everything is being geared to the early completion of the whole complex which will then reach a capacity of 55,000 tonnes of paper per year

1981

THE PHA LAI POWER STATION

DUC THANG

Flowing in parallel lines from the north, the Thuong and Cau rivers join and mingle their waters at the boundary of Ha Bac and Hai Hung provinces, forming the Thai Binh river. Six kilometres downstream, the Thai Binh meets the Duong at a junction called Pha Lai 60 kilometres from Hanoi as the crow flies. It is there that the construction of a large power station is now in full swing, attracting the attention of the whole country.

A Turning-Point in the Electrification Programme

No power station has been built in Vietnam since 1975. The imbalance between the development of energy and the national economy is obvious. The Communist Party and Government of Vietnam have worked out a programme for the development of energy in the eighties. Parallel to oil exploration at Vung Tau, the installation of a grid to distribute electric current on a nationwide scale is under way, with the wholehearted assistance of the Soviet Union. This programme includes the construction of the hydro-electric stations at Hoa Binh in the North, Tri An in the South, and the thermal power station at Pha Lai.

Tang Van Phuc, Vice-Minister of Electrical Energy, is constantly present at Pha Lai to direct the construction work.

He said, "The Pha Lai thermal power station will play a decisive role in the formation of a powerful electric grid in the North. The main task in this plan is to build such large-scale works as the hydro-electric station at Hoa Binh and the thermal power station at Pha Lai to increase the capacity of the existing electrical system to install over 1,000 kilometres of high voltage carrier lines and to build a network of local transformers. This programme has been successfully carried out up to the present time. We have completed half the work of installing the carrier lines and transformers, and have blocked the flow of the Da river (in the construction of the Hoa Binh hydroelectric) station. At Pha Lai we are busily preparing for the commissioning of the first 10,000 kw turbo-generator which is at present the biggest of its kind in Vietnam being equal to one-fourth of the combined capacity of all the electric installations in the North (with its three turbo generators totalling a capacity of 150,000 kw, Uong Bi is at present the biggest thermal power station in the North). The operation of the first turbo-generator at Pha Lai will not only offset the shortage of electric current but help build other electric installations. As planned, Pha Lai has four 10,000 kw turbo-generators which will successively be put into operation between now and the end of 1986. Then the nationwide electric grid will be strengthened thanks to the construction of the Hoa Binh hydro-electric station, which will operate its first turbine early in 1988."

Difficulties and Advantages

Early in 1976, the first Soviet technical experts came to Pha Lai and, with the Vietnamese technicians, made preliminary investigations of the physical relief of the area. A plan of construction was adopted in Hanoi in July 1977.

The Pha Lai electric installation has a vantage situation as it lies at only some dozen kilometres from the mines of Quang Ninh province and is easily accessible for the transport of coal by rail and waterway; in addition its situation allows easy transmission of electric current to the main industrial centres in the North. Nevertheless, its construction faces great difficulties. The complicated natural features of the land call for careful survey before laying the foundations of the boiler and other buildings; auxiliary industrial bases are lacking in the region and all materials have to be carried from afar. While data were still collected for the blueprints of the project, working against time the Vietnamese workers flattened the hills and removed the small town of Pha Lai to make way for the electric installation, which occupies 128 hectares.

One of the pioneers at the construction site is Nguyen Ton, who is now Director of Building Company No. 18.

He said, "This hilly region, watered by calm rivers, was then deserted. Nature, though beautiful, was not tamed. The construction of this plant was far beyond our abilities. We have not previously been faced with such a huge task. The operation began on May 17, 1980. Building materials were lacking. Many of them had not yet arrived from the Soviet Union. The order was signed while the blueprints of the plan was not yet completed. The materials were not supplied in their correct order. But we had to start work, otherwise everything would have to be postponed to the end of 1982. We made slow progress in 1980 and the foundation of the main building was finished only at the end of that year."

The Pha Lai construction site is bustling with over 10,000 workers. The unit tackling the main work is Building Company No. 18 of the Ministry of Civil Construction

The assemblage of equipment and installation of the high voltage line linking Pha-Lai to the national grid are in the charge of the Ministry of Electrical Energy. The Ministry of Communications is responsible for the building of a railway line 10 kilometres long and a wharf to unload materials coming from Hai Phong. The slag depot and canal draining waste water were built by the Ministry of Water Conservancy. The army is also taking an active part in this construction; it is building the railway line linking the coal mines, fifty bridges and thirty big culverts. Twenty-three teams from five Ministries are working at Pha Lai. Independent work units are joined together by economic contracts. This is a new working method used for large construction projects. Over 100 managers and deputy-managers of enterprises work at the site, each assuming his own responsibility.

The construction of a 200-metre high chimney was one of the most important jobs. It was cast with 4,548 cubic metres of reinforced concrete. Without helicopters, a platform and a 13-tonne iron beam were raised to the top of the chimney by rudimentary means.

Victor Gratchev, head of the Soviet expert team working at Pha Lai, made the following remark :

"This chimney is a splendid achievement, built by Vietnamese workers under the guidance of Vietnamese engineers and with the assistance of Soviet engineers. With its height of 200 metres, it is not simple to construct even according to developed countries' technique, and was seldom seen anywhere fifteen years ago. Its construction at Pha Lai has been completed in five months and eleven days, while in the Soviet Union, a similar construction would require six months".

Thanks to the devoted assistance of the Soviet technicians, the Vietnamese workers have grown in number and maturity. Pha Lai is in fact an important testing ground for them.

Our Address : Pha Lai

Soviet assistance is playing a decisive role in the construction of the Pha Lai electric installation. All the main building materials are being shipped from Odessa (Soviet Union) to Hai Phong. At Odessa, a dock and a depot have been specially built to receive goods for Pha Lai. All the packages bear the address : "Socialist Republic of Vietnam : Pha Lai."

This is also the address of 310 Soviet experts, workers and technicians, working from dawn to dusk at this construction site at the side of Vietnamese workers and engineers even in the hottest days of the year.

All problems are solved and all decisions are taken in complete agreement between the responsible cadres. One of their meetings was held on July 27, 1983 with the attendance of representatives of the Ministry of Civil Construction and the Ministry of Electrical Energy from Hanoi, the head of the Soviet expert team Victor Gratchev, and the chief engineers and heads of departments concerned. The meeting reviewed the preparation for the testing of the auxiliary furnace - an important event at the construction site - on the result of which will depend the generating of electricity by the Pha Lai installation. Great joy prevailed among the workers as the furnace began to work. It was an occasion to check the technical data and the work entrusted to each responsible cadre :

"The pumping station had been given a final check is ready to start working."

"The safety valve has been put in order. A check is needed of the transformer switch-board."

"It is necessary to finish the installation of the fire control system; without this measure, no test is possible."

Many important resolutions were adopted. The meeting finished at 10 p.m.

On the afternoon of July 29, the whole construction site was eagerly awaiting the whirring of engines. Over ten thousand workers and soldiers hurriedly finished working and waited impatiently for the momentous event.

It was then I met Alexander Guminik. In charge of the supply of materials, he is the best-known Soviet worker at Pha Lai and is affectionately nicknamed Sasha. He is secretary of the Komsomol Youth Union.

He said, "It is very difficult to know who are the best Vietnamese workers as all of them have done their utmost to fulfil their duty. Their main concern is to finish their work ahead of time for turbo-generator No. 1 to operate on November 3, 1983 as scheduled. This feat is to greet the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Vietnam - Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, and the 66th anniversary of the October Revolution. We are driven forward by the slogan 'Light for Vietnam'."

And he smiled, his suntanned face brightened. His Ukrainian voice reminded me of his native land, known

for its well-watered fields and enough electricity for every village. Of course, there is still plenty of work to do in his country, but he has been sent here to help us in our difficult days.

He spoke to me confidentially, "Why am I well-known among the Vietnamese here? Perhaps because I am a youth representative and responsible for the organization of friendly matches between the Soviet and Vietnamese workers. The favourite sports here are football and volleyball. I must add that our chess players' team will compete with students from Hanoi Polytechnic. There are many shock youth here, as in my country. One of the famous Soviet songs is: 'My address - the Soviet Union' It says that. 'Our address is not the name of a street nor the number of a house, it is the Soviet Union.' We are ready to go anywhere duty calls. Now our address is Pha Lai."

* * *

At exactly 4.30 p.m. on July 29, 1983, Kieu Quan Bao, foreman in charge of the furnace, trembling with emotion, phoned the Director of the Construction Company: "We're ready!"

General Director Nguyen Ton looked at his watch. The man standing by him was Victor Gratchev. During a dozen years of service, he had witnessed many important events, but that day he could not conceal his joy.

Nguyen Ton gave the order to stoke up the furnace.

After a few minutes on tenterhooks, people shouted : "Smoke !" The cheer spread all over the construction yard mingling with the sound of firecrackers, sirens and the whirr of machines. Gratchev hugged Ton, their faces brightening, and the workers shook hands with one another amidst a thunder of "Hurrahs" mixed with "Bravo"!

Thin white smoke rose into the limpid sky in the glow of sunset. Gratchev took off his hat as if to greet the smoke. Standing beside him I saw in his eyes all the affection he has for my country.

1983

AN UNDER-DEVELOPED ENTERPRISE

DAO QUANG BINH

Duyen Hai is one among 30 handicraft co-operatives of Dong Da ward, Hanoi, situated in an alley of a populous workers' quarter. Actually, it does not yet have an office so we were received by manager Hoang Hung in his not so roomy house.

"Our co-operative produces nets for table-tennis, volleyball, football, and badminton. The members make them at home from the materials with which we supply them. My house serves as a meeting-room and a store as well."

With that the manager indicated the heaps of nets in the corners of the house and up in the garret — quite a sight! An elderly man who served in the army during both resistance wars against the French and the American, he retired for health reasons after the liberation of South Vietnam.

"I became a pensioner reluctantly," he confided, "and a worry preyed upon my mind. How could I be useful to society? So I hit upon the idea of participating in, or setting up, if possible, a handicraft co-operative to turn out more goods for society and also to raise my family income. This I discussed with my fellow-demobees, some of them wounded soldiers. In 1977 the General Department of Physical Culture and Sports placed an order with us for the goods we have been making ever since." The manager spread

out a fine-meshed table-tennis net and a badminton net the length of his room, both hand-woven from synthetic fibre.

"Our material is waste from several weaving-mills in the city and other provinces of the country. At first, the State supplied us with a quantity of fibre for us to weave nets and deliver them to the General Department. As the price of the material was high, so was the cost price of the products. Since we managed to use the waste of weaving-mills we have saved material for the State while reducing cost price and raising our co-op members' income."

Accompanying us were two foreign correspondents who gazed at the co-operative products and fingered the well-knit fibres as if these could not be products made from waste materials.

"Of course, we also have machines," explained the manager, smiling. "A kind of fibre-spinning machine we designed after a model conceived by a wounded soldier of ours. Apart from that, everything is hand-made."

Following the manager we went to the "co-operative workshop" which is in a private house. Here we saw only one wooden "machine" operated by hand in a corner of the room. Its inventor, maker and operator is a wounded soldier from the time of the resistance war against the French. The "machine" was so simple that in no time one could grasp the principle of its operation.

With such raw materials and tools one wonders how the Duyen Hai Co-operative has developed.

"In 1977," said the manager, "that is in the year our co-operative was established, we were seven and made 14,000 *dong* worth of goods. In 1978 we had 18 full time workers and 10 assistants turning out 104,000 *dong*. In 1979 the

number of full-time workers rose to 30 and that of assistants to over a hundred while the output value reached 217,000 *dong*. In 1980 we had 50 full-time workers and a greater number of assistants. I can't remember exactly without looking at the books, and the returns were 447,000 *dong*. Due to the lack of raw materials, in 1981 we employed only 33 full-time workers and over 200 assistants who made 374,000 *dong* worth of goods. Our nets are not only sold in Vietnam but are exported to several countries, members of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance. Recently, we received a sizable order from the Soviet Union."

One of the foreign correspondents made a remark: "This is an enterprise from underdevelopment!"

At that the co-operative manager, an ex-officer who had devoted most of his life to fighting, smiled:

"You are right. Our co-operative was born in an under-developed economy and has grown in that context. But the fact is that it is developing and helping the country to develop."

1982

THE NEW COAL MINE OF MONG DUONG

DAO QUANG THEP and
LE VIET CHUNG

The Quang Ninh coal mining area, which was called Hon Gay-Cam Pha mine under the French, is a strategic economic zone of Vietnam. It covers an area of 3,300 sq km., stretching along the Ha Long Bay and the Bai Tu Long Bay. The mine produces the world's best anthracite, which contains 90% of carbon and has a thermal energy of 8,500 calories, i.e. yielding 8,500 kilogram calories per kilo of coal. Its reserves are fairly large and production conditions are favourable. Long and thick seams of coal lying just beneath the earth's surface permit opencast mining. The proximity of the sea makes it easier for ships to come and get coal at Hon Gai and Cua Ong wharves, formerly Cam Pha wharves. The first miners who came to this mining area hardly exaggerated when they described it as a piece of *gio lua* (1): it suffices to remove the banana-leaf wrapping to be able to taste the delicious meat. Likewise, one had only to scratch away the thin layer of rock and earth to be able to hew the coal.

The French-run Coal Company of Tonkin (Charbonnages du Tonkin) amassed huge profits in the Quang Ninh coal area from the end of the last century until 1955, when

1 A Vietnamese delicacy made of ground lean pork wrapped in banana leaves into a large roll. The banana leaves are removed before the "gio lua" is served

French troops withdrew from the area under the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam. French capitalists had exploited nearly all the surface seams on mountain slopes and had started to dig pits to extract coal from underground seams. Since 1965, under the new regime, the Mong Duong mine management has been exploring coal production through deep mining. But the equipment left by the French was very rudimentary. It was not because French technology was lagging behind, but simply because the French owners preferred to rely on dirt cheap Vietnamese labour and lives. This not surprisingly led to a major mining disaster in which 72 miners were killed in a flooded gallery. The miserable life of the miners under the French was described by one of them as follows: "We were forced to get down into the pits to work for the boss. Dead, we would remain there; alive we had to send up coal to the surface before we were allowed to come out of the shaft."

In 1965, 10 years after the departure of the French colonialists, the Vietnamese Government started prospecting the area and preparations were made to re-activate the Mong Duong mine. At this juncture the Americans escalated their air war to the coal area and forced us to suspend work until 1969. In 1973 when prospecting work was over and construction work started, the Cam Pha Building and Assembling Company despatched a large part of its work force and equipment to Mong Duong to help set up the Mong Duong Building and Assembling Enterprise. About 2 million cu.m. of water were pumped from the former pits. A 150m-deep main shaft and a 108m-deep auxiliary shaft were dug. A gallery was also built 57.5 metres below sea level. Nearly 200,000 cu.m. of earth and rocks were brought to the surface.

"It took us 10 years' preparation," said Engineer Doan Van Kien "before we could produce the first waggonloads.

of coal in late 1982. We do not allow ourselves to be attracted by immediate interests, but always bear in mind the long-term interests of State and the miners. The Mong Duong coal mine will be exploited in a rational way and it is expected that it will produce 900,000 tonnes of clean coal per year for about 40 years. The miners will work in most favourable conditions. The Soviet Union has helped us in this large-scale project by supplying us with equipment and technique. But we will do our utmost to combine manual labour and mechanized means. For example, to dig pits we will make use of hoes and picks besides the drilling machines we get from our Soviet friends. For the Mong Duong mine is only one of the many projects built with Soviet aid, and we wish to make the most rational use of it."

Engineer Doan Van Kien is the manager of the Mong Duong Mine Building Company with a 1,600-strong labour force. The company boasts 20 engineers and many young workers, nearly half of them have been trained in fraternal socialist countries. The company has four pit-digging workshops, one electrical engineering workshop, two brigades of builders, one machine-installation brigade and one machine-operating brigade.

Kien took us on a tour of the mine. Two systems of windlasses operating at the main and auxiliary shafts take equipment, tools and people down and coal up. Next to the main shaft gate is a room-long structure protecting a system of conveyors extending from a hill top to the coal-separation plant. The crude coal extracted is loaded onto the conveyors and transported to the coal-separation plant. After cleaning the coal is loaded into waiting waggons. It is then carried by railway

to Cua Ong port for export or to other parts of the country. Thus, the production line is thoroughly mechanized.

We followed Kien and the head of the team of Soviet experts down into the pits. The elevator is a small railway carriage moved up and down by a system of electric windlasses. When we were barely 5 metres below the ground we saw water cascading, with the spray occasionally blown into the ear.

"Our great concern," said Kien, "is how to control water and prevent flooding, which often occurred under the French. We have installed a system of pumps with a 2,000 cu.m hour capacity. Besides the mains we have diesel generators standing by."

We went westward along the main tunnel, which was wide and well ventilated. A new track for mine cars had just been built, branching off in two directions. Twenty-four kilometres of gallery have been dug along the eastern and western coal seams, the deepest section 250 m below sea level. Construction work is still going on, together with the laying of the track and the power mains. In many places the walls, roofs and floors of the underground galleries are reinforced with concrete.

We arrived at the place where water pumps, ventilation fans, and power generators were installed. The installation of machines has been entrusted by the management to the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union Branch of the mine. Guided by the head of the electrical engineering workshop, the manager and Soviet chief expert inspected each machinery group and checked its operation.

"The youth constitutes the main force in our company," Doan Van Kien went on. "They have been playing the role of a shock force in the socialist emulation drive, especially in the one launched last year to mark the

60th anniversary of the founding of the USSR. Through the combined efforts of all of us and thanks to the wholehearted assistance of the Soviet experts, the Mong Duong mine was commissioned on schedule."

The Mong Duong mine is one of the key projects of our industry. Its immediate task is to help boost coal production, and its long-term task is to train cadres for the coal industry. The output of coal in Vietnam, 6.2 million tonnes in 1982, is to increase to 8.5 million tonnes by 1985.

"It is essential," Kien explained to us, "that we should attain the 8.5 million-tonne target by 1985. For the construction of the Pha Lai thermal power station will then have been completed, and this plant will consume 2.4 million tonnes of coal a year. True, higher output—up to 10 million tonnes per year—can be achieved if we get more capital, equipment and manpower. But the State Planning Commission has to cater for other branches, too, with a view to ensuring a balanced development of our national economy".

1983

THE DA NHIM HYDRO-ELECTRIC STATION

T. T. L

The Da Nhim hydro-electric station, one of the main power plants in the South, lies 250 kilometres northwest of Ho Chi Minh City as the crow flies.

It was built by the Japanese when South Vietnam was under US-puppet rule. The building lasted from 1961 to 1965. During the war, it only supplied a few megawatts to the Da Lat area. Only after the liberation of the South (30 April 1975) has it been put to full use to serve production and the people's life.

At the confluence of the Da Nhim and Krong Let rivers, a 1,400-metre long and 38-metre-high dam called Don Duong was built, which created a 156-million-cubic-metre reservoir.

A 5-kilometre long and 3-4 metre wide tunnel crosses the mountain and brings lake water to two 2,257 metre long pressure pipelines leading to four 40-MW turbines. The water then flows into the Cai river. In summer it helps irrigate tens of thousands of hectares of cotton land.

Before liberation both of the pipelines were damaged by atmospheric pressure, once in November 1967 and again in 1974.

Following liberation in 1975, the new administration decided to restore the power station. Of course, the Japanese

were contacted. The Sakai firm, however, said it would need 12 months to complete the work and asked for a very high price.

So we took matters into our own hands. Work started in December 1975 and immediately ran into many obstacles: sudden changes in the weather, rugged terrain, enemy mines and traps left from the war, not to mention the heavy damage suffered by the pipes...

The first thing to do was to clear the land of mines and traps, repair the roads, remove the damaged sections, prepare materials, muster technical cadres and skilled workers. Technical difficulties were numerous: One of them was the lack of the kind of special steel required by the Japanese designers. So we just use the steel we had and reinforced the pipes with girdles.

Another difficulty was to pressure-test the pipes. In 1964 the Japanese experts divided the pipes into sections by means of expandable joints. During the tests, a joint burst, followed by others along 120 metres of pipe. The gush of water under pressure killed a Japanese expert on the spot and sent his body into an abyss.

Obviously such a testing method had to be discarded. The cadres and workers in charge of the repair work racked their brains and eventually worked out one which ensured complete safety.

Since May 1976, all the four turbines (160 megawatts in all) of the Da Nhim hydro-electric station have been working without a hitch. In future, the station will be enlarged and its capacity increased.

1980

CONSTRUCTIONS IN THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

NGOC TUONG

Construction work actually began only after the end of the first Indochina War in 1954. In the liberated North of the country, it helped heal the wounds of war and build economic and public welfare facilities in towns and countryside, plains and highlands.

By late 1964, many plants and factories had been built. Industrial centres were taking shape. In the domain of energy, besides the enlargement of the Yen Phu power plan in Hanoi, whose output was doubled, new thermal power plants were built in Vinh, Ham Rong, Lao Cai, Uong Bi, Viet Tri..., not counting hydro-electric stations.

In the field of mechanical engineering, in addition to the restoration and enlargement of old plants, a modern plant was built in Hanoi, the No.1 Machine-tool Plant, the first of its kind in Vietnam.

The foundations of our chemical industry were laid with the construction of the Lam Thao superphosphate plant, the Lao Cai apatite mine, the Van Dien phosphate plant...

Light industry was equipped with weaving mills and glassware, rubber, soap, plywood, paper, cigarette, and canning factories. Great attention was paid to the restoration and extension of coal, tin, chromite and

apatite mines. The old cement works at Hai Phong was enlarged, and dozens of brick-and-tile kilns built.

In the cultural and social fields let us mention the building of Hanoi Polytechnic, the Institute of Water Conservancy, the colleges of agriculture, economics and finance, sports and physical education, together with a vast network of general-education schools mushrooming up all over the country. A vast health-care network, a truly omnipresent one, was also set up with a polyclinic in every province and a smaller one in each district, not counting health-care stations in the communes. Urban centres were built or enlarged. The size of Hanoi doubled compared with the days following liberation, and new blocks of flats appeared.

The war of destruction launched by the USA against North Vietnam in 1965 was to destroy almost all our material bases which had been built at the cost of immense efforts. Almost all provincial capitals and cities were hit, of which 12 were completely destroyed along with 51 other urban centres. Out of a total of 5,800 communes, 4,000 were attacked—All our industrial centres were razed to the ground. Civilian dwellings totalling more than five million metres of floorspace were knocked-down. More than 3,000 schools and 350 hospitals were bombed, and ten hospitals totally destroyed. In the South, as a result of the policy of rural “pacification” and forced “urbanization” of the rural population pursued by the American occupiers and their puppets the countryside was in a state of utter desolation.

The year 1975 saw the total liberation of the South, followed by national reunification in 1976. In implementation of the State plan, the Building Ministry focused its activities on the restoration and enlargement of thermal-power plants in Uong Bi, Vinh, Dong Hoi, Hue and Da

Nang; the hydro-electric plants of Thac Ba and Da Nhim, and the construction of the Pha Lai thermal power plant and the hydro-electric projects of Hoi Binh and Tri An.

In the food industry, a large number of factories were restored, expanded or built. Four weaving-mills were constructed in Nha Trang, Hanoi, Hue and Vinh together with plywood factories and sawmills in the Central Highlands, a pulp-and-paper mill in Bai Bang, a number of refrigerating plants, cement works in Bin Son and Hoang Thach, a diesel engine plant in Song Cong... All this went along with the restoration and enlargement of other enterprises of the national economy.

In the social and cultural fields, let us note the construction of the Hanoi Gynecology-Obstetrics Hospital, the Hanoi Pediatrics Hospital, the Dong Hoi Hospital, and many provincial and district hospitals throughout the country; the restoration and construction of 1,300 general-education and higher-education establishments; the building of housing totalling more than ten million square metres of floor space, etc., to mention only the main undertakings. In the countryside, brick houses have multiplied in 60% of the communes.

Compared with 1955 the production of building materials has increased considerably: cement (62 times), brick (56 times), sand and gravel (130 times). Prefab concrete factories turn out 250,000 square metres of housing elements each year; sawmills process nearly 80,000 cubic metres of timber each year. More and more vehicles and machines have become available to our building industry: 400-h.p. bulldozers, mechanical shovels of 4.3 cubic metres capacity, 130-tonne cranes... On many construction sites, work is 70–80% mechanized.

In order to fulfil its tasks, the building industry must have a competent staff. To train such personnel, there have been set up the Institute of Designing, the Institute of the Building Industry, the Building Science and Technique Institute and the Building Materials Institute. Two colleges of architecture, several schools of economic management, and many secondary vocational schools train thousands of technical agents and tens of thousands of skilled workers. The number of people working in the building industry has gone up from a mere 10,000 (including 24 architects and engineers) in 1955 to more than 350,000 including thousands of college-trained engineers and hundreds of doctors and candidate doctors of science. The maturity of our building industry is evidenced by projects requiring high technical qualifications such as the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, the Vietnam-Soviet Friendship Working People's Palace of Culture, the Bai Bang pulp-and-paper mill, the Pha Lai thermal power plant, the hydroelectric projects in Hoa Binh and Tri An, etc.

It must be emphasized that our building industry has benefited from the important assistance of the brother socialist countries, friendly countries and international organizations in the fulfilment of its tasks.

1985

EXPORT GOODS FROM THAI BINH

HUU THO

Following in the steps of major cities—Ho Chi Minh, Hanoi and Hai Phong—Thai Binh is taking the lead, among the plain and upland provinces, in average export value per capita as well as per working people. “To rely on one's work force and land and to advance from one's output of paddy, pigs and industrial crops” is the motto of the province. On the basis of increased productivity and yield in rice production, the province has put nearly 10,000 hectares, out of a total of 89,000, under industrial crops in order to provide materials for the manufacture of export goods.

Thai Binh's main exports include jute and such jute products as carpets, bags... besides rush mats and carpets, paprika, dried and powdered garlic, essential oils, bamboo and rattan items, pigs, poultry and feathers. There are also products from handicrafts and small industry such as leather gloves, badminton rackets, table-tennis bats.. At present, the value of export products made from local materials comes up to 60% of total.

As one of the most densely populated provinces in the country, Thai Binh has an abundant work force. Engaged in making goods for export are over 80,000 people, i.e. more than 10% of the social work force, not to speak of those who grow jute, rush, mulberry and other plants

which supply materials for making export products. More than half of the work force of Thuong Hien and Minh Lang communes is engaged in making goods for export. Thirty-seven out of thirty-nine, communes of Kien Xuong district have shops making goods for export.

The province now has two State-owned enterprises and over three hundred cooperatives turning out export items. It's interesting to note that of these three hundred cooperatives, only forty are working on their own, the rest, being appendages of agricultural cooperatives. Under the present circumstances, this structure makes for greater solidity. The reason is that so long as agriculture relies mainly on manual labour, it may be affected by both shortage and redundancy of manpower. With handicraft shops set up within agricultural co-ops, we can have sufficient work force for intensive farming during cultivation campaigns and make full use of redundant manpower during the slack periods to turn out export items. Thus, the co-op members' income is raised and its capital accumulation increased while a large volume of products is contributed to the State. This also leads to better local division of labour, a gradual shaping of an agro-industrial structure within the cooperatives, and lays the foundation for the speedy formation of an agro-industrial structure in the district—and this, without having to ask for food subsidies from the State as the country is facing difficulties in food supply.

Exports in order to finance imports: this is the road to self-reliance. Thai Binh's imports are, above all, chemical fertilizers for intensive farming, feed for livestock materials for making export goods, which creates jobs and valuable merchandise. In 1982, thanks to its exports, Thai Binh imported 15,000 tonnes of ureal fertilizer and

5,000 tonnes of other nitrogenous fertilizers. These were supplied to various districts which will pay back in rice in 1983. The quantity of nitrogenous fertilizer imported by the province thanks to its export proceeds was larger than that set aside for it by the State plan. Its exports have also made it possible for the province to import an additional 300,000 metres of cloth last year and 500,000 metres in the first half of this year, to help meet the clothing requirements of the people and to exchange for exportable items.

1983

3. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS

CURING DRUG ADDICTS IN HO CHI MINH CITY

Dr. TRUONG THIN

At Binh Trieu New Youth School, a centre for curing drug addicts in Ho Chi Minh City, we have carried out investigations on 2,500 people, and obtained the following results: 98.2% of the addicts are young people, but some of them took to drugs 45 years ago, and others, at the age of 12 or 13, and their arms are pocked with injection marks. Some addicts have made use of opium and morphine others, of LSD, marijuana, heroin sedatives or other stimulants.

These addicts usually contracted such social diseases as syphilis (27.2%) T.B (37%), malaria (30%) hypothyrepsia (30%), purulent scabies (61%). Most of them have committed delinquencies or crimes (theft: 100%, banditry: 50%, murder: 2%, drug trafficking: 40%, prostitution: 80% of the female addicts).

How can we solve the problem of drug addiction in the social and medical field? This was one of the primary

concerns of the authorities of Ho Chi Minh City, shortly after liberation. The main difficulty is how to cure all the hundred thousand addicts in the city in a short time. Even if all of them are gathered for treatment, every year, five thousand people can be cured at the most. Thus twenty years would be needed, so disease would never disappear if we relied only on therapy. To solve the problem, we have divided the addicts in two kinds most of them are treated at home, the others are taken in for treatment.

Those belonging to the first kind are addicts who are not so corrupted as to be harmful to society and can still work, although they are handicapped by their addiction. Accounting for 90%, they are cured in their own houses by social methods.

The second kind comprises corrupt addicts, who, apart from contracting social diseases, lived a perverted life harmful to order and security and easily fell into criminal practices. They account for 10% of the addicts and need to be concentrated for long treatment and reform.

The addicts in the first kind (about 90,000) are cured by society, while those belonging to the second kind (about 10,000) are gathered together for treatment. Ninety per cent of the patients treated by social methods have their disease cured by means of receiving smaller and smaller doses of drugs until complete recovery.

These methods prove to be effective thanks to the following measures:

1. The revolutionary authorities cut all sources of drug supply and the quantity consumed is visibly reduced.
2. The authorities and inhabitants in the city educate hooligans and step up the new life movement, so the drug addicts feel they are out of their element and consequently reduce the use of drugs.

3. The economic difficulties in post-war days have lowered the living standard of the people and compelled the addicts to curtail the consumption of drugs.

4. The drug addicts do not like to be "hospitalized" for a long-term transformation and make strenuous efforts to cure themselves.

The results of the drug reduction method are most heartening. The basic investigations made in the five inner districts of Ho Chi Minh City by the drug curing centre have revealed that there remain only 629 drug addicts in 73 wards of 583,717 inhabitants. Thus the number of addicts for the whole city is now about 3,000 (or 1.07%) compared with hundreds of thousands of addicts before liberation.

With regard to the inveterate addicts who are usually corrupt, we concentrate them for a long treatment and transformation. After being weaned from drugs, they are enabled by means of study and work to become useful to themselves, to their families and society. In this respect we have achieved two important results in therapy and education.

Formerly in Southern Vietnam and other countries the following methods were used to cure drug addiction:

1. Method of substitution: the addicts take Methadone, a light drug to replace opium or morphine.

2. Method of dose reduction: the addicts use opium in a smaller and smaller dose together with another sedative or anodyne.

3. Sleep cure: the addict is given an artificial sleep of 3-7 days by swallowing a strong dose of sleeping pills.

4. Method of violent cure: the addict is confined in a room and prevented from using drugs; he is left to torture

himself by violent convulsions and his craving for drugs vanishes gradually.

5. Electroshock: electricity is used to eliminate the convulsions of the addict.

6. Psycho-surgery of the frontal lobe of the brain: destruction of the region of the brain which gives the sensation of pleasure to drug addicts.

Those classical methods are time-consuming and most expensive, and are sometimes violent and harmful to the health of the addicts.

We are now applying a new method recognized by the health service, known by the name of Binh Trieu, the first centre for curing drug addicts in Ho Chi Minh City.

Almost all the addicts in Vietnam use opium, heroin or morphine, and we deal with these drugs only.

As far as the symptoms of the crisis are concerned, we divide them according to five functions of classical medicine:

1. Increase of movement: the patient fidgets, twists in convulsions; sometimes he suffers from insomnia, his heart beats precipitately; his blood pressure increases; he coughs, perspires profusely and feels nauseous; his genitals are excited.

2. Increase of temperature: the patient feels hot in his chest, and his face flushes while respiration is heavy because of the rush of blood; his tongue, eyes, nose are red; he has a headache and sometimes his lungs, stomach and ears bleed.

3. Increase of secretion: abundant secretion of urine, sweat, tears, mucus saliva; uncontrolled ejaculation of sperm, leucorrhoea (in women).

4. Reduction of assimilation: it causes dysentery, abundant secretion of sweat and urine, chest complaints, dyspnoea.

5. Weakness of the reserve function: the patient does not retain liquids; he is easily frightened, fears cold and water, has a poor memory. The symptoms are: abundant discharge of urine, ejaculation of semen, leucorrhoea, hair falling, ear buzzing, falling eyesight.

According to traditional medicine, the intensified functioning of the organ emitting heat is the root cause of the syndromes of drug addiction. This function is determined by two forces in an antagonistic partnership one emits heat and the other prevents the propagation of heat. As drug addiction is a chronic disease causing asthenia, the loss of heat does not show that the patient has an overabundant source of heat, but that the force checking its propagation is so weak that no control is possible.

These symptoms occur in the heart and kidneys which are related by two corresponding systems. At the touch of the hand, the sensitive points of these systems give a traumatic sensation.

In a word, drug addiction is the sequel of the weakening of the organ checking the emission of heat. If this organ is brought under control, the syndromes of drug addiction disappear; its functioning can be improved by acupuncture and medicines (Acupuncture is performed on the sensitive points of this organ).

Besides, the following methods are applied:

— Oriental gymnastics and profound respiration to improve the physical and mental strength of the addicts.

— Psychological treatment to dissipate the despair stored in the mind of the patient. Affection and respect for the dignity of the addict play an important role.

— Labour cure a precious method applied after the patient has recovered his health, to help him find joy in his work.

The results of these methods are most encouraging:

1. Acupuncture helps shorten the cure and quickly restores the strength of the patient: he has no more convulsions within a few minutes; all the crises disappear after four days, and the patient's health is improved after a week.

2. Acupuncture and oriental medicine are inoffensive methods.

3. Isolated from his surroundings, the patient will not easily have a relapse.

4. Economically speaking, these methods are not costly. In light cases, acupuncture and oriental gymnastics — profound respiration — will do. In more serious cases, the use of medicinal herbs is to be added.

After the cure, the addict will be retained for some time for study and for doing manual work. This difficult job will be tackled by the War Invalid and Social Affairs Service and the Youth Union at the New Youth School at Binh Trieu and the New Life Building Youth Schools at Xuyen Moc and Vinh An. Many addicts have mended their ways and led a useful and healthy life: they took part in the Shock Youth Brigade, joined the armed forces, work in State farms or return to their families. However there are cases of relapse, and energetic measures must be taken by the drug curing centre to keep an eye on the addicts after they have returned to normal life.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN PUBLIC HEALTH SINCE THE AUGUST 1945 REVOLUTION

Prof. *DANG HOI XUAN*,
Minister of Health

Since its founding on 2 September 1945, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (formerly the Democratic Republic of Vietnam) has scored brilliant achievements in public health.

1. We have built a **unified healthcare network** in the whole country down to the district and the grassroots, thus bringing health care to the masses.

This is the greatest achievement of our department.

By building a health-care network that covers the whole country down to the district, both rural and urban, laying emphasis on the prevention of diseases, combining modern medicine with traditional national medicine, acting upon the watch-word "Parallel efforts by the State and the people", launching a mass movement for completing the five major tasks in health care (building sanitary and anti-epidemic facilities; family planning; growing and using traditional medicinal herbs; looking after the people's health and controlling social diseases; and building a popular health network) our department has gradually brought health care to the masses.

Starting from scratch, we have built 5,000 health-care stations (including maternity wards) for communes, wards and factories in the North, and now we have more than

10,000 such stations in the whole country, serving cities and countryside, lowlands and highlands, and even the most distant islands. Our mode of action is to perform well medical and pharmaceutical work, disease prevention and treatment, emergency and obstetric care at the grassroots, while mobilizing the people to engage in emulation to complete the five above-mentioned tasks.

- Closely connected with the network at the grassroots is the district (rural and urban) network which covers the whole country and comprises hospitals and clinics, anti-epidemic and anti-malaria teams, pharmacies and traditional medicine rooms for examination and treatment (in the district), and polyclinics (in the city quarter).

The successes we have recorded in building a health-care network and launching a mass movement at the grassroots also constitute an encouraging achievement in implementing the policy of "looking after the initial health" of all citizens—a policy put forward by the World Health Organization as an objective to be attained in the year 2000 by all countries. This achievement was recognized by the review **World Health** of May 1978.

2. **Training health-care personnel**: Whereas in 1945 the total number of such personnel was barely 4,000 by now this figure has increased to 240,000, a 60-fold rise. The number of doctors in particular showed an increase of 349 times.

In 1945, we had only one physician for every 180,000 people. Now the figure is one physician (doctor and assistant doctor) for every thousand people.

We have 162 professors of medicine and pharmacy (not counting the 105 professors of military medicine); 228

doctors and candidate doctors of medicine and pharmacy; 1,976 specialist doctors and pharmacists.

3. Specialized medicine has made constant progress in order to serve popular medicine and help build a Vietnamese medicine that has attained international standards in many fields and won the prestige in the world.

The health system in cities and provinces has been constantly perfected. It now comprises polyclinics, specialized hospitals, institutes of traditional medicines, sanatoriums, and anti-epidemic stations, etc. Its tasks consist in building up and providing guidance for the district and grassroots network while solving their difficult problems. Its personnel comprise doctors of cadres with post-doctoral training while the number of cadres with a tertiary training for each city or province is around 300-400, even 1,000 in some cases.

The central health-care system has quickly developed. In 1974, we had ten research institutes. Now, the whole country has 28 institutes and branch institutes, and more than ten major polyclinics and specialized hospitals fitted with modern equipment. Our pharmaceutical trust includes many pharmaceutical works, companies and research institutes. We have six medical and pharmaceutical colleges, one school for managing cadres of health services and a regional branch of the school, both dispensing college-level and post-graduate training.

The above organization and structure of our health-care system bespeaks the line, orientation and objectives of our socialist health system, which lays emphasis on the struggle against epidemics, the prevention of contagious and social diseases, and closely relates such matters as sanitation, environmental hygiene and the keeping of health records to the examination, treatment and rehabilitation of patients.

It pays due attention to modern medical science while setting great store by traditional medicine, combining the two for the benefit of the patients and the progress of Vietnamese medicine as a whole.

During the past thirty years, our basic investigation and research works in medicine and pharmacy have been focused on the treatment of Vietnamese patients in the conditions and environment of Vietnam; on methods of disease prevention, diagnosis and treatment (by means of drugs and without recourse to drugs); on the use of modern and traditional drugs; on the health problems related to production, combat and the people's life—all aimed at serving the building and defence of our socialist homeland.

In the struggle against epidemics, and infectious and social diseases, we have managed to check dangerous epidemic outbreaks and lower the morbidity rate with regard to infectious and social diseases, malaria and tuberculosis in particular. We have given timely treatment to people suffering from current diseases and cured many difficult cases. Many seriously sick people, people struck with blindness, dumbness, deafness and paralysis, victims of accidents involving loss of limbs in a number of cases etc., have been successfully treated, returned to a normal life, again being able to participate in construction and national defence.

In the field of pharmacy, we have made great efforts in developing the supply of material medica and in producing, exporting, importing and distributing drugs in order to meet the ever-growing needs.

Thanks to the above-mentioned efforts we have contributed to protecting and improving the people's health: the mortality rate has been reduced by four times (20 times

with regard to women in childbirth and newborn babies, and the average life expectancy has been raised from 38 to 63.

4. The achievements of healthcare work in serving the wars of resistance

Over the past three decades we spent more than twenty years fighting against US imperialist aggression, and in recent years we have been resisting Chinese expansionist designs and actions. To serve our combat effort has become a sacred duty of health cadres toward the homeland, the people and the army. Our record in this field contains many achievements, but our outstanding contributions have been in the treatment of war injuries. Health cadres have thus directly contributed to the glorious successes of our people's heroic wars of resistance.

In order to cope with continual bombings, night and day, by US supersonic jet aircraft in the extremely barbaric air war of destruction against the North, we quickly gave training in surgery to large numbers of our health cadres, sent them to refresher courses and trained more of them, and strengthened the district and communal network that had been built in the years of peace. We organized mobile surgical teams which came to help the grassroots when the need arose; sent more cadres, equipment and medicines to the districts and the communes, as well as to the sector stations; gave training to all popular strata, especially to workers, students and young people in first-aid care and measures against chemical warfare; and vigorously developed Red Cross units and brigades of stretcher-bearers among the people. Thanks to those measures, proper first aid was given to all cases of war injuries at the grassroots: 80% of the victims were given emergency

treatment at the communal stations and almost all were treated at quarter and district stations. The mortality rate was reduced to a minimum.

In recent fighting against the wars of aggression by the Chinese expansionists on our southwestern and northern borders, health cadres have fulfilled their duties in serving the national defence effort.

Our health department has also fulfilled our internationalist duty with regard to Kampuchea and Laos, and all other nationalist countries.

1985

FAMILY PLANNING AND ITS PROSPECTS

ANH THU

As in most developing countries the large and fast-growing population in Vietnam has exerted great pressure on socio-economic development programmes. But unlike the case in many countries, the overriding concern here is not only to redistribute the population, organize effective migration, adjust the pace of urbanization and protect natural resources and the environment, but first and foremost to reduce the population growth rate.

The population growth rate in Vietnam has been very high over the past forty years. Since 1939, it has averaged about 3 per cent annually. In 1955-60, following the conclusion of the anti-French war of resistance, it jumped to 3.8 per cent. In the period from 1955 to 1977 the population of Vietnam grew from 25 to 50 million in spite of the anti-US war of resistance. Following are some results of a census conducted in 1975: In Ward 16, District 4 of Ho Chi Minh City, of the 1,253 women of child-bearing age two-thirds had from 6 to 10 children. In Hai Binh commune, Tinh Gia district, Thanh Hoa province, a commune of average size, 70% of the families had 7 and more children. In 1975, Binh Tri Thien province had 1.7 million inhabitants. From 1975 to 1980 more than 100,000 of its inhabitants went to other provinces under the programme of redistribution of the work force. Yet, due to the high

birth rate (3%) the population figure in 1980 was again 1.7 million.

By 1984, the population of Vietnam had grown to 58 million. Over the past forty years, the increase in food production has barely kept pace with population growth. The result has been a stable level of per capita food production, a high population density, and the shrinking of farmland. At present, Vietnam is the 13th most populous country in the world and is also among those with the lowest national income per head of population.

As early as 1962, the Vietnamese Government decided to enforce a programme of family planning. The programme was entrusted to the Health Ministry, assisted by the State Planning Commission, the Federation of Trade Unions, the Women's Union, the Fatherland Front... Policies aimed at encouraging birth control have been issued. Thanks to this, the population growth rate dropped to 2.4% in 1980 from 3.3% in 1970 and 3.8% in 1960.

However, this still falls far short of the demands of economic development. In August 1981, the Council of Ministers issued a new instruction regarding family planning, calling on each couple to have two children at most, with a view to bringing the rate of population growth down to 1.7% by the end of 1985. Birth-control targets are to be attained at all Government offices and production establishments. Each locality is to set a target for itself on the basis of the national target and its own concrete conditions. As a result, by 1984 the population growth rate had dropped to 2.2% throughout the country. Most encouragingly, some rural localities with a long record of fast population growth have obtained good results in birth control.

Lac Hong commune in My Van district, Hai Hung province, is a case in point. In this agricultural commune with a population of 4,211, each couple has only two or three children compared with the national average of five. The birth control programme has received warm response from the population. Few women marry before the age of 22 and most stop bearing children at the age of 30. Most couples are applying contraceptive measures. Users of contraceptive devices, apart from free medical care, also receive bonuses in paddy and other foods. These measures have concurred to bring the annual population growth rate at Lac Hong down to 1.6%.

Regrettably, however, there are not yet many places like Lac Hong. Nationwide, propaganda for family planning remains inadequate. A large section of the population still has mixed feelings about birth control, and doesn't know how to go about it. A survey shows that only about 30% of all married couples of child-bearing age are using contraceptives. The national population which stood at 30 million in 1960 will have risen to 60 million by mid-1985. On an average, a Vietnamese woman of child-bearing age still has four or more children, compared with six in 1960. In other words, more than twenty years after the birth-control programme started, the number of children per family has been reduced by only two while the total population has almost doubled. Although the birth rate in Vietnam is lower than the average in the Third World (2.3% compared with 3.1%), the mortality rate has been lowered thanks to progress in medical care and improvement in the social environment (0.7% compared with 1.1%) with the result that its population growth rate is higher than the Third-World average (2.2% compared to 2-2.7%). The present annual increase in the population is 1,300,000

which means a drop in per capita food production if 400,000 more tonnes of food is not produced each year.

Lowering the population growth rate is a prime concern of the Vietnamese Government. So far, this work has been entrusted to the health service. The latter, if left to itself, cannot cope with such a vast problem which involves many aspects of social life. Besides, investments have remained inadequate.

In April 1984, the Council of Ministers set up a National Population and Family Planning Commission, directly under its authority, which is to give a real thrust to the campaign. The Commission has ramifications in all provinces, cities and special sectors.

In recent years, a body of specialists in demography has gradually taken shape in Vietnam. Their reports and forecasts have attracted wide attention and received general approval. Scientists say that if the birth-control campaign should progress at the present rate there would be no hope of reducing the number of children per family to two by the end of this century and the population would have exceeded the 80 million mark by that date. They also point to the need of bringing the number of married couples using contraceptives from the present 30% to 70% within the next ten years. The birth rate should be so reduced that the population would stabilize at 75-80 million about the year 2000.

A more vigorous propaganda campaign should be launched so that family planning be accepted by the entire population. Since all young men have to do military service, family planning should also be a topic for education in the army. Demographic education at school, which began a few years ago, must be improved so that all young people will realize the vital importance of birth control

before they get married. More importantly still, Government policies should provide for more effective incentives in this regard.

..

Viewed against the results reaped so far and the target set for the year 2000, the battle to be fought in the remaining fifteen years of this century will not be an easy one. However, the crucial guarantee for its success lies in the fact that the Party and the Government have fully grasped the importance of the problem. Shortcomings in the conduct of the campaign are being overcome. The experience gained in countries with comparable conditions is being seriously studied. We have good reason to hope that the target set by Vietnam for the year 2000 in this regard will be reached.

1985

GENERAL EDUCATION IN THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

VIET CHUNG

Fifteen million! This is the total enrolment in infant schools and general-education schools (including so-called complementary classes for adult education) for this school year (1985-86), which began on 5 September last. If the enrolment figures at higher-education and secondary vocational-education establishments are added it is reckoned that one out of three Vietnamese is going to school at present. This fact is especially impressive if one recalls that before the August Revolution in 1945, 95% of the population were illiterate.

This result is the fruit of forty years of sustained efforts. Immediately after the Declaration of Independence on 2 September 1945, President Ho Chi Minh called illiteracy one of the three worst enemies of the revolutionary power (the other two being foreign aggression and hunger) to be fought and defeated at all costs. Indeed, he said, without proper education, one could neither defend the country effectively nor improve the people's living conditions.

In the whole country a vast anti-illiteracy campaign took place, in which all who could read and write were called upon to teach those who could not. Within a year, two million people were freed from illiteracy, and by 1949,

in the thick of the anti-French war of resistance, ten million people above the age of eight had learnt to read and write. By 1958, illiteracy had been eradicated in the North, and by 1978, three years after national reunification, it had been liquidated in the main throughout the country.

In 1954, following the liberation of the North, while the anti-illiteracy campaign continued, complementary (adult) education was begun, aimed at raising the cultural standards of cadres and workers. By 1965, 2.7 million adult learners had finished the first (primary) level of education; 380,000, the second (junior secondary) level; and 38,000, the third (senior secondary) level.

Before the Revolution, primary education was available only in the plain regions, but not in every district. In the whole country, there were only 16 junior secondary schools and three senior ones. Higher education was almost non-existent.

In the very first year of people's power, in 1945-46, we succeeded in organizing 4,900 primary schools with more than 280,000 pupils, and 29 secondary schools with 2,400 pupils. At present, the enrolment in our first-level (primary) schools is over eight million; in our second-level (junior secondary) schools more than three million; and in our third-level (senior secondary) schools 800,000. Compared with the colonial days, there was a 140-fold, 140-fold, and 1,200-fold increase, respectively.

At present, there are more than 12,000 basic general-education schools in all the communes, even the remotest ones, and 832 secondary schools in all districts. First-level education, comprising four classes, involves almost all children less than 15 years of age, and second-level education, comprising four more classes, is about to involve most adolescents. The development of secondary schools and

third-level complementary (adult) classes has led to the multiplication of universities and colleges and the emergence of a body of cadres and workers with sufficient scientific-technical knowledge to serve in the various socio-economic branches of activity. Special classes have been organized for children with special aptitudes. Children of revolutionary martyrs, orphans, and physically handicapped children receive special educational care. In the highlands, boarding schools are organized for children living in remote mountain hamlets.

Infant education was organized as early as 1954 after the return of peace accompanying the signing of the Geneva Agreements. By 1960, there were in the North 336 classes catering for 4,500 children. At present, there are more than 55,000 kindergartens where 1.6 million children are looked after and educated. The best conditions for the setting up of infant classes and schools are found in construction sites, factories, government offices, cities, and densely populated rural regions.

When the anti-US war of resistance ended victoriously in 1975, we took charge of education in South Vietnam, which had to be reorganized before being integrated into the national system. As happened in the North after 1954, we also had to combat illiteracy among the masses. By the end of a vast campaign dubbed "Cultural Light", in December 1978, 1.4 million people has learnt to read and write.

In view of the development of education, more teachers' schools have had to be set up, especially in the South. At present, there are in the whole country 114 such schools (8 colleges and 24 junior colleges) and a system of schools dispensing refresher courses to administrative cadres in education. The number and qualifications of teachers have increased continuously. Among the half-million or

so teachers at all levels, there are hundreds of doctors and candidate doctors of science and many full professors. Throughout the country a single socialist system of education prevails.

It must be said, however, that in face of the many requirements of the revolution a number of short comings still exist. The popularization of primary education has not been smooth sailing and a fairly large number of children have not gone through all four classes. Many adults, specially in the highlands and the Mekong delta, have relapsed into illiteracy. School enrolment is not well coordinated with the needs of the country's or the region's socio-economic development, the number of teachers and the educational facilities available. Complementary (adult) education is somewhat declining. The health condition of the school children calls for improvement. Education is still insufficiently bound up with social practice. The new batches of teachers are not quite up to standard. Insufficient appropriations of funds for education have resulted in an insufficient material-technical infrastructure.

The fundamental objective for our system of education is to form patriotic people devoted to the socialist ideal, morally and technically capable of performing a profession or trade that conforms to the division of labour in the country and the regions, and to the national level of socio-economic development over a given period.

Under the present circumstances, the development of education will benefit from cooperation between the State and the people.

1985

HIGHER EDUCATION AND SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

HOANG XUAN TUY

Vice-Minister of Higher Education
and Secondary Vocational Education

Since the August 1945 Revolution, we have built a modern system of higher education and secondary vocational education in the very difficult conditions of a developing country having to face continuous wars of aggression.

In 1942, the peak year under French colonial rule, the number of students in higher-education and secondary vocational education establishments in the whole of Indochina was only more than 1,000; 200 of them French. Almost all university professors were French (about 50). The French language was the only one used in higher education.

Now, throughout the country, there are 93 universities, colleges and junior colleges. This network extends from the Northern mountain regions to the Central Highlands, from the Red River delta to the Cuu Long (Mekong) River delta, with 18,720 teachers. Of them, 9.1 per cent hold degrees of doctor and candidate doctor of science, 384 have been appointed full professors, and 4,800 are women. There are 115,600 students doing in 200 college departments in which 1,700 subjects are taught; and 267

secondary vocational schools with 11,000 teachers and 100,000 students, not counting a system of equivalent schools under the Ministry of National Defence and the Interior Ministry.

Parallel with the regular system, there are 82 establishments for in-service education with an enrolment equal to 25 per cent of that of the full-time system. More than 25,000 cadres have graduated from college-level courses and nearly 40,000 from secondary-vocational courses provided by those establishments.

Parallel with post-graduate training abroad, in 1976, we started post-graduate courses at home. So far, 49 establishments are providing post-graduate training in 132 branches of science for 700 students, and 310 cadres have earned the degree of candidate-doctor of science. In all, we have trained more than 1,000,000 specialists, 5,000 doctors and candidate-doctors of science, 350,000 university-level cadres (of whom 24 per cent are women and 3.5 per cent come from ethnic minorities) and 670,000 cadres having gone through secondary vocational schools. They now hold jobs in both central organs and grassroots production establishments. They work hard and have made worthy contributions to the revolutionary cause.

During their development, both higher education and secondary vocational education have faithfully followed the educational principles of our Party and overcome countless difficulties. Teachers and students have joined people outside the schools in production and combat and made full use of their potentialities. The results of researches undertaken in universities have been fruitfully applied by production establishments and army units. Since 1980, our universities have undertaken more than 200 projects of scientific research in 72 key State-level

programmes, 292 ministry-level projects and 1,680 university-level projects. Of these projects, 20 per cent are on social sciences, 15 per cent on educational sciences and the rest on industry, agriculture, the improvement of life and national defence. Universities have signed more than 300 contracts on scientific and technical subjects with production establishments, to a total value of 200 million dong. Tens of contracts have brought about good economic results for both sides. Thanks to these activities, our universities have overcome part of their material difficulties, improved the living conditions of teachers and students, and contributed to improving the quality of education.

In 1981, our system of higher education and secondary vocational education was awarded a Ho Chi Minh Order by our Party and State.

However, looking back over the development of our higher education and secondary vocational education system, we still note a number of shortcomings, and the quality and results of education are still insufficient.

The body of trained scientists and technicians is still small considering the size of our country, and they are not yet fruitfully employed. Training and employment are not well coordinated and so there has been a reduction of efficiency.

Our universities and secondary vocational schools are bound up with our two strategic tasks of building socialism and defending the country. Our aim is to train, for both the present and the future, young people ready and able to work for national building, overcome poverty and backwardness and contribute to the defence of our socialist homeland.

The resolution of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee on educational reform in 1979 pointed out, "To train a vast body of managerial, scientific, technical and professional cadres, that is well-balanced and well-coordinated with regard to skills, standards and categories, and congruent with our plans for economic and cultural development. These cadres must have good political and professional qualities which will enable them to step by step resolve the scientific, technical and managerial problems they will encounter in the practical conditions of our country."

In order to fulfil these objectives, in the coming years, our system of higher education and secondary vocational education must concentrate on these tasks:

To perfect and concretize the objectives and structure of our educational system, reform its content and methods in order to train a highly diversified body of cadres with a large variety of skills, standards and categories, for the whole country and for each branch and each locality, and to satisfy the educational needs of the masses. At the same time, to train a body of competent and dependable scientific and technical cadres with good political qualities. To re-arrange the system of schools, classes, and training institutions in response to the demands for socio-economic development. To pay equal attention to both the full-time and the in-service systems of education and give them a supple and flexible structure. Our universities will train two kinds of cadres: one with ability for practical work, and the other with capacity for fundamental research.

Our universities and secondary vocational schools have to fulfil two functions: training cadres and conducting scientific-technical researches; and working to produce

material and spiritual wealth for society. With their achievements in scientific research, our universities will contribute worthily to fulfilling the economic-social objectives of our country, thereby overcoming some of their own difficulties and raising the quality and effectiveness of education. The potentialities of universities and secondary vocational schools being enormous, it is necessary for the various branches, localities and production establishments to provide them with more capital, materials and equipment for them to make full use of these potentialities. Because the most important and decisive factor is the quality of the teachers and management personnel we must raise their standards. The body of teachers at present still lacks balance, and their professional standards are not uniform. The management personnel are not sufficiently well-trained and well-prepared for their jobs. So an important task is to conduct control and selection according to set standards, take measures to upgrade them, and adopt appropriate policies towards them, especially the highly-skilled ones.

Investments for education are of great importance, so the State should work out a policy of rational investments, regarding them as investments for production. Better training of higher education and secondary vocational education teachers would contribute to raising social productivity, heightening the quality of production and economic efficiency. Besides State investments, we must get investments from various branches, localities, and production establishments; from revenues accruing from the work of teachers and students; and from international co-operation and assistance.

We must strongly improve the organization and management of higher education and secondary vocational education according to the resolutions of the Party Central Committee especially that of its 8th Plenum: re-examine policies affected by bureaucratic centralism, egalitarianism, and subsidy-based management and abolish them if need be; build a mechanism of management governed by democratic centralism and carry out a system of management aimed at achieving efficiency in training, scientific research, and production.

1985

4. REGIONAL EFFORTS

DA NANG REVISITED

NGUYEN KHAC VIEN

Thus, here I was back in Da Nang, for the third time. The first time had been exactly fifty years ago, in 1934. I have no precise remembrance of the town, except for the name it bore then: Tourane. The word sounded strange to Vietnamese ears—vaguely French. For it had been ceded by Vietnamese kings to France in 1888 and was thus legally French territory. On the maps of the time, that French name on Vietnamese land was for us a wound in the flesh.

The second time had been in 1975, after the liberation of the South. In fact, what struck me on that occasion was less the town, which had remained intact, than the surrounding countryside.

I could not believe my eyes. In Europe during the Second World War as in the North of our country, I had seen cities destroyed, houses and monuments knocked down. But here not only the houses were in ruins but

nature itself, trees, fields, grass, had been burnt down, uprooted, crippled. All verdure had disappeared. The earth was dotted with scars, craters, ulcers, and bore only dry, stunted vegetation.

A couplet came to my mind:

*Misfortune struck at mounts and rivers.
Even trees and grass suffered. (1)*

The author of these lines, who lived in the 18th century, could not imagine that two hundred years later, his verses which bore a purely symbolic meaning, were to reflect concrete reality. Standing on Marble Mount, a beauty spot of Da Nang, I could assess the misfortune. In the place of the screens of filao pines that used to protect villages and fields from the invasion of sand blown inland by the winds from the Pacific, one now saw only an immense expanse of white sand littered with charred debris. I could imagine the unchecked sands now progressing into the hinterland to conquer fields and villages. Barren hillslopes, villages levelled to the ground, not a single orchard intact, ricefields abandoned, a littoral completely deprived of its protective green belt—such were the things the war had brought to this martyr province.

I perfectly understood what had happened.

Quang Nam province, of which Da Nang is the capital like all other provinces south of the 17th parallel down to Nha Trang, had been bitterly contested for twenty years by the two sides in the war. Unable to recapture the villages, the American Command had for years poured napalm and

1. In Vietnamese:
*Phong trần đến cả sơn lâm
Tang thương đến cả cây cỏ này*

defoliant on the countryside. Thousands of heavy guns bombarded day and night not only the houses but every single bush. For years, American and Saigon troops had mopped, swept, and searched the province. Every village had been burnt to the ground, razed, levelled repeatedly, for the people and their armed forces had clung to their home places, evacuating them when forced to, but coming back as soon as enemy pressure slackened.

The figures given me by the provincial authorities made my head swim: 70,000 hectares of cropland abandoned, out of 127,000; 200,000 dead and 137,000 wounded; if the trees knocked down or set afire were counted, their numbers would run into the millions. Even a journalist then living in the American-controlled zone could not help lamenting:

"A ruined province, a desert. Temples and pagodas wrecked, not a single old tree to evoke nostalgia in the mind of a native who had gone away, not a single peaceful stretch of river for the fisherfolk." (Pham Phu Huu).

The war had spared the city of Da Nang, at least on the material plane. In the social field, it was another story. In March 1965, the first American troops had landed in large numbers and soon turned Da Nang into a colossal military base. Warships berthed in the port and the main airfield could accommodate giant B.52 bombers. Da Nang became a major American base in the Pacific, from which columns of troops were sent to sweep the hinterland and planes took off to bomb the North or the liberated areas of the Centre. Barracks, airfields, arms and fuel depots

military harbour, giant radars strung out along dozens of kilometres.

A document of that time thus described life in the city:

"The population had risen to 470,955 (50,000 in 1956) not counting the 300,000 displaced persons living in camps on the outskirts. The villages having been destroyed, and fields and orchards abandoned, it was the presence of American troops which provided a living to the whole population... But this prosperity, alas, was only an artificial one. The hour of truth, truly atrocious, struck with the departure of the American troops." (1)

In 1975, in the last months of the war, many more refugees had come not only from Quang Nam but also from Thua Thien and Quang Tri further north, which brought the total number of the population in and around Da Nang to about a million.

What to do about this population which had until then managed to eke out their livelihood only thanks to the American military presence? The puppet troops alone numbered more than a hundred thousand, not counting their families. Besides, the war was not finished even after the complete liberation of the country: each day, several people were killed or wounded when fields and orchards had to be freed of the mines and put back under cultivation. Famine threatened: the local paddy production was only 110 kilograms per head of population that year. Urgent relief was sent from the North, but it was evident that one could not live on relief for ever.

1. Quoted from a report on a development project for Da Nang drafted in 1973 by the administration of that time following the withdrawal of American forces.

When for the third time I came to Da Nang, early this year, it was not without apprehension. Eight years had passed since liberation: what had become of them, the exsanguinated province of Quang Nam and the chaotic city of Da Nang?

As our car descended the Cloud Pass and penetrated into Quang Nam, a weight was lifted off my chest and a kind of delight came into my heart. That land, that had been so badly maimed, that had been murdered, was now well alive: the fields were lush and green, abundant foliage covered the orchards, bamboo hedges girded the villages while the plumes of young coconut palms swayed in the wind. Along the sandy beaches, young filao pines were growing vigorously and a green belt was taking shape against invasion by sand. The roads were lined by rows of eucalyptus. The scene was to be the same along the highway that led me down the central part of the country, from Da Nang to Qui Nhon.

Never had I felt so acutely that green is truly the colour of hope: the green of ricefields, of bamboo, of orchards where grow in abundance guava, avocado, jackfruit and carambola trees—trees which are so dear to Vietnamese hearts. In that sea of verdure, how beautiful were the red and pink spots formed by the roofs of newly-built houses! Exactly the same landscape we had known in the northern countryside following the first war of resistance and the land reform.

From my own experience I knew how much effort, how much labour one had to put in, how many casualties the population had had to suffer for this renaissance to take place. The sound of water flowing in a dense network of irrigation channels, sluices and pumping stations here and there, new varieties of rice which had replaced the

old ones, some rare tractors, and a few words I overheard in conversations among peasants—*khoan* (contract system), degree of soil acidity, two-way exchanges, NN.8 rice strains... all that confirmed to me that life here had indeed changed. The people of Quang Nam had not been satisfied with rebuilding their destroyed villages and reviving their murdered lands, they had built new things. It was because they saw new prospects for their own life and that of their children that they had found the necessary courage and energy to cause their villages and fields to come back to life.

* * *

For its part, the city of Da Nang offered to my eyes a less brightly coloured but no less reassuring view. What contrast with the chaos inherited from the former regime and the war!

A large number of refugees have gone back to their villages or left to build new ones in the sparsely inhabited hinterland. There now remain about 350,000 for whom the popular administration has found various jobs. The two main markets, Cho Han and Cho Con, are crowded with sellers and buyers, many coming from the surrounding countryside and even from neighbouring provinces. It can be seen that handicrafts and small industry have made great strides since liberation, locally-made products competing hard with imported goods. Unlike Ho Chi Minh City, coffee-houses and popular restaurants here are not crowded during working hours, and the streets are full only after the end of office and factory hours. Da Nang is a working city. The industrial quarter of Hoa Khanh, planned in 1973 by the former administration to try to give

some vitality to the city after the departure of the American troops, is now under construction. A mechanical engineering plant equipped with machines mostly coming from the socialist countries undertakes repairs for the whole province and turns out spare parts and farming tools. It has designed an apparatus for spinning silk which will soon be mass-produced and used in the whole country. People who took refuge in Saigon during the war had built in the Bay Hien quarter of that city a textile complex; they have now come back with their looms and spindles settled in Hoa Khanh where they have formed a State-private enterprise and given a strong fillip to local industry.

During the war Da Nang was a purely military city which depended on neighbouring Hue for higher education. Now new colleges have been built: the Polytechnic, the Medical College, the Teachers' College. Other educational projects are under way. There is a beautiful park with a lake, built by the population on the site of a former refuse dump.

Man does not live by rice alone: the city officials are well aware of it. As soon as the city was liberated, they set about launching a vast cultural movement and in many quarters clubs have been installed in former pagodas or garages where talks are held and where young, and also old, people assemble to sing and stage plays. There, trades and crafts are taught: basketwork, embroidery, small mechanical or electrical repairs. In Hai Chau, near Cho Con market, I once came to a monthly talk of the local club. Retired public employees, housewives... the atmosphere was a relaxed one, and the speaker talked about various subjects. Fairly late in the night, I walked back home with a friend. "Only a few years ago," he said to me "I would not have taken the risk of going out at night in

this part of the city. I would have lost my wallet, if not my life. The place was full of thugs."

The fact was that like all other southern cities in the days of American occupation, Da Nang's population was for a large part composed of lumpen elements, unemployed drug addicts, prostitutes... On this point even the worst opponents of the new regime would recognize that social life has become a great deal more wholesome in spite of the still precarious economic situation.

•••

In a shop I had a bit of small talk with the owner. A burly man, he told me that he had been an officer in Thieu's army and, one thing leading up to another, he overcame his reticence and talked to me about his life. In 1962, he was twenty and had failed to pass his *baccalauréat*. So he went to the officers' school in Da Lat from which he graduated in 1965. It was the year in which American troops were massively sent to South Vietnam.

"I had no political opinion," he said. "I was simply fascinated by American power. I thought I was on the right side. I fought, but without asking myself for whose sake and why. I was lucky: I received no serious wound and advanced in rank rapidly. I was about to be promoted colonel when our troops disbanded in 1975. I was then in Quang Tri. When I made my way to Da Nang it was too late: I could not, with my family, board one of those ships which were leaving the port to escape. For several days, I was utterly confused. What to do with a wife and two children? Some colleagues tried to recruit me into a clandestine organization. I told myself: they were crazy; with

540,000 American and a million Saigon troops it had been impossible to get the better of the revolutionary forces; so what's the good of carrying on? For several days then, I found myself in a mental muddle. Finally, I decided to have a try. Perhaps, I told myself, the Communists were telling the truth when they said they would be lenient. I presented myself before the new authorities with my C.V. They sent me to a re-education camp."

"What did you do in the camp?"

"Manual labour, raising crops and animals to improve our diet, some carpentry and brick-laying to put our dwellings in good repair. I was strong enough to do all this without fatigue. There were study sessions in which they tried to inculcate in us various things; sometimes we had discussions with the instructor. Within myself, I accepted some ideas and rejected others, but I took care not to be too outspoken. I knew they were watching me."

"Why should they?"

"Because they wanted to know if I had really changed my opinions and if, once released, I would not continue my counter-revolutionary activities. I knew quite well that for them, I was a traitor to the homeland and a war criminal. My only preoccupation was to get out of the camp in order to live with my family."

"How long did you stay in the camp?"

"Six years."

"A bit long, wasn't it?"

"It's always too long when one is deprived of one's freedom. But when I think of it, I believe that I got off cheap. Just think: I actively fought the revolutionary forces for ten years I don't know how many people were killed, how many houses were burnt down by the units.

under my command. I have to put myself in those people's shoes. They need time to have more trust in me."

"What do you think about the future?"

"I run a small business. It allows me mostly to give a good education to my children. I believe that they will become honest people with a good occupation and an honourable place in society. I have no personal ambitions."

If you take a walk in Da Nang, don't be surprised if you should discover a former officer of the Saigon army in a shopkeeper, a craftsman, a mechanic, etc. In this enormous military base, there were about 100,000 officers and men of the Saigon army. While some officers may still nurture dreams of revenge, counting on a joint intervention by China and the USA, which they still believe to be all-powerful, the great majority of them have come back to a working life thinking of the future of their children, like that shop-owner I talked to.

Quang Nam is now a province where people work. Da Nang, a city where people work. After twenty-one years of American presence, the province and the city have returned to their age-old traditions and their inhabitants have gradually recovered that quality for which they were renowned: to be hard-working, tenacious people that nothing can discourage. With a large hinterland, excellent port and air communications installations, and such a well-tempered population, Da Nang is certain to become the great economic and cultural city of central Vietnam in the years ahead.

THE OLD AND THE NEW IN HOI AN

HUU NGOC

Polish architect K. Kwiatkowski, who took part in conservation work in Hoi An, said: "It is lucky that history has left us this old city quarter, an architectural relic of great artistic richness. We have the responsibility of preserving and developing the historical and cultural values contained in every bit of wall, every motif of roof decoration and in the smallest architectural details, in order to transmit them to future generations."

Hoi An, a small town of 65,000 souls, is located on the left bank of the Thu Bon river, five kilometres from the sea and 30 kilometres south of the port city of Da Nang, almost halfway between Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. While waiting for the symposium on Old Hoi An to begin, we tried to get acquainted with the things and people of new Hoi An.

A French friend of mine once said to me in Paris: "To get an idea of the mood of the people in a strange city, it is enough to observe people's reactions when you ask them your way." I think that she would be happy to wander with me in the streets and lanes of Hoi An. All the people I approached, young, old, men, women, showed me the way with a smile. A child of seven or eight even walked with me part of the way. When I entered a house and asked for permission to see the interior, I was warmly

received and offered a cup of tea. My stay was too short for me to give an opinion on the character of the townsfolk, but I had the impression that they had retained their traditional kindness:

*Tinyland, dense population,
Yet Hoi An neither lacks human warmth,
Nor verdure and flowers,*

(Folk song)

Hoi An is like an old watercolour with delicate tones. Stretching on the bank of a clear river, the town shows a harmonious arrangement of small streets around a so-called Japanese bridge, a profusion of old-style houses, huts on stilts, pagodas, temples, seats of associations of Chinese communities, together with surrounding canals, paddy fields and groves of bamboos, banyans, filao pines and coconut palms. On the river, the confused movement of boats and junks decorated with magic signs, eyes of marine monsters and the like, and helms in the form of buffalo horns, evokes the naval battles of ancient times. Many a European visitor must have left with regret a house discovered by chance during a walk, unwilling to cast off the spell of "a 17th-century atmosphere". At sunset, Nguyen Thai Hoc street with its dented lines of old houses, uneven roadway, narrow pavements, and pedestrians looks as though it had come straight out of the archives of history. The Hoi An authorities intend to ban motorists from this old quarter, as is done in Louvain-la-Neuve, for instance. It is a miracle that after thirty years of war and a century of colonial urbanization, Hoi An still keeps its architectural integrity.

Under American occupation, between 1954 and 1975, the town itself with its three districts did not suffer much,

but the suburban countryside with its seven rural communes was terribly ravaged. Mr. Hong, who had lost his left arm in the war of resistance, showed me around Kim Bong commune, of which he was the chief administrator. "Ten years ago," he said, "all these houses, jackfruit trees, banana trees, palms, papayas, ricefields did not exist. This was a "white" zone covered with weeds and brambles, and completely deserted. Here the enemy launched numberless mopping-up operations. Since liberation in 1975, people have gradually come back. Although the removal of unexploded mines cost tens of lives, life has eventually triumphed over death." Thanks to the application of new farming techniques, the construction of three pumping-stations for irrigating 800 ha of paddy-fields, and the building of 6 km of dykes, the output of food grain increased from 3,255 tonnes in 1977 to 4,707 tonnes in 1984. Kim Bong, whose joiners and cabinet-makers were employed in the old days in the building of Royal Palaces in Hue, is trying to revive this craft. Wooden statues and curios are made in a State-run workshop on the other bank of the Thu Bon. Four months ago the commune started a cooperative building wooden boats with an initial capital of 35,000 *dong*, the 25 pioneer members have now achieved a turnover of 780,000 *dong*, each earning between 2,400 and 2,500 *dong* on average per month.

Other handicrafts have also been revived or started. In the Minh An quarter, the tourist will note the clicking of shuttles and the humming of little circular saws cutting rushes for making blinds. In a pagoda, young girls are making wool carpets in the shadow of Buddha. In 1984, revenue brought in by handicrafts and small industry increased six times compared with 1976. These activities together with fishing and the harvesting of sea-swallow nests, cinnamon bark, sandalwood, pepper, etc., feed

exports whose value is still standing at a modest annual average of 30 roubles, dollars per capita.

Four centuries ago, Hoi An was an international commercial port called Faifo. It was a unique centre of acculturation in Vietnam where Vietnamese, Cham, Japanese, Chinese, Portugese and other elements from Southeast Asia and from the West mingled. Hence the interest presented by the *Symposium on Hoi An* (Faifo) held on 23-24 July 1985, some months after the Ministry of Culture decided to include the town in the list of national monuments to be conserved. About 40 researchers from various universities and research centres of Vietnam presented some 30 papers. Some titles suffice to illustrate the variety of topics dealt with; *Archaeological Finds in Trung Phuong* (Quang Van Cay, History Museum); *Hoi An's Place Among the Old Cities of Vietnam* (Nguyen Duy Hinh, Institute of Archaeology); *The Cham Port of Hoi An* (Tran Quoc Vuong, Hanoi University); *The City Port of Hoi An in Time and Space* (Do Bang, Hue University); *Could Hoi An Have Beent he Cradle of Romanized Vietnamese Writing at the Beginning of the 17th Century* (Le Van Hao, Cultural Service of Hue); *Origins of a Number of Geographical Terms and the Role of Hoi An* (Nguyen Ngoc Chung, Hospital of Traditional Medicine in Hoi An); *The Artistic Value of Hoi An* (Vu Trung Luong, Insitute of Fine Arts); *Old Houses in Hanoi and in Hoi An* (Dao Hung, Vietnamese Studies); *Hoi An, a Treasure of Ancient Urban Architecture* (K. Kwiatkowski, Polish architect).

1985

EXPERIENCE IN ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT IN HAI PHONG PORT

Over the past few years, Hai Phong has recorded important progress. In *agriculture* following the application of the product-based contract system, good harvests have been brought in for three consecutive years. In 1983, rice yields surpassed six metric tons per hectare; food grain deliveries to the State were 1.5 times those of 1982; the city's food requirements were 70% met by local production. The regional *industry* was undergoing recovery and began an upward swing, overfulfilling its targets by 33.3% in 1983 and surpassing 1982 figures by 55%. *Import and export trade* developed vigorously and effectively served production, construction and the people's life. *Goods circulation and distribution* gradually improved.

Only a few years ago, in 1979-80, like many other regions in the country, Hai Phong was beset with difficulties. Relying heavily as it did on subsidies from the central administration and confining itself to the role of distributor of centrally-supplied food and equipment, the city's economy was immediately affected as soon as the central sources dried up. Being a mostly industrial city, its agriculture accounting for only one-fourth of the total value of agro-industrial production, the city could not meet its population's food requirements. Starting in 1979, the city had to cope with machinations of Beijing-instigated elements among its 30,000 ethnic Chinese: many technicians and

skilled workers among them were induced to leave the country and go to China. Repeated natural calamities struck the region. In consequence of the above facts, the city's economy seriously suffered. The power supply was cut by 27%; that of materials and equipment by half; hence the value of output by industry, small industry and handicrafts declined by nearly 50%. In 1980, the output of food grain was only about 190,00 metric tons; in 1979 rice yield was only a little more than four metric tons per hectare; from more than five tonnes per hectare in 1976. The supply of various locally-produced commodities, including farm products and industrial goods, decreased by 20-30%. The life of workers and public employees ran into great difficulties.

Creating the Initial Capital

The above situation put the city leaders before an alternative: either continuing to rely on subsidies from the central administration, or seeking to exploit local possibilities, overcome weaknesses and shortcomings, and progress. They opted for the second solution.

The first problem they encountered was to secure an initial capital. So far there had been no accumulation due to deficient production, which had failed even to meet the normal needs. The City Party Committee realized that the weakest link was the circulation and distribution of goods.

So it began by reorganizing and upgrading two branches of activity: home trade and foreign trade.

So far the city's foreign trade department had confined its role to managing red tape and putting out materials to producers. It now became a trust of import-export trading companies which was entrusted with the task of building a foreign-exchange fund through export,

both on the spot (to tourists, seamen, etc) and to appropriate foreign markets. Each year this trust was to earn from 1.5 to 3 million dollars, and the value of goods handled was estimated at nearly half a billion *dong*.

The home-trade department quickly checked and took over the goods sent by the higher echelon and expanded its sales network down to rural commune and city ward, thus achieving a quick turnover and accumulating funds.

A trading company was also organized by the city and entrusted with the special task of business cooperation with the southern provinces. Within 18 months it brought in 18,000 tonnes of commodities and achieved a turnover of 200 million *dong*, eventually contributing 20 million *dong* to the city's initial capital.

Along with commercial activities, the city administration mobilized contributions from the people. The city banking and financial departments applied a series of fiscal, price, monetary, and savings policies aimed at mustering idle money among the people. Various popular movements for encouragement to savings, initiated by mass organizations with such watchwords as "For the future of our children" "For old age", etc., brought the city 100 million *dong* in 1981, 224 million in 1983 and are expected to reach the figure of 300 million in 1984.

Special emphasis was put on quick rotation of funds according to the formula: Vietnamese capital - Export goods - Foreign exchange - Consumer goods - Vietnamese capital. The city's initial fund underwent a turnover rate of 6-7 times annually.

Then making another step forward, the city built a special wharf and a special fleet of cargo boats serving its business activities. One of those boats, the 1,200-tonnes *Song Cam* paid for itself within fourteen months.

The initial fund, created through import-export trade, had a beneficial influence on production and led to more and more export goods being turned out. From the mere collection of such items as animal bones, fowl feathers, etc., the city made better and better use of manufacturing units, both State and collective, supplied them with materials and equipment, made them produce either export goods or consumer goods for home consumption which could be exchanged for exportable farm and sea products.

Special areas were set aside for the planting of exportable crops in An Hai, Kien An and Do Son districts. In 1983, these districts exported 2,730 metric tons of cabbage to the Soviet Union.

To sum up, in the initial period Hai Phong tried to boost exports to create an initial capital.

Making Investments for a Rational Economic Structure

The problem was: where to invest in order to attain the highest economic efficiency?

The city leaders thought: no industrialization is possible without enough food to eat, no development of the regional economy is possible if hundreds of thousands of tonnes of food are still to be supplied from the central authorities each year.

And so in spite of the relatively small proportion of agriculture in total agro-industrial production, about one-fourth, agriculture is considered to be the forefront of the battle, at least until the average yield of food grain attains eight metric tons per hectare per year. This guideline is in accordance with the spirit of the resolution adopted at the Fifth Party Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam which holds that efforts should be concentrated on

agricultural development in the 1981-85 Five Year Plan and in the 1980's. Facts show that far from making light of industry, the objective pursued by this policy is the future development of industry itself.

Because the funds available are limited, the city decides that investments should be concentrated on key areas, first of all for a boost to intensive cultivation and the improvement of soils affected by salinity and acidity.

One shortcoming of the city's water conservation network was the lack of fresh-water supply works. The city has invested more than 100 million *dong* in the building of five major sluice-gates, which bring fresh water to more than 40,000 hectares of land in five districts: Kien An, Do Son, Tien Lang, Vinh Bao, and Thuy Nguyen. Nearly 30 more pumping-stations have been built, raising their total number to more than 100. Fifty kilometres of high-voltage power-transmission lines and nearly 100 kilometres of low-voltage lines have been laid, 35 transformer stations built, together with 50 bridges and 25 culverts. Canals have been dredged and thousands of kilometres of ditches dug.

Thanks to additional investments in seed selection and multiplication, the cooperatives have received new strains of rice: they have a short period of growth, give high yields and are suited to the local acid and saline soils.

In 1983, the city spent some foreign exchange importing 5,000 tonnes of urea, hundreds of kilograms of vegetable seeds, more than 1,000 insecticide-sprayers and some special pesticides. These have been sold on credit to cooperatives and individual farmers.

Hai Phong is situated on the coast. The area of arable land per head of population is small, only about 400 square metres. Hence the necessity of gaining ground on the sea-

To this task of great importance the city has devoted much investment. Nearly 600 kilometres of sea dykes have been consolidated, more than ten additional kilometres built. Within the space of three years, three coastal land-building sites have been opened (along Highway 14, in Vinh Quang, in Dinh Vu) totalling nearly ten thousand hectares, more than the area of an average district in the North.

In consequence of those efforts, the output of rice has become more stable and shows an upward trend.

Rural construction is to go hand in hand with agricultural development. The city has made investments for the making of cement and bricks and given assistance to the peasants in building brick-and-tile houses, a long-cherished dream of theirs. In the space of three years, as many houses built of those materials have been erected as in the period from 1960 to 1980. In many communes in Thuy Nguyen district, all houses are now made of brick and tile. A number of other districts have also set this target for themselves, to be achieved by 1985.

While reorganizing industry, small industry and handicrafts, the city administration directs the efforts in those fields toward serving agriculture, regarding the 700,000 peasants in the rural suburbs as a market for industrial goods. The city joins efforts with a number of centrally-run enterprises located in the city in producing industrial goods, building materials in particular, to be exchanged for the farmers' products.

Following that orientation, in 1983 alone, the city imported 8,000 tonnes of bituminous coal for the local cement works, 200 tonnes of tinplate for the local enamelware factory, 90 special machines for the local shoe-making factory for export whose output would increase by 78% in

1984 and account for one-sixth of total output value of the regional industry.

The imported materials have kept many enterprises in stable operation and provided jobs for tens of thousands of people.

Appropriate attention has been paid to the strengthening of the infrastructure. Resolutions have been adopted by the City Party Committee on construction, transport and communications, urban planning, improvement of the city power grid. In the last four years, key arteries have been built or enlarged and two major bridges have been completed ahead of schedule: those of Cau Rao and Cau Niem. Two other major undertakings, with total investments of 200 million *dong*, are under way: An Duong Bridge and the Cai Tat dam.

Welfare, cultural, sport and physical culture work have also been stepped up. A television relay station and a photo-transmission system have been imported with money from the foreign-exchange fund.

State Control Over the Bulk of Goods and Money

While giving a strong boost to production, the State must also hold control over the bulk of goods and money.

The city fund of consumer goods is fed partly by the central administration, partly by the city foreign-trade department and partly by on-the-spot buying or exchange operations.

This fund is disposed of in three ways: one part is reserved for workers, public employees and members of the armed forces, who buy them at low "supply prices"; one part is sold to them at fixed but higher prices, to cover the costs; the third part is retailed on the market to the population at large, at prices slightly lower than those on the free market, in order to keep private traders in check.

Besides drawing on the existing sources of industrial and handicraft goods, the city imports necessities not available in the country, and uses part of the goods available to it in exchanges with local farmers or other provinces. To this end, the various districts are authorized to establish their own trading companies and expand exchanges with other regions. These companies have succeeded in supplying the city with large quantities of goods which have helped in stabilizing the living conditions of workers and public employees. This has proved to be a good way to replenish the fund of consumer goods, and other regions in the country may turn this experience to account.

Control over the food supply gets top priority. The essential measure is to promote the people's right to collective mastery. The city calls on the farmers to sell to the State the surplus food they have left after the compulsory deliveries. The financial, banking and trading departments receive instructions to establish close ties with the districts and meet the local people's needs in buying and selling operations.

The above measures have led to State control over the bulk of goods especially food, and money. While in former years, the city procured only 20,000 metric tons of food grain annually, this figure increased to 32,000 tons in 1981, 65,000 tons in 1982 and more than 100,000 tons in 1983, and the amount of food supplied by the central administration has been reduced by 70,000 tons annually.

Once its control firmly established on the bulk of goods, the city ordered its trading, food supply and financial departments to reorganize the system of circulation and distribution with a view to taking the goods directly to the consumers. The necessity is driven home to cadres and the population at large of restoring order in goods circulation and distribution, strengthening market control,

punishing speculators and saboteurs, and stamping out negative activities among cadres of the trading services.

The retail network of the State trade has been expanded to the grassroots. Counters have been set up in districts. Rationed necessities are supplied to workers and public employees at fixed prices and on schedule. This helps not only in stabilizing their living conditions but also in strengthening market management.

Goods circulation and distribution, however, remains a critical front in the present circumstances. The organized market is still not strong enough. The unorganized market still creates great price disturbances. Owing to deficient control, most of the goods circulating in the "free market" come in fact from the State sector.

At present there remain in Hai Phong no fewer than 19,000 small traders nearly 10,000 of them in the rural areas. The City Party Committee has adopted a resolution on the reform of the market and the reorganization of small traders. Their aim is to shift 90% of them over to productive or service activities in 1984-85, or they may become agents of the State trade. To this end, materials have been imported to give jobs for them, the State trade has been strengthened and market management improved.

The progress recorded by Hai Phong and the experiments it has undertaken are being studied by other regions. Of course the city has been hampered by limitations common to the whole country, which is starting from small-scale production. A number of State policies and guidelines have not been amended in time to accord with the new situation. But like Hai Phong, other regions in the country are experimenting with various measures aimed at working out appropriate managerial mechanisms

DISTRIBUTION AND CIRCULATION OF GOODS IN LONG AN

Long An is a province in the Mekong Delta whose capital, Tan An, lies 50 km from Ho Chi Minh City. The population is 1.1 million, of whom 25,000 are workers and public employees (if the employees of the central administration living in the province and for whom supplies have to be ensured by the provincial administration are included, this figure will be about 50,000). The main industrial products are textiles (five million metres of fabric per year) and sugar. Long An is a mainly agricultural province, producing mostly food grain, pork, freshwater fish, vegetables and fruit, poultry, eggs... Before steps were taken to improve the situation, the provincial economy was beset with difficulties: food grain production in 1980 was only 436,000 tonnes. Industrial crops were erratic. Animal husbandry was seriously declining. The socialist sector of the provincial economy accounted for 7-8% in agriculture, 36% in industry, 22% in retail trade... Market management was slack and the larger part of farm products were controlled by private traders in the province and neighbouring provinces. The administrative style of conducting business in the State sector made nuisances for public employees and the people at large and led to such evils as bribery, collusion, theft, abuses, etc. Many difficulties plagued the life of workers, public employees, and members of the armed forces. Hundreds of employees

in the health and educational services and the building and textile industries handed in their resignation.

On 27 June 1980 the standing bureau of the Long An Party Committee adopted a resolution on State purchases of food grain, farm products and food-stuffs. On 13 October 1980, the provincial People's Committee issued a directive on State purchases of farm products and goods circulation and distribution. These two documents were aimed at solving this key problem in goods circulation and distribution, viz. control by the State over the bulk of goods and money on the basis of readjusting buying and selling prices, giving a fillip to production, and stabilizing the living conditions of cadres in particular and the population in general.

The following measures have been applied in implementation of the above resolution and directive. Some initial results have been recorded. Naturally, much remains to be done but Long An believes that it has chosen a fundamentally correct orientation.

1. Improving the Ways to Buy and Sell, and the Relationships with the Peasants

To gain control over the bulk of goods means, in an agricultural province like Long An, to control the sources of food grain and other foodstuffs and farm produces made by the peasants. To this end the State must:

- Have industrial goods, mainly means of production, to exchange with the peasants for farm produces;

- Improve the ways to buy from and sell to the peasants, in order to eliminate the interference of private traders.

With regard to the means of production, in 1982, Long An, thanks to its export earnings, was able to import

15,000 tonnes of urea, together with materials to produce insecticides and a certain quantity of fuels and lubricants.

With regard to the mode of conducting business with the farmers, two ways have been worked out :

The main one is the two-way contract, whereby the State would provide an advance supply of means of production (no consumer goods).

With regard to the surpluses left to the peasants after delivery to the State, the latter would pay a mutually agreed price, a bit lower than the market price, in cash.

With regard to pork and sugarcane, because no supply of materials can be as yet provided to the farmers by the State, such as animal feed, fertilizers, and food grain for growers of industrial crops, the usual commercial way is the normal mode of business.

The above measures have yielded encouraging initial results. The State has been able to purchase increasing quantities of food grain, foodstuffs and other farm produces :

Item	1981 (tonnes)	1982 (tonnes)	1983 (tonnes)
Food grain	71,200	77,700	118,000
Pork	2,700	4,440	6,800
Groundnuts	1,003	1,150	1,960
Jute	230	829	1,070
Sugar (produced by handicraft methods)	2,900	2,700	7,000

The proportion of good purchased by the State compared with that controlled by private traders has also increased ; here is the relationship between the two :

Item	1980 (total=100)	1981 (total=100)	1982 (total=100)	1983 (total=100)
Food grain	51/66	55/15	42/58	50/50
Pork	22/77	31/69	41/59	51/49

2. Improving the Distribution of Consumer Goods ; Better Market Management ; Abolition of Ration Tickets

With regard to prices, the provincial authorities decided first to readjust buying prices of farm produces and improve the distribution of materials and commodities ; next to readjust other prices and strive to establish *unified prices* ; step by step abolish the system of administrative subsidies and shift to the socialist mode of enterprise and economic accounting. However, the system of unified prices is applied only in relations between the State sector and other sectors ; within the State sector, the system of prices as established by the central authorities is to be observed. The reason is because the economy of Long An is dependent upon the goods supplied by the central authorities.

With regard to State employees, goods are no longer supplied in kind ; instead they receive money compensations for price differentials, and efforts are made to allow them to get all the supplies they are entitled to.

The means of production, technical materials and other industrial goods are supplied to State-run enterprises and government departments according to the procedure and the prices established by the centre. Medicines and exercise books for school pupils are distributed through the health-care and educational networks at prices established by the centre.

With regard to consumer goods and building materials handed over to the province by the various central departments (for exchanges with the peasants for food grain, and other foodstuffs and farm produces), these will be entrusted to the provincial trade service, put in a retail-commodity fund, and sold to the people in both town and countryside at unified prices to be established by the province for a given period.

Naturally, the above step could only be taken as market management gradually improved and the private traders underwent socialist transformation.

Owing to the proximity of Ho Chi Minh City and such thriving business centres of western Nam Bo as My Tho, Vinh Long and Can Tho, the job of managing the free market, managing, reforming and utilizing private traders in the province, and preventing traders from other cities and provinces from infiltrating into Long An and causing economic disturbances there is a very complicated and difficult undertaking.

At present, in Long An private trading has in the main been abolished with regard to such commodities as food grain, pork, sugarcane, and agricultural means of production. The provincial trading service is trying to expand its activities in such fields as fresh-water fish, vegetables, and fruit, firewood, and step by step abolish private trading there. This aim can be attained due to the extension of buying-and-selling cooperatives to the countryside, which has led to direct contacts between the State Trade and the peasants, and ever better control by the former of the goods produced by the latter. The network of State retail stores has also been expanded in town and countryside, and prices have been fixed with greater flexibility according to market fluctuations.

Thanks to better distribution of materials and consumer goods, better market management, and systematic reform of private traders, the provincial authorities have been able to purchase ever more goods, hence to gain control over the bulk of goods. They have also gained ever better control of the money in circulation owing to the improvement in the financial and monetary situation.

Thanks to better control over the money, the State has been able to grant more credit. While in 1980, State loans totalled only 266 million *long*, this figure had increased fourteenfold in 1983. Savings deposits have also progressed. Due to the relative abundance of goods supply, the money paid out to compensate for price differentials is almost immediately retrieved by the State bank. The amount of cash in circulation is not excessive and does not have a bad influence on prices. Over the past three years the provincial budget has been well-balanced. Both revenues and expenditures have increased and there has always been a budget surplus. Revenues from the State sector in 1983 had increased seven times from 1980. Revenues from the collective economy and individual economy in 1983 had increased fourteenfold from 1980. Starting in 1983, the province has enforced the two newly-promulgated decrees on agricultural tax and industrial-commercial taxes. The district now has its own budget and many districts have been able to balance their budgets due to increased revenues.

Another success recorded has been the abolition of ration tickets, and consequently of much nuisance for salaried people. Each year, hundreds of thousands of *long* are saved in the printing of ration tickets and other red tape; the number of cadres having to occupy themselves with the management of ration tickets has been greatly

reduced ; much time is saved in queueing, waiting in line, and other time-consuming procedures. This means also doing away with discriminatory treatment between the cadres and the population and between cadres of various categories, and with such negative activities as trafficking in ration tickets, theft, abuses, collusion, giving short weight, arrogance towards the population, etc.

Owing to better control over farm produces, over the past three years, Long An has fulfilled all targets in supplying goods to the centre. With regard to food grain in particular, in 1983, the target was overfulfilled by 26%. The amount delivered to the centre was equal to 88% of the total amount bought in the province and to the total quantity delivered to the centre over the four years 1979-83.

Since 1980, Long An has unfailingly fulfilled its export targets, both those set by the centre and those set by the province for itself. In 1983, the total value of exports was four times that of 1980. Foreign-exchange earnings had increased six times.

However, on the financial side, the province still fails to collect large amounts of tax arrears, mostly turnover tax, forestry tax and fishing tax. Besides, revenues from the State economic sector are still modest owing to poor management of State enterprises.

Another positive feature is the visible reduction in the number of private traders. There remain in the province practically no trading capitalists. As for the medium and small traders, they have registered with the authorities and are given guidance on the correct way to do business. Markets in towns and districts have been reorganized,

3. The Successful Transformation of Private Traders and Improvement of Market Management Have Been Due to the Consolidation and Expansion of the Network of Socialist Trade

One may say that the consolidation and expansion of socialist trade is the essential lever used in the improvement of market management and the reform of private traders. Along with improving the ways to buy from and sell to the peasants and the State's relations with them, the provincial administration has decided to rapidly develop the State Trade's network and buying-and-selling cooperatives everywhere in the province, in both town and countryside. In each of the eleven district centres, there are a district trading company, a department store, a buying-and-selling cooperative and a materials-and-equipment company. In each of the 145 communes, there is a buying-and-selling cooperative, together with a total of 396 counters of the State Trade. Of the above 145 co-ops, 115 are entrusted with buying farm produces from the peasants on behalf of the State Trade. Each district trading company has a large number of shops and counters within the district. The district buying-and-selling cooperatives have expanded their business activities to the whole province and even to neighbouring provinces in order to supply communal co-ops with goods.

The province has test-organized trading companies specialized in sugarcane, jute, pineapple, vegetable oils, which will be active in areas planted with industrial crops.

4. Gradual Improvement of the Living Conditions of Cadres, Workers and Public Employees

The improvement in goods circulation and distribution, better market management, and the development of socialist

trade have provided Long An province with favourable conditions to gradually improve the living conditions of workers, public employees and members of the armed forces of the province. The solution of this problem hinges on the existence of an abundant fund of commodities for retail sales. At present the province's fund of consumer goods comprises supplies from the centre, goods imported by the province through the foreign-trade channels of the centre, and goods obtained through exchanges with other provinces. This unified fund is divided into two parts. One includes the necessities reserved for supply to workers and public employees, such as food grain and other foodstuffs, and a number of industrial goods. The other part comprises goods to be retailed on the market and sold to the population at large in both town and countryside. Sales are made the usual commercial way, at prices which are the same for both the cadres and the population. For the workers and public employees, however, compensation are given for price differentials with regard to eight items (in addition to rice) for which they are entitled to "supply prices" (lower than the market prices).

In this way, worker and public employees are free to buy these goods or abstain from buying all or some; they are free to select the goods they want, and the quality they need. This procedure is well liked by the people concerned and in itself is a major improvement in their living conditions.

With regard to rice, it is sold in two ways: a worker or public employee may choose to buy his entire ration and pay the "supply price"; or he may choose to buy only the quantity he wants on the market and pay the normal retail price, but then he will be entitled to compensation for the price differential calculated upon his

whole ration. This procedure has allowed the province to have a surplus of 3,000 tonnes of rice this year. This rice is retailed on the market and has contributed to maintaining price stability.

In short, in Long An nine items are sold to workers and public employees in quantities determined by the centre, at prices which allow the province to do away with State subsidies, compensations being given to the people concerned for the price differentials. A minimum guarantee is thus ensured for the workers, public employees and members of the armed forces with regard to their real salaries and wages. There is no system of supply of goods in kind to them. Likewise there is no other allowance besides the ones included in the normal salaries and wages throughout the country. With regard to goods other than the necessities mentioned above, workers and public employees are to buy them on the free market if they wish, and will receive no compensation whatever.

If allowances given by the centre and compensations given by the province are included, the income of a worker or public employee in Long An in 1983 had increased threefold from 1980. However, this increase still fails to catch up with the increase in prices on the free market.

* *

From the efforts to improve goods circulation and distribution in Long An over the past three years, these lessons may be drawn:

One must give a strong push to agricultural production by supplying the farmers with enough technical materials. One must gain control over the farm produces grown by

the peasants through the network of socialist trade and buying-and-selling cooperatives, eliminate the disturbances created by private traders, and manage the market well. The State Trade, with the assistance of the buying-and-selling cooperatives, must control the sources of goods: farm produces, handicraft and industrial goods, export items. This, in addition to well-organized retail sales, will allow the State to control the bulk of the money in circulation. Thanks to control over goods and money, the State will be in a position to guarantee real salaries and wages for workers, public employees and members of the armed forces, and gradually improve their living conditions and those of the people at large.

1984

HO CHI MINH CITY AND THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION (*)

At the Third Congress (second round) of the Ho Chi Minh City Party Organization, Vo Van Kiet, member of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers and President of the State Planning Commission, delivered, in his capacity as ex-secretary of the City Party Committee, an important speech, large excerpts of which are published below:

Economic Changes in the Eighties

New prospects have opened up for our economy which, despite great difficulties, has recorded initial results from 1980 to 1983.

A review of the last months of 1980 makes it possible for us to accurately assess the great efforts we have made to overcome obstacles which at first had seemed insurmountable.

What was the situation of our economy at the beginning of 1981?

— Our food production did not meet the needs of the population.

— In 1980, our industrial output, clearly in decline, was only 87% of the 1978 figure.

— Exports accounted for only 27% of the value of imports.

— The granting of State subsidies according to the bureaucratic method of management had disastrous economic and social consequences.

— The toiling masses experienced insuperable difficulties in their daily life, which badly affected their production work.

While the wounds of the American war were not yet entirely healed, we had to cope with two new wars on our southwestern and northern frontiers. Early in this decade, the international situation imposed on our national economy heavy restrictions due to unexpected price fluctuations in the world which caused a sensible reduction of our sources of foreign currencies. Working hand in glove with the American imperialists, the Beijing rulers practised against our country an active policy of economic embargo and sabotage.

However, thanks to our efforts, to the general line and economic line charted at the 4th National Congress of our Party and confirmed at the 5th Congress, an initial change has been wrought in our economy, chiefly in food production. In this field, despite unfavourable weather conditions, limited investments, insufficient and irregular supplies and inadequate economic measures, for three successive years (1980–1982) our food production was boosted. In 1983, for the first time, we have not had to import food. Meanwhile, our industrial output (handicrafts included) has recorded a yearly increase of 11.5%. The living conditions of our peasants, who make up the majority of the population, have been stabilized and improved. The daily life of our workers in regions enjoying relatively stable conditions of production has become less difficult.

These initial results confirm the correctness of the economic orientation adopted by the 6th Plenum of the Party Central Committee in 1979.

The new measures of economic management advocated by our Party and State have stimulated the workers' enthusiasm, their dynamism and their spirit of collective mastery and self-reliance in various branches, sectors and regions, simultaneously with a better use of the assistance and cooperation of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, friendly countries and international organizations. The aim is to utilize our many possibilities in land, manpower, skills and other potentials.

The new economic orientation, well assimilated and strictly applied by our city and the other provinces in the region, has given rise to a new way of thinking and a new style of work, and has had a positive influence on socio-economic development.

Nevertheless, our economy is still beset by great difficulties and suffers from many weaknesses and shortcomings with regard to labour efficiency, product quality, productivity and product marketing.

Despite substantial progress, we must make still greater efforts to produce food—a major problem—both for human consumption and for animal husbandry and for building up reserves in prevision of natural calamities.

On the whole, our industrial production still leaves much to be desired, its slow development has hampered the progress of our economy and agriculture.

The circulation and distribution of goods are serious problems requiring urgent solutions to ward off their baleful influence on industrial and agricultural development and on the gradual stabilization of the people's living conditions.

Agricultural Potentialities of the Region

The present period is particularly important for us.

Proceeding from the results obtained these last few years, we must study the socio-economic strategy of our Party and work with might and main to bring about a turning-point, so as to obtain, from 1990 onwards, a fundamental change in our economy and secure socio-economic stability while laying the basis and preparing the forces necessary for socialist industrialization in the next decade.

The region under review holds a particular place, due chiefly to the fact that the Mekong delta, an integral part of it, is the essential centre for food production of the whole country. In order to get an annual national production of 450 kilograms of food grain per capita, enough to meet the needs of the population and the requirements of animal husbandry, and build up food reserves, it must, in the seven years to come, at least double its present rice production, that is, produce 15 million tonnes of paddy yearly by the end of this decade. This is possible by the application on a large scale of scientific and technical achievements, the practice of intensive culture, the clearing of new lands, and chiefly the multiplication of crops. This last measure is potentially the most important, the coefficient of soil utilization being at present only less than 1 for the Mekong Delta, as against 2 in the Red River Delta.

Parallel with the acceleration of food production, we must develop industrial crops. This is a strategic orientation.

In the historical conditions of our country, the primitive accumulation necessary for socialist industrialization must begin with agriculture and light industry. This agriculture

can only be a diversified agriculture, a polyculture. Whatever may be its importance, rice can only play a "basic" role, that of a prop for industrialization, for socialist construction cannot be achieved with monoculture. The specific natural conditions of our country give industrial crops a choice place.

Rubber, coconut, palm oil, coffee, jute, sugarcane, tobacco, soya, groundnuts, fruit trees, cinnamon, rice seed, medicinal plants, etc., are important resources and will provide us with the foreign exchange needed for the import of steel, fuels, machines, complete equipment, and materials. We can say that industrial crops, both perennial and annual, make up the material and technical basis of our socialist industrialization. That is why their development is one of the decisive tasks of industrialization which must be carried out through "cooperation between the central and regional levels and between the State and the population" through the cooperation and integration of various provinces, through the redistribution, both local and national, of our work-force and the reorganization of production at district level.

The targets are:

— *Rubber*: 800,000 — 1,000,000 hectares (500,000 hectares in the eastern provinces of Nam Bo): .

— *Coconut*: 700,000 hectares and 100 million trees (500,000 hectares and 65 million trees in the Mekong delta), against 33,000 hectares and 10.5 million trees at present, or a respective increase of 840 and 600% in the seven years to come. The areas under coconut palms and oil palms will thus total one million hectares:

— *Jute*: 100,000 hectares in 1985 in the Mekong delta and 500,000 hectares in 1990, to be grown in connection with

rice, in the floating rice-growing areas of the Long Xuyen quadrangle and other regions in the delta;

— *Sugarcane*: 500,000 hectares in 1990, mainly in the eastern provinces of Nam Bo and the Mekong Delta, yielding annually 2 million tonnes of raw sugar (average yield: 50 tonnes of sugarcane per hectare);

— *Tobacco*: 80,000 hectares in 1990, or 5.7 times the 1983 figure.

Other crops are also to be grown in the eastern provinces of Nam Bo and in the Mekong Delta: groundnuts, soya beans, sesame, banana, castor-oil plants.

These targets are quite attainable if one takes into account our land and manpower potentials and the adequate production of food in the provinces bordering on Ho Chi Minh City (eastern provinces of Nam Bo and Mekong Delta). By 1990 (perhaps sooner), all the provinces in the region should be able to exploit all their land and utilize all their workforce. Tay Ninh has so far been regarded as a poor province engaged in the monoculture of rice. The first program of land readjustment provides for the growing of rubber on 40,000 hectares. With the commissioning of the Dau Tieng irrigation project, the biggest of its kind in Nam Bo, 70,000 hectares will be planted with sugarcane, 30,000 hectares with groundnuts, 10,000 hectares with tobacco, while intensive culture of rice will be practised on all the rice area. Parallel with the intensified planting of industrial crops, the processing of agricultural products will be developed in close cooperation with Ho Chi Minh City.

The intensification of polyculture and building of an industrial — agricultural economic structure should make Tay Ninh a rich province.

Animal husbandry is one of the strong points of the region. On the 3 million hectares of agricultural land (4.6 million hectares if the coefficient of soil utilization is 1.5), the number of pigs raised should reach 9 million if two pigs (of 50 kilogrammes each at the time of slaughter) were reared per hectare. By 1990 the herd of buffaloes should amount to 3.2 million head or a buffalo (or an ox) per hectare.

At the rate of 5 ducks per hectare of ricefield, the region will be able to raise 12.5 million ducks (chiefly on a seasonal basis) on its 2.5 million hectares of submerged ricefields.

The existence of immense areas of water (ricefields, ponds), an extensive network of ditches and canals, and mangrove forests should promote fish rearing and fresh-water agriculture (chiefly the rearing of crustaceans alternated with rice culture or salt making). Deep-sea and offshore fishing practised along hundreds of kilometres of coasts should be developed. All those resources, which will yield hundreds of millions of dollars every year, call for important investments for the purchase of equipment (deep-sea fishing vessels, fresh-water fishing equipment) and the setting up of enterprises for the processing and storage of export products.

The processing and storage of agricultural produces (paddy, industrial crops) and fishing produces make it necessary to build a processing industry, which poses the problem of electrical energy.

In this connection, the building of the Tri An hydro-electric project No. 1 should be stepped up so that its first turbine generators can be commissioned by 1987. After its completion in 1990, it will supply one billion kwh yearly. Survey work for the construction of the Tri

An hydro-electric project No. 2 will be carried out together with the enlargement of the thermal power plant at Thu Duc and Tra Noc. Mention should be made of the construction of the Soviet-Vietnamese oil and gas enterprise at Vung Tau for offshore oil extraction.

The abundant agricultural and fishing produces and energy resources of the region determine its evolution in the eighties, and also the role to be played by Ho Chi Minh City as an industrial centre. Hence the necessity to start building, right now, an industrial agricultural structure, that is the socio-economic structure linking a city with great industrial potentialities to neighbouring provinces rich in agricultural and fishing produces. This task is facilitated by historical ties, namely the traditional exchanges between Saigon and these provinces over past centuries.

Industrial Potentials of Ho Chi Minh City

These industrial potentials comprise the enterprises in the industrial region of Bien Hoa, the enterprises run by the central administration and based in the city, and those managed by the municipal administration itself. These enterprises have a great capacity of production: 220—240 million metres of textiles, 70,000 tonnes of paper, 8,000—9,000 tonnes of processed rubber, 7,000 tonnes of lacquer, 170 million tins of condensed milk, 300,000 tonnes of animal feed, 40,000 tonnes of detergent, 900 million packets of cigarettes, 100,000 tonnes of refined sugar, tens of millions of litres of beer and alcoholic drinks, not to mention a refrigeration industry with a capacity of 34 tonnes per day, of rice mills capable of husking hundreds of thousands of tonnes of paddy. Our engineering industry

can turn out a great quantity of spare parts and accessories. Once reorganized and provided with large investments for their re-equipment, these engineering works can turn out a variety of agricultural machines and means of transport, and make or assemble (partly from imported materials and parts) radio and T.V. sets, electric fans, sewing-machines, wrist watches and clocks... Our capacity of production of handicraft and art articles is considerable. The city has a body of well-trained scientific and technical workers and tens of thousands of skilled and experienced workers (mainly in construction).

This capacity of industrial production has so far been only partially utilized (50% at most in a number of sectors). At present and in future, our greatest concern is how to make full use of these precious potentials and to turn them into real assets.

The interests of Ho Chi Minh City are closely bound up with those of the other provinces in the region. If the supply of raw materials from the provinces rich in agricultural produces is cut off, the city will see its prosperity jeopardized. Conversely, without the industrial support of Ho Chi Minh City, the provinces in the region cannot make rapid progress. This is a process of economic integration between a city with some degree of industrial development and surrounding areas rich in agricultural resources.

Thus, it is imperative for the enterprises using local raw materials to operate at full capacity. With regard to the making of animal feed (essentially from rice bran, maize and fish meal obtained locally, plus imported chemicals), cooperation between Ho Chi Minh City and the various provinces should make it possible for our factories to maintain a steady production of 300,000 tonnes.

Insofar as the enterprises using imported materials are concerned, they can operate thanks to the revenues from the export of agricultural produces: for instances, in order to supply to the 18 million inhabitants of the region 10 tins of condensed milk per person per year, the foreign exchange needed for the import of powdered milk to be processed by the condensed milk factories will be obtained from our agricultural exports.

Of course, the full utilization of our industrial enterprises calls for a solution to the problem of energy and spares, in addition to the export of agricultural products and the implementation of appropriate economic policies and measures.

Besides, the development of sources of raw materials in the region requires big investments, above all for the reorganization, re-equipment and enlargement of engineering works. By the time 500,000 hectares of land are planted with jute, it will be necessary for us to have 100 processing factories.

Can these processing enterprises be built in time? At the beginning, they will not be in sufficient numbers, and we must export part of our raw produces such as jute, copra... to get the funds necessary for our industrialization, that is, for the building of new enterprises.

Transformation of Private Industry and Trade in Ho Chi Minh City

This task is closely associated with the transformation of agriculture in the region. If crowned with success, it will directly contribute to agricultural cooperativization, a sine qua non condition for the complete use of the manpower and land available in the region. Our city has a great workforce. Nevertheless, the problem

of employment, that is the provision of jobs to the entire population, has not only a social but mainly an economic significance. Full employment is required for economic development. By 1985, Ho Chi Minh City must have found employment for 300,000 people through the development of small industry and handicrafts, while providing the necessary manpower for the clearing of 15,000 hectares of new lands and the afforestation of another 15,000 hectares in the suburban regions, the economic development of Duyen Hai district, the building of rubber plantations in cooperation with the eastern provinces of Nam Bo, and the exploitation of the Plain of Reeds (Dong Thap Muoi), in cooperation with Long An province.

Exports are the decisive factor for the exploitation of all our potentialities, for the building of Ho Chi Minh City as well as the development of our industry. For this purpose, we must perfect the organization and management of our foreign trade for higher efficiency.

At present, a great obstacle stands in our way: the acute shortage of capital. But if a judicious orientation and appropriate methods are worked out, this seemingly insuperable obstacle can be overcome.

We have spoken of the great potentialities and fine prospects facing the city and the region. To turn them into realities, we must quickly stabilize the living conditions of the population, the major target of the programme of action charted by the Congress. This is not an easy task as it covers over 3 million people. The solution to this problem also depends on our assessment of the role to be played by Ho Chi Minh City in the region.

In fact, lying in the midst of an immense food-producing region, Ho Chi Minh City is in a position to supply its population with enough rice, vegetables (550 and 500 tonnes

per day), meat (80 - 100 tonnes per day), fish (150 tonnes per day), fish sauce (21-22 million litres per year), salt (20,000 tonnes per year)... In this field, difficulties still exist, due to inadequate organization, the lack of appropriate economic measures and policies, and to some extent, faulty managerial methods. Nevertheless, the city has many assets: great industrial potentials, competent cadres, experience in promoting the people's collective mastery... In the first year after liberation (1975), under the impulse of the Women's Union, selling-and-buying cooperatives, and consumer cooperatives of various kinds made their appearance, giving precious support to the State trade. In the difficult years that followed, various mass movements helped the State organs in their efforts to control the market and stabilize prices. Recently, together with the Food Trading Company, mass organizations have lent a helping hand in the opening of thousands of rice retailing shops in populated quarters; this initiative is warmly supported by both the local population and the central authorities. This model should be applied to the food and fuel trade. A stubborn struggle must be waged against speculation, illegal trafficking, the stealing of State property and upsetting of the market, in coordination with the various branches of activity and the support of the population and mass organizations.

1984

* Comprising Ho Chi Minh City, the eastern provinces of Nam Bo (ex-Cochinchina), the provinces in the Mekong Delta, the southern provinces of Trung Bo (ex-Annam) and the Central Highlands.

HANOI: FROM A CONSUMER CITY TO AN INDUSTRIAL CENTRE

NHAN DANG

Hanoi has come a long way since it was liberated on 10 October 1954. A radical change of historic significance has taken place on this "land of age-old culture". In economic terms, it has changed from a city of consumers to a city of producers, a major economic centre, above all an important industrial centre of the country.

...

The legacy left to Hanoi by the French colonialists was indeed a shabby one. For a city of 270,000 inhabitants there were barely nine small-sized industrial establishments, chiefly providing repairs and services. After 1954, a few factories came back to the capital city from the resistance bases. By 1955, the city had only 18 industrial establishments staffed by 1,369 workers, in addition to 496 privately-owned small-industry and handicraft establishments with a work force of 5,000. During the French occupation, the economic life of Hanoi chiefly centered on consumption and serving the French war machine-catering for the needs of the imperialists and their indigenous agents. The streets were mostly inhabited by traders, one out of every two families being engaged in

some kind of trade. The suburbs were small agricultural areas comprising 47 communes with 180,000 private farmers. The land was mostly in the hands of the landlords. No significant progress in food production was recorded all along the war years. It was against that background that liberated Hanoi embarked on the period of transition to socialism, simultaneously building and transforming its economy.

In the first five years after liberation, the country focused its efforts on healing the wounds of war, rehabilitating the economy, carrying out socialist transformation of agriculture, industry and trade and laying the preliminary bases for socialist building. In that period, Hanoi undertook a land reform which returned to the peasants more than 20,000 *mau* (one *mau* equals 3,600 sq.m) of ricefield, more than 6,000 farming tools together with nearly 500 draught cattle. In the ensuing drives for the transformation of private capitalist trade and industry, all the industrial means of production together with 421 trading enterprises and shops and more than 600 means of transport were taken over from the bourgeoisie. This was followed by a campaign to reorganize production and establish cooperation along the socialist line. By 1960, Hanoi had set up 280 agricultural co-ops in the suburban areas embracing 39.6% of all peasant households. Over 50,000 persons were organized into units of collective handicraft production, of whom more than 29,000 joined the handicraft cooperatives; 95% of the small traders also joined low-level cooperatives. Others took up productive jobs. Thus, Hanoi had radically abolished colonial, capitalist and feudal exploitation and established socialist relations of production based on State and collective ownership. The transformation of the relations of production immediately gave a strong impetus to the productive

forces. But more important, it has seen the building, consolidation and strengthening of the State-run economic establishments which would serve as the core and leading force of the whole economy. Together with the expansion of the joint State-private enterprises and their equipment with new machines, the city began building a series of new industrial plants under the post-war industrial development programme, such as the Hanoi Engineering Factory, the Cau Duong Plywood Mill, the Tien Ba Printing Office, the Sao Vang Rubber Goods Factory, the Hanoi Soap Works, the Thang Long Cigarette Factory, etc. The output value of Hanoi's industry, small industry and handicrafts by 1960 had increased 100% compared with 1955 and accounted for 22% of the total in the liberated North.

In 1961, Hanoi embarked on the first five-year Plan, thus taking an initial step in socialist industrialization and the laying of the first material-technical bases of socialism. In January that year, the Congress of the City Party organization was able to affirm that "Hanoi has changed from a consumer city to a producer city."

But it was not easy going. During the resistance against US aggression for national salvation, Hanoi together with the rest of the North did all in its power to provide aid to the South. The Americans brought their air war of destruction to the Vietnamese capital itself, sending B-52 strategic bombers to carpet bomb even populous quarters inside the city. Many completed industrial construction were destroyed. Many projects had to be cancelled or slowed down. Tens of thousands of tons of bombs were dropped on the city. Heavy destruction was wrought on two-thirds of the suburban communes and more than 200 economic and cultural establishments, including 108 industrial projects. After the two wars of resistance against the

French then the Americans, Hanoi is still at war without peace. Now it has to send men and supplies to the defenders of our northern border against the Chinese expansionists while coping with the sabotage activities of Beijing agents abetted by Washington.

The low starting-point and the crippling difficulties caused by the enemy have thrown into even bolder relief the Vietnamese people's will to make socialism a success and Hanoi's achievements in the past thirty years since liberation. Before 1954, Hanoi had only a small power plant with a capacity never exceeding 15,000 kilowatts. Today the city's electric power capacity has increased 10-fold. Electricity supply for industry has risen 140 times, that for agriculture 40 times, and that for daily life 75 times. Besides the industrial establishments in the central area, there has taken shape a series of outlying industrial areas such as Thuong Dinh, Dong Anh, Vinh Tuy, Cau Duong-Yen Vien, Cau Dien, Xuan Hoa, Son Tay... By late 1983, the city already had 266 centrally-run and local industrial enterprises and 438 handicraft cooperatives. Over the past 30 years, on an average, eight new factories have sprung up in Hanoi each year. These enterprises form a fairly comprehensive system comprising heavy industry (especially mechanical engineering), food-processing industry and consumer goods industry. Industrial output value in 1983 had risen more than 38 times compared with 1955 and accounted for 14% of the national industrial output. The engineering industry in particular made up one fourth, and the consumer goods industries one fifth, of the national total.

Many major plants have been equipped with modern machines and their products have been effectively serving such economic branches as industry, agriculture, capital

construction, communications and transport. The No. 1 Machine Tool Plant, the pacesetter in the country, in the 25 years of its existence (1958-83) has supplied the national economy with 13,000 machine tools of various kinds, thousands of tonnes of machine parts, and other equipment. It can manufacture complete brick production chains (20 million bricks a year), sugarcane presses (500 tonnes daily) and equipment for small hydro-electric power stations (from 20 to 1,000 kilowatts capacity). Hundreds of machine tools and tens of thousands of machine parts and accessories from this plant have been exported to Cuba, Poland and Czechoslovakia. The Tran Hung Dao Engineering Plant in the 23 years of its existence (1961-1983) has turned out more than 45,000 diesel engines of different types, with a total capacity of nearly 640,000 h.p., chiefly for the mechanization of agriculture (especially in the Mekong River delta) riverine and rural transport, and sea fisheries.

Along with the development of industrial establishments, the construction industry has built such major projects as the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, the Workers' Cultural Palace, Hanoi Polytechnic, the Thang Loi Hotel, the Thang Long Bridge... The communications and transport network has been extended and improved for land, sea, rail and air communications linking together different places in the country and Vietnam with the outside world. The information and telecommunications network has also improved markedly to expand our international relations through postal, telephone and telegraph connections with nearly 100 countries. Equally impressive has been the growth and maturity of industrial personnel, now comprising more than 100,000 factory workers and nearly 130,000 handicraft workers. Hanoi has been the scene of many campaigns of emulation for improvement

management, technical innovation and rationalization of production. Many research projects, inventions and innovations born in Hanoi have been applied throughout the country. The number of skilled workers in Hanoi has increased quickly. Hanoi is also taking the lead in the number of State-level product-quality certificates and medals (6 out of a total of 28) won at the Exhibition of National Economic and Technological Achievements held in late 1983. Hanoi boasts a large contingent of scientific and technical workers in 31 universities and colleges, nearly 100 institutes for both fundamental research and special applications and 73 secondary vocational schools and technical schools which each year turn out tens of thousands of technicians and skilled workers for different branches of the national economy. Of the nearly 250,000 personnel working in different branches of the economy in Hanoi, more than one-fourth have completed the tertiary education and 2.9 the post-graduate training. The growing industry of Hanoi is an offspring of socialism, the result of the strenuous efforts of the whole country, of both the central and city administrations, of the cadres and population of Hanoi, and of the whole-hearted assistance of the fraternal socialist countries.

The development of industry in Hanoi during the past years, however, has been extensive. Now the point is to develop it intensively in order to increase work productivity, product quality and economic efficiency. A series of problems need to be addressed at the same time, regarding technical equipment, supply of materials, renovation of the working style and the management mechanism in order to arouse and develop dynamism and creativeness at various levels of the city, the grassroots unit and the individual worker as well as to enhance their sense of

collective interest. There should be a harmonious combination of the central and local industries, of industry and agriculture, of large-scale industry, small industry and handicrafts, of production and science and technology, of the economy and defence, of the domestic economy and the export trade.

Resolution 08 of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee on Hanoi has pointed out: "The capital city is the political, cultural, scientific and technological centre and also a major economic and international transaction centre of the whole country."

"Hanoi must be strong and prosperous in order to meet the needs of production and life on its territory and make ever greater contribution to the national economy through the creation of a rational industrial-agricultural structure composed of branches, trades and products that are of vital importance to the whole country, to the export trade in particular. Hanoi must be a model of the new style of work ensuring high productivity, quality and efficiency. It must turn out products of good reputation on the domestic market and a number of foreign markets."

Hanoi is the capital city of the country. Its progress is supported by and serves the whole nation.

1984

