

Vietnam courier



A MONTHLY REVIEW



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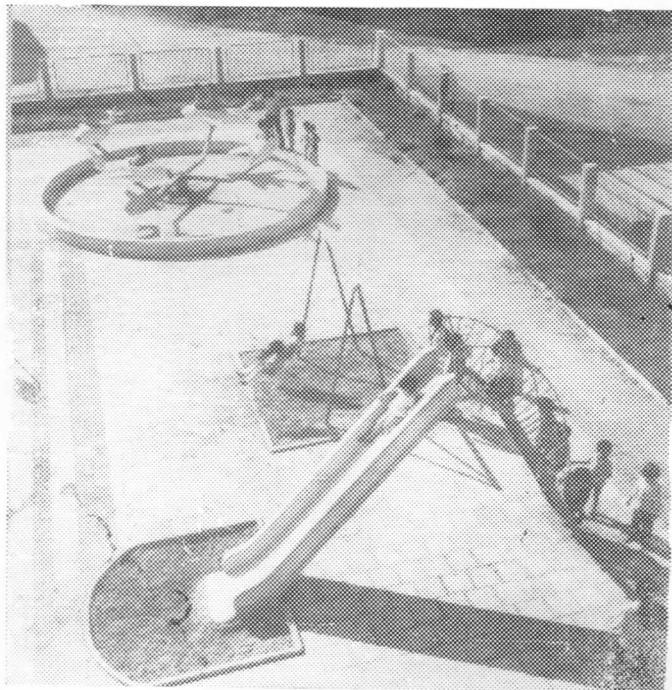
SOCIETY



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The crèche of Trung Tu housing estate in Hanoi.

CHILDREN IN VIETNAM

The general department store in Haiphong on International Children's Day, 1 June 1978.



The Mam Non (Young Bud) nursery school in Hue.



OUR MONTHLY comment

Contents

● Our Monthly Comment	1
● At the Vietnam-China Talks	2
● International Support for Vietnam	3
● The Dien Bien Phu Lesson after 25 Years	4
● Dien Bien Phu Revisited	6
● The Symbol of Pac Bo	9
● People's War: Self-defence Unit in Tan An	10

● Hanoi's Viewpoint: Treaty on a Separate Settlement of the Middle-East Problem	12
● Poor China!	12
● Agony of the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary Army	13
● A Great Friend: India	15
● Appeal of the Vietnam Commission for the International Year of the Child	16
● Activities of the Vietnam Commission for the International Year of the Child	16
● "How Will the Children Live in the Year 2000?"	17
● The International Competition for the Composition of Songs for Children in 1979	18
● Uncle Ho's Five Teachings to Children	19
● Waste Paper for a Train	
● Socialist-oriented Child-care in Ho Chi Minh City	20
● Chinese Aggressors' Crimes: Massacre of Children	24
● Evidence Given by an Orphan	25
● From Lang Son to Hanoi	26
● International Conference on Computer Science in Hanoi	27
● Pol Pot's Version of Peking Socialism	28
● Chronology	32

Front cover: Childhood
Photo: Vo An Ninh

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IN the last days of April 25 years ago, Vietnamese troops were perseveringly digging trenches closer and closer to the centre of the French defence complex at Dien Bien Phu. On 7 May 1954 their victory banner was hoisted on General De Castries' bunker, signalling the beginning of the collapse of colonialism throughout the world. Half of Vietnam was liberated.

At the same time of year four years ago, these Vietnamese fighters, this time with much better equipment, and with tank and aircraft support, opened a lightning offensive on the last dens of the US puppets in Saigon, dealing a staggering blow at the neo-colonialist system. Vietnam was completely liberated.

However, from this moment of historic victory, the Vietnamese people had straightaway to cope with a new hostile force: the Peking expansionists and hegemonists.

Speaking about the Chinese invasion of Vietnam last February, Anthony Barnett, correspondent of the British journal *New Statesman*, wrote on 23 February 1979 that China "had punished" Vietnam because of Vietnam's victory over the US imperialists in 1975. Barnett's view is correct because, as we know, the liberation of South Vietnam upset the collusion between Peking and Washington which was embodied in the Shanghai joint communiqué. The tacit implication of this document was a Chinese promise to help the US maintain the puppet regime in South Vietnam in exchange for the withdrawal of US forces from Taiwan.

The events since April 1975 are well-known:

In Kampuchea, the Chinese rulers used their Pol Pot — Ieng Sary agents to usurp the fruits of the Kampuchean people's victorious resistance against US aggression and to set up a neo-colonialist regime in this country to use it as a jumping-off point for attacks on Vietnam from the southwest.

In Laos, they were unable to apply a similar plan after the triumph of the Lao revolution in May 1975 and with the flight of the top rightist elements and the forcible dissolution of USAID. So they tried to buy out the Lao revolutionaries and divide their ranks; and at the same time tried to undermine and pressurize the country so as to create the conditions for the establishment of a force attacking Vietnam from the northwest.

In Vietnam, after seizing control of the Eastern Sea by the occupation of the Hoang Sa archipelago in 1974, they invented the story of "victimised Chinese residents" to sabotage Vietnam from within; then they used this as a pretext to cut off aid and call back their experts. Meanwhile, they launched a slander campaign against Vietnam and tried to shift the blame for their own warlike and expansionist schemes onto Vietnam;

At the Vietnam — China Talks

Main Principles and Contents of a Three-point Proposal To Settle the Problems in Relations between Vietnam and China

Made by the Delegation of the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to the first plenary session of the talks between Vietnam and China on 18 April 1979.

1. Urgent measures to secure peace and stability in the border areas of the two countries and to ensure an early reunion of the people captured during the war with their families.

a) To refrain from concentrating troops close to the border-line, to separate the armed forces of the two sides: the armed forces of all kinds of each side along the entire border-line to pull back into their territory to a distance of three to five kilometres from the line of actual control prior to 17 February 1979.

b) To stop all acts of war provocation and all forms of hostile activities violating the sovereignty

and territorial integrity of the other side and threatening its security.

c) The zone lying on either side of the line of actual control mentioned above and wherein the armed forces of the two sides will be no longer present, shall become a demilitarized zone. The status of this demilitarized zone shall be agreed upon between the two sides.

d) The two sides shall exchange at once lists of people captured by the two sides during the war so that they may be returned as soon as possible.

they persuaded other countries and international organizations to stop aid to Vietnam, thus going against the resolutions of the UN General Assembly and of the non-aligned countries' meetings.

However, all these despicable actions have failed to weaken and subdue Vietnam. On the contrary, the main Chinese instrument to oppose Vietnam — the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary clique — collapsed early in 1979. Enraged by this defeat, and still sticking to their hegemonistic ambitions in Southeast Asia and their dreams of becoming masters of the world, they sent their own troops for an invasion of Vietnam on 17 February 1979.

The local troops, militia and guerillas rather than the Vietnamese main force units, sons and daughters, younger brothers and sisters of those who fought at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 or in the Ho Chi Minh Campaign of 1975, have taught a well-deserved lesson to the 600,000 troops of 11 Chinese Army Corps.

Nevertheless, there are signs that the Chinese rulers in Peking have not understood this lesson well. They spoke about troop withdrawal, but in comparison with the historical border that both sides had explicitly recognized in 1957 — 1958, they still occupy over 10 places after 17 February 1979, not counting the 90 places they had seized after 1949 and the 60 places previously seized by the Kuomintang. Moreover, they concentrated considerable military forces and war material close to Vietnam's border, continued their spying activities and armed provocations, and arrogantly threatened that they might "punish Vietnam twice as severely".

V IETNAM is 20 times smaller in population and 30 times smaller in area than China.

Vietnam would be mad to seek trouble with China. Moreover, the two peoples have been bound by a long-standing friendship and have stood shoulder to shoulder in the struggle against the imperialists and their agents.

Vietnam has always favoured the settlement of disputes between the two countries through negotiations. The Vietnamese people are determined not to accept this occupation of their territory, but in such circumstances, their goodwill leads them to sit down at the negotiating table with China.

The SRV Government delegation to the talks, which began on 18 April 1979 in Hanoi, prompted by their attachment to peace and by their treasuring of solidarity and friendship with the Chinese people, as well as by their desire not to have hostile relationship between the two countries, advanced an important three-point proposal:

1. Urgent measures to secure peace and stability in the border areas of the two countries and to ensure an early reunion of the people captured during the war with their families.

2. Restoration of normal relations between the two countries.

3. Settlement of border and territorial problems between the two countries.

These three points embody the main principles and contents of a settlement of the problems in the relations between the two countries. What is of prime urgency is that the two sides should discuss and reach agreement on point 1. In fact,

c) To set up a Joint Commission of the two sides to supervise and control the implementation of the above-mentioned measures.

2. Restoration of normal relations between the two countries on the basis of the principles of peaceful coexistence: respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity; non-aggression, refraining from the use of force or the threat of use of force; non-interference in the internal affairs of the other side; settlement through negotiations of disputes and differences in the relations between the two sides, development of economic and cultural relations in a spirit of mutual respect and mutual benefit.

On that basis, to restore railway, civil aviation, postal, and other relations.

To resolve the question of the aftermath of the war.

3. Settlement of border and territorial problems between the two countries on the principle of respect for the status quo of the historical borderline delineated by the 1887 and 1895 Conventions between the French Government and the Ching dynasty, as agreed upon between the Vietnamese and the Chinese sides; respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

measures should be taken without delay to prevent the resumption of hostilities; and to this end, there is no other way than that proposed by Vietnam: no troop concentration close to the border, separation of the armed forces of the two sides, cessation of all provocative actions and all forms of hostility violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the other party and jeopardizing its security; establishment of a demilitarized zone between the two sides and setting up of a two-party joint commission for supervision and control.

The application of these measures will make it possible to eliminate clashes between the two sides, to remove the completely fabricated "pretext" often invoked by the Chinese side to justify their aggression against Vietnam: "Vietnam's provocations and encroachments". Peace and stability in the border regions between the two countries, once ensured, will create the conditions for the restoration of normal relations and the settlement of border and territorial questions between the two countries. Constructive, fair and reasonable proposals have been put forward by Vietnam. Chinese reaction to these proposals in the coming days will show whether China really desires peace and respects the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of neighbouring countries, whether she really wants to settle disputes peacefully or whether she only wants to use the negotiations to placate public opinion at home and abroad and to buy time for the preparation of new military adventures.

25 April 1979

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR VIETNAM

COMMUNIST SATURDAYS.

— The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the USSR Council of Ministers, the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions and the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League have just issued a resolution on using 70 per cent of the proceeds of voluntary work done throughout the Soviet Union for the 109th anniversary of Lenin's birth to help the Vietnamese people overcome the consequences of the Chinese war of aggression.

Under the slogan "Assistance to Vietnam is Our International Obligation", on 21 April 1979, tens of millions of people throughout the Soviet Union enthusiastically participated in labour for the benefit of Vietnam. In past years, Soviet people volunteered to do manual labour on such "Communist Saturdays" to build their schools, hospitals, crèches and kindergartens. This year, it is to raise money to help Vietnam rebuild schools, hospitals, crèches and kindergartens destroyed by the Chinese aggressors.

— To commemorate the 109th anniversary of Lenin's birth, the People's Republic of Mongolia also organized a socialist labour day. By decision of the Central Committee of the People's Revolutionary Party of Mongolia, 60 per cent of the proceeds of the socialist labour day will be used to help the Vietnamese people overcome the consequences of the recent Chinese war of aggression.

— Saturday work to support Vietnam was held in Czechoslovakia with the participation of millions of working people. According to preliminary statistics, East Slovakia province has sent more than 12 million korunas to the Fund of Solidarity with Vietnam. Workers in the K. Gottwald Steel Mill in Ostrava have contributed 25,000 korunas.

SUPPORT FOR VIETNAMESE CHILDREN

— On 16 April 1979 the Cuban Committee for Solidarity with Vietnam called on the entire Cuban people to help Vietnamese children and people. A voluntary labour day was held on 22 April under the slogan "For Vietnamese Children in the International Year of the Child". Meanwhile, Ms Vilma Espin, President of the Cuban Federation of Women and President of the Cuban Commission for the International Year of the Child, has sent a message to the UN asking it to demand that China stop its policy of aggression against Vietnam. The message also asked for UN material aid for Vietnamese children, such as books, stationery, school equipment, toys and medicines.

— On 22 April 1979, the ambassadors, chargés d'affaires and embassy staff in Hanoi of the Soviet Union, Kampuchea, Cuba, GDR, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary and Mongolia participated in a voluntary labour day to help Vietnamese children in the northern border provinces.

THE DIEN BIEN PHU LESSON AFTER 25 YEARS

« **W**ATERLOO made less noise in the world, where the fall of Dien Bien Phu gave rise to great amazement. It was one of the West's most serious setbacks, and heralded the collapse of colonial empires and the end of a republic. The thunder of the event is still sounding.”

In these terms the French political writer Jules Roy, in his book “The Dien Bien Phu Battle” (1), described the Vietnamese victory which put an end to the first Indochina war. This historical event occurred a quarter of a century ago, on 7 May 1954. For the first time, the people of a colony knocked down a colonial power — the first milestone on the road to the liberation of oppressed nations. Twenty-one years later, the 1975 Spring Victory gave back to Vietnam her enslaved southern half. This second thunderbolt presaged the defeat of neo-colonialism. The recent defeat inflicted by the Vietnamese on the Chinese aggressors conjures up the idea of a third thunderbolt sounding the death knell of another accident in human history: Peking's hegemonistic expansionism.

Continuing their millennia-old traditions of victorious struggle against foreign invaders, the Vietnamese people have in the last twenty-five years forged a new tradition — that of Dien Bien Phu.

THE small town of Dien Bien Phu, population 4,000, appears on the map as a district capital in the remote northwest of Vietnam, near the Lao border. Nothing seemed to predestine the town to glory before it gave its name to the largest French garrison in the first Indochina war. At that time Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea made up only one theatre of operations, and the establishment of a definitive defence complex at Dien Bien Phu, which was decided in late 1953, had three aims: to take in the garrison of Lai Chau, a town which was being evacuated, and thus to create a new important base in the autonomous Thai country, a French creation; by controlling this important crossroads of tracks, to provide cover for Luang Prabang and Vientiane, seriously threatened by Vietnamese — Lao forces; and lastly to compel the Vietnam People's Army to fight a battle on a terrain considered to be very unfavourable to it and to win, at a low price, a war which was already dragging on and becoming costly for the French expeditionary corps.

When the order was given many must have wondered why the French High Command, and more particularly its chief, General Henri Navarre, had taken this risky decision of engaging its crack troops at Dien Bien Phu. The area resembled a mouse-trap with surrounding mountain ridges and

the great distance — 300 km in a straight line — from the nearest logistical bases. But the French calculations had their own logic. To make up for all those disadvantages, they had only to set up an airlift from Hanoi and Haiphong, which posed no problems given the fact that the French had absolute air supremacy and Vietnamese troops had no anti-aircraft guns. In the French view, the same difficulties that the French had to resolve remained completely insoluble for the Vietnamese, whose bases were at least 500 km away. Should the Vietnam People's Army accept the battle it would doubtless be annihilated.

The Dien Bien Phu defence complex was looked upon by the French High Command as absolutely impregnable, at least in the context of that period. Covering an area of 12 km by 5 to 6 km, it had 49 bases of operations and fortified positions covered by auxiliary defence lines, able at the same time to resist in isolation or give support to each other. An elite detachment was garrisoned there which included, at the height of the battle, 17 infantry and paratroop battalions, 3 artillery battalions, not to mention several tank, air force and engineering units — 21 battalions and 10 companies all told. An airlift was ensured which was able to transport 100 men and 150 tons of munitions every day as reinforcements for the Dien Bien Phu garrison. Some 23,000 tons of war material together with troop reinforcements were flown in.

Accepting the challenge, the Vietnamese High Command decided to open the Winter 1953 — Spring 1954 campaign, with Dien Bien Phu as the main front and the Red River delta as the front of coordination while trying at the same time to wear out the enemy and partly destroy their forces in the South, and, together with Pathet Lao troops, to bring them to a standstill in Central Laos. Determined to put into practice the decision of the Party Central Committee to wipe out all the enemy forces in this base, several divisions of regular troops were concentrated and one hundred thousand civilian carriers were mobilized to transport supplies to the front. The building of a 100-km road in the jungle, started on 15 December 1953, was completed on 1 March 1954 as a result of tremendous efforts. Many artillery pieces were hauled uphill and brought into position in front of the enemy without his knowledge.

The order of attack was given on 13 March 1954, and on that day the Him Lam (Beatrice) post was stormed with fighting lasting many hours. On 14 March, it was the turn of Doc Lap (Gabrielle), one of the outer defence positions. On 17 March,

(1) Ed. Julliard — Paris, 1961.

the Ban Keo (Anne-Marie) post surrendered, ending the first phase of the offensive which destroyed the outer defence to the north and northeast.

Preparations for the second phase were in full swing for two weeks. Under intense enemy fire, the attackers built a huge network of trenches and shelters which started from the surrounding hills, zigzagged through the plain, pressed closer and closer towards enemy lines, and isolated the hill tops from one another.

On 30 March, Vietnamese forces launched another round of attacks, this time against the hills which served as a shield to the main French defence position in the east. Fighting was raging, especially on hill C1 (Eliane 1) and hill A1 (Eliane 2) which changed hands many times. The Dien Bien Phu aerodrome, "The stomach of the garrison", was cut into two by mid-April, notwithstanding fierce enemy counter-attacks. Despite intensive bombing, the enemy airforce failed to check the advance of the people's army. The third phase of the offensive started on 1 May. The attackers captured the last hills defending the central sector, reducing the garrison to an area one kilometre square. The final attack took place on the afternoon of 7 May. The enemy CP was stormed and its command, with General De Castries at the head, surrendered. All resistance ceased from 6 p.m. All told, 12,000 enemy troops were taken prisoner, including a general, 16 colonels, and 1,749 officers and NCO's. The Vietnam People's Army annihilated the whole French garrison of 16,200 crack troops, shot down 62 planes, and destroyed and seized a considerable amount of war materials.

Dien Bien Phu, however, was only the crown of a vast campaign throughout Indochina. In the Indochina theatre of operations, the aggressors lost 112,000 men in six months, puppet troops included, and 117 planes. The celebrated Navarre plan, largely financed by Washington, was smashed to smithereens. To save the situation, the Pentagon suggested the launching of its "Operation Vulture" in which tactical atomic weapons would be used to help do away with the best of the resistance forces. But France and Great Britain opposed the move, lest the whole French garrison should be destroyed and a world conflagration flare up.

ON 8 May 1954, General Navarre's Order of the day No. 9 notified that "outnumbered by the enemy and forced to fight one to five, the Dien Bien Phu garrison, under the command of General De Castries, had to cease the battle after 56 days of continued fighting [...] The defenders of Dien Bien Phu and the combatants of air and aero-naval forces have written down in history an epic which adds to the most glorious pages of our army."

Without trying to discredit an adversary who had often shown an admirable, though blind and futile, courage, we must however stress that the same order of the day reckoned the engaged Vietnamese forces at 30 battalions, and therefore not greatly outnumbering the French garrison of 21

battalions and 10 companies. Therefore numerical superiority was by no means the root cause of the victory of the Vietnam People's Army.

On this point, General De Castries proved himself more lucid, if not more sincere and frank, in his analysis. During a press conference held in Paris on 17 September 1954 and reported by *Le Monde* the next day, the French general spoke about the Vietnamese patriots in the following terms:

"Although the democratic army started from scratch in 1946, its units, who had already had a tradition of fighting, adopted very flexible and skilful tactics. I had to cope with, it should be admitted, an excellent and experienced command."

In his book "Dien Bien Phu" (1), Colonel Pierre Langlais, 3rd deputy to General De Castries at the defence complex, touched on the heart of the matter when he wrote:

"The Indochina war was a war of independence waged against France. If the tool of combat was forged by Marxist methods, it is none the less true that the V.M. [Viet Minh] soldier, who attacked our positions at Dien Bien Phu with such a great courage, was fighting to drive us out of his home where we did not belong.

"Fighting always means in the long run carrying out one's determination at the risk of one's life. Such risks or sacrifices need motives, faith. Yet, that faith, which was so simple and evident for our adversary, was difficult to find in our ranks. We were not fighting to defend our homes, we were not fighting to drive foreigners from our country, we were not even fighting to keep Indochina for France. Then for what did we fight? For the honour of the soldier's profession, and that was all."

The Vietnamese people and army have learned a great deal from their victory at Dien Bien Phu, which was the fruit of the combined effort of the whole nation. Their unshakeable faith in their just cause helped them get the upper hand of the enemy. The Marxist—Leninist political and military line applied to the concrete reality of the country, the strategy of the people's war and the choice of appropriate tactics also contributed to their victory. Other factors leading to their victory included their high political consciousness, the citizen-combatant's high morale, and the valuable international material, technical and moral aid given by the socialist countries, the working class movement, the world's forces of peace and progress, and by the great people of France as well.

All the factors of the Vietnamese victory, which date back to the resistance against the French colonialists, have been reinforced during the war of resistance against US imperialism and further strengthened in face of the Chinese expansionist aggressors. It is our hope that Peking will benefit from the lesson of Dien Bien Phu and renounce its neo-fascist ambitions.

VU CAN

(1) Presses Pocket — Paris, 1969.

DIEN BIEN PHU REVISITED

Editor's Note: *Huu Mai, a soldier-novelist, has written many stories about Dien Bien Phu. His latest work was published under the title "Dien Bien Phu — Time and Space" (1).*

The book is about a visit to this historical battlefield made in 1978 by two foreigners — André, a French historian, and Mohammed, an African journalist. Both had fought at Dien Bien Phu in the French army. As guest of Vietnam, the two were

guided by Colonel Quy of the Vietnam People's Army, also a Dien Bien Phu veteran.

The following passage recounts a visit to the Dien Bien Phu Museum. Thanh is the name of the young museum guide. Both her father and mother had taken part in the Dien Bien Phu Campaign, together with Colonel Quy. An interesting exchange on certain military aspects of events of a quarter century ago involves all the four characters.

WITH a map and pointer Thanh started explaining developments in the military situation in the winter of 1953 that prompted General Navarre to build the defence complex at Dien Bien Phu. "Early in the dry monsoon in 1953" she said, "most of Navarre's mobile groups and most of the Vietnamese main force army groups were concentrated in Bac Bo, the main battlefield. Navarre was doing his best to put together a huge mobile force in preparation for a major encounter to defeat the various army groups of the Vietnamese main forces and then end the war at an advantage. The plan would be put into operation in the winter and spring of 1954 — 55 when all necessary preparations had been made. Meanwhile, Navarre's mobile columns made many incursions into the southwestern part of Ninh Binh and Nho Quan. The French General's intention was to thwart, by preemptive measures, an offensive planned by the Vietnamese forces for the Bac Bo delta in this dry season. He expected the Vietnamese command to move all main force army groups to this area. Then, he would recall these forces, and the Vietnamese forces lose all sense of direction. A few abortive operations of this kind and the brief dry monsoon would go by. Navarre's diversionary tactics would gain him time for his other plans. But the Vietnamese command decided to field just one army group then present in the southwestern part of Ninh Binh, and ordered the

other forces to stay put. Navarre's operation in Ninh Binh, far from diverting the attention of the Vietnamese forces, resulted in 1,700 French casualties. It was called off after over a fortnight, and the French troops returned to the Bac Bo delta.

"In mid-December, the Vietnamese forces went ahead with their plans for the winter and spring. One army group was ordered to advance on the North-western Region where, in Lai Chau, French troops were still maintained at an isolated enclave. Another group set out on a long trek to Lower Laos.

"Five days later Navarre airlifted his troops to Dien Bien Phu. He wanted to stop Vietnamese forces which, after annihilating the French enclave at Lai Chau, would be expected to move on to Upper Laos and threaten Luang Prabang. Laos was then a member of the "French Union" in Indochina.

"The Vietnamese command moved another army group to the Northwest.

"Together with its predecessor, this force had the mission of surrounding the units the French had just air-lifted to Dien Bien Phu and wiping out remnants of the French garrison fleeing from Lai Chau.

"Upon learning of a massive Vietnamese concentration in Dien Bien Phu, Navarre sent in more reinforcements and gave instructions for building the valley into a huge defence complex to cope with a Vietnamese offensive.

"After the arrival of most of the French mobile forces in Dien Bien Phu, the Vietnamese command fielded another army group and its newly-formed artillery.

"The French garrison at Dien Bien Phu now totalled twelve carefully selected battalions commanded by hand-picked officers.

"Taking advantage of the depletion of enemy forces in the Bac Bo delta, the Vietnamese command positioned an army group around them while dispatching the rest of another group to the Northwest.

"Dien Bien Phu was thus completely surrounded. But, as the biggest and strongest French defensive position in the whole of Indochina, it armed Navarre with the conviction that attacking Vietnamese forces would be exterminated by the French garrison.

"So, Navarre was forced to give up his plan of avoiding all major encounters in the winter and spring of 1953-54, and had to commit himself to a big battle in the Northwest."

André took his eyes off the map and turned to Colonel Quy.

"I want to know about the mission of the Vietnamese forces which preceded the French army in Dien Bien Phu," he said.

(1) *Nha Xuat Ban Thanh Nien* (Youth Publishing House), Hanoi, 1979.

"Their order was to wipe out the French garrison at Lai Chau," Colonel Quy said.

"Just that?"

"Just that. At least originally."

"And then?"

"As far as I knew, our next moves would be decided by the enemy's reaction."

"Some people said General Giap was laying a trap for Navarre at Dien Bien Phu."

"I don't think our High Command held such a rigid view. You can see from the documents on display here that the Vietnamese command guessed Navarre could probably make a big move in the direction of the Northwest if he detected any movements of Vietnamese troops here."

"What would have happened if Navarre had not moved his troops to Dien Bien Phu?" André asked after a while. "He could easily have moved his mobile columns against your rear in Viet Bac."

"This possibility was also taken into consideration. That was why the French were annoyed when they discovered that one of the Vietnamese army groups had disappeared into thin air. The fact was that that group was still within reach of the French. It was lying in ambush on the palm-tree covered hills in Phu Tho. Should Navarre's troops move to Viet Bac in strength, the second Vietnamese group that was heading for Dien Bien Phu would be promptly pulled back."

"So General Giap did not lay any trap at Dien Phu?"

"You could say so. But you could also say that many traps were being laid at the same time and in many directions. Our primary objective was to force Navarre to disperse his forces and send them, against his will, where they would be at a disadvantage."

THE visitors were next shown the relief map of Dien Bien Phu.

"This is a reduced model of what you saw just now on Hill A1," the museum guide explained.

"More than that," André commented. "At least everything is the same here." (*)

Thanh smiled and switched on the coloured blinkers which marked the two camps. The tiny aircraft and tanks started to move. Artillery batteries flashed intermittently.

André was staring at the bright lines marking Vietnamese trenches which were tightening around French positions.

"Historians are still wondering exactly who worked out these 'nibbling' tactics," he said, looking at the guide. "Those trenches which formed a noose around almost 17,000 crack troops of the French army."

Thanh shot a glance at Colonel Quy.

"According to Colonel Langlais, deputy commander of the Dien Bien Phu garrison, that was an invention of Vauban," André went on.

"Vauban?" Thanh looked at the French visitor questioningly.

"Marquis de Vauban, Marshal of France in the seventeenth century," Colonel Quy explained.

"I wonder if Colonel Langlais will go to the length of saying that the Vietnamese were imitating the guerrilla tactics of the ancient Gauls?" said Mohammed.

"He'll never do that," André replied and, turning to Colonel Quy, he continued: "As a historian I would like to know if these trench tactics had any historical origin, or were just an extension of your previous practice."

"Trench warfare is part of modern warfare. The Vietnamese army, however, prefer-

red hit-and-run attacks and night operations," Colonel Quy said.

"Researchers on the Indochina war say it was a long and unsuccessful quest on the part of the French army for a pitched battle," André remarked.

"But they did find one," Colonel Quy said, "when they built a defence complex. And we were forced to enter a drawn-out battle."

"Although that was against your tradition?"

"You're right to talk of a tradition. It originated because the balance of forces had always been against us. We're always the weaker party, in fire power and equipment. At Hoa Binh we ran into a defence complex set up by De Lattre de Tassigny. The only thing we could do was to lay siege to the French mobile column and pin it down here, allowing our forces on other battlefields to wear out the enemy forces. Another complex, defended by Salan, awaited us at Na San. We tried to take it but could not overcome the overwhelming firepower of the French. Then we knew that we could no longer avoid these tactics, which had become the French army's principal and last resort. To cope with the concerted firepower of aircraft, artillery, tanks and straight trajectory weapons, we came upon the idea of trenches which, in fact, enabled us to close in upon French positions any time we chose."

"My question is: What prompted the Vietnamese to make their trenches mobile?"

"That is not hard to answer. We were the attackers. To reach the enemy we had to extend our trenches."

(*) *Very few vestiges of the historic battle remain in Dien Bien Phu today because the place has been taken over by a thriving State farm — Ed.*

"But you did more than that. Your trenches literally joined in the assault. They crawled across French positions."

"Oh, that was an invention of our troops. One of our regiments was moving in from the west, and our trenches had already reached the perimeter of the Huguette group. While waiting for further instructions our men kept digging. They burrowed past the barbed wire entanglements and arrived at the machine-gun emplacements. Then they jumped out of the trenches and seized the guns. The French gunners fled. As I've said, most of our troops were peasants. They were used to spade work, and they wanted to remove enemy positions as soon as possible. This invention was followed up and made into a new, economical tactic to seal the fate of the Dien Bien Phu complex."

"That sounds very simple. But how did you manage to have such soldiers?"

ANDRÉ slowed down and turned to Colonel Quy, who had been following him silently.

"Colonel, I'm still worrying about what was mentioned by our young friend on our way here. Quite a number of people wrongly believe that the French expeditionary army was defeated in Dien Bien Phu because it was flooded by Viet Minh human waves.

"We did not use the 'human-wave' tactics. That's because we didn't have enough men. We also attached a great value to the lives of our troops."

"I also know that... You had twenty-eight infantry battalions, right?"

"The French had their correct designations."

"And the French had seventeen battalions. They also had

a solid defence complex. They fought in bunkers, with the support of aircraft, tanks and cannons. As a rule, the attacking party must be five or ten times more numerous than the one on the defensive. But the rate was a little more than 1.5 per cent, which was too low."

"Right again."

"So what was the guarantee of your victory? I agreed with Thanh that the bait dangled by General Navarre that winter was too big. The French always had enough supplies to last them nine days. They had enough ammunition for five or eight days. You, though, were supplied on a day-to-day basis, and your field commanders had to think carefully before using each cannon shell. Your men were very brave and intelligent. But, let's face it, they had the characteristic shortcomings of peasants. They could extend their trenches up to enemy blockhouses, but they could not bore tunnels into the bunkers on Hill Al. At least I saw some signs of hesitancy on your part before allowing the battle to begin. You moved your artillery in, and pulled it out again. In fact, you took thirty-seven days to take just one hill. What helped you secure victory, then? A strict comparison will show that with the exception of a high morale you're in no way stronger than the defenders. But more than just high morale is needed to win."

"Thank you, André," Colonel Quy said after a while. "Your point is very interesting. It's true that our High Command had to weigh all the pros and cons before ordering the attack. It was originally decided that 25 January 1954 would be D Day, so to speak. Our intention was to concentrate all our efforts to remove the defence complex within a few days. But, at the last minute, we decided against it, aware that our plan was too uncertain. Later, it was

found that had the battle taken place as originally planned, General Navarre would have succeeded to a certain degree, and our war of resistance would have to go on for many more years. So we had to find a method suited to the balance of forces and our capabilities. You're right when you say that the bait dangled by Navarre was too big: we weren't stronger than the other party. So, we decided to divide the complex into fragments to be removed one by one. Then, in each such battle our troops would be able to deploy an overwhelming strength. We Vietnamese know that it's easier to break a single chopstick than to break a whole bundle of them. So we used the customary method of our troops. We attacked at night, when enemy aircraft become ineffective. We chose a manageable target, which could be disposed of before daybreak so that we could withdraw and take a breather. Perhaps that was what helped us secure victory. And since our numbers weren't limitless, we had to find a way to prevent the French command sending in reinforcements. Suppose for each battalion he had lost Navarre could get a new one, we would have to abandon our offensive sooner or later."

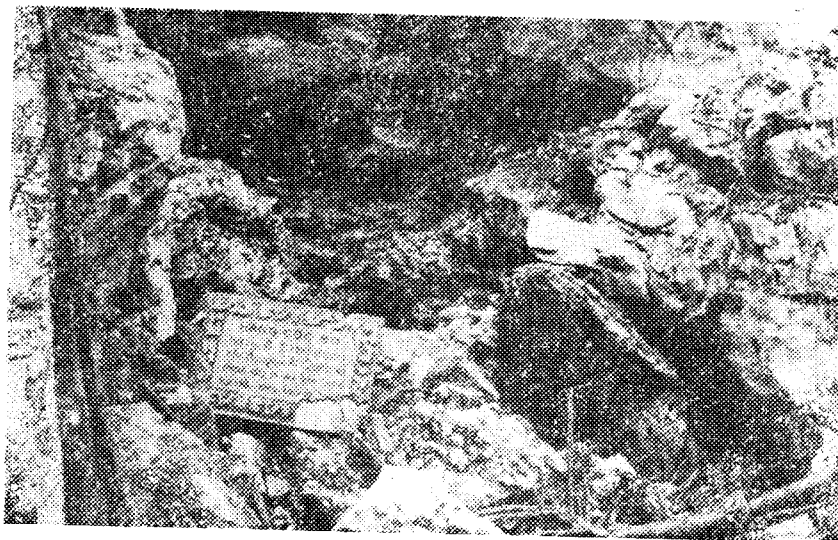
"And Navarre had almost one hundred mobile battalions at his command at the time."

"Correct. But only three of them were available. Our regional forces and guerrillas were engaging Navarre's mobile forces everywhere. Navarre was defeated not because he had lost more than 16,000 crack troops at Dien Bien Phu, but because more than 100,000 French troops, that's to say a quarter of his combat forces, had been wiped out on the whole battlefield that year."

HUU MAI

VIETNAM COURIER

The Symbol of Pac Bo



The Coc Bo grotto after departure of the Chinese troops.

WHEN Ho Chi Minh returned to Vietnam in 1941 he took up residence in a hamlet called Pac Bo. The hamlet is situated near the Chinese border, in one of the most picturesque mountain areas. It was from Pac Bo that he led popular movement which culminated in the success of the great 1945 August Revolution. Recently, the popular administration built a museum and a guesthouse in the hamlet to receive both Vietnamese and overseas visitors.

In their aggression against Vietnam, Deng Xiaoping's troops set on fire and ransacked the whole hamlet, hoping to wipe out for good this historical site which means so much to every Vietnamese.

The destruction of Pac Bo (*) was just part of the Chinese policy to level the

towns of Lao Cai, Cao Bang and Lang Son as well as all the mines, industrial bases, lumber sites, and villages they were able to occupy.

This vandalism strangely recalls the policy of the Ming who occupied Vietnam from 1405 to 1427. The Ming Emperor gave instructions to the commander of his expeditionary corps to destroy every book, monument and artifact which could testify to the originality of the Vietnamese nation and culture. As a result, almost no

great pre-15th century masterpieces of Vietnamese culture still exist. For the Ming thought that in order to annex Vietnam to the Chinese empire it was necessary first of all not only to massacre patriots but also to destroy systematically all traces of Vietnamese history and national culture.

It is terrifying to think of the possibility that Peking might instal in Hanoi their loyal servants like Pol Pot. Fortunately, this is never likely to happen.

(*) Many sections of the roads leading to Pac Bo were dynamited and quite a large number of the inhabitants' homes destroyed. The entrance of the Coc Bo grotto where President Ho Chi Minh lived and worked was dynamited, and many surrounding trees were burnt down. The wooden house on stilts with a palm-leaf roof standing beside the Khuoi Nam stream was the site of the 8th plenum of the Party Central Committee from 10 to 19 May 1941. That house was destroyed, too.

The doors and windows of the museum and guesthouse were smashed. Many valuable exhibits relating to the President's life and work were destroyed.



*Hua Tu Phuong
(centre) with
other members of
her militia unit.*

PEOPLE'S WAR

Militia Unit in Tan An

New Fighters

IN the beginning, the militia unit of Tan An in the border town of Cao Bang was composed only of 17 ordinary townspeople: craftsmen and crafts-women and housewives. The unit had in all five rifles, an obsolete tommy-gun and some other rudimentary weapons. Just after the Chinese invasion of Cao Bang province, the unit received the order to defend an enclave on a hill northwest of the town.

On the morning of 18 February 1979, when firing was heard nearer and nearer the town, the unit was reinforced by new members who, instead of evacuating as planned, were willing to join up to defend their home town.

Two sisters Kham Thi Dao and Kham Thi Hoa, of the Nung minority and members of a local weaving cooperative, came back to the town from their place of

evacuation to join the militia unit. After arranging things in her office and seeing her family off to safety, an infant-school teacher, Dinh Thi Huyen, said to the militia unit, "I have never handled a gun before but I can do any work to serve the fighting. Let me remain with you to defend our town."

Hua Tu Phuong and Hua Tu Hoa, two Vietnamese sisters of Chinese extraction, working at a wheat pasta factory, said, "We've got no guns but we can work in ammunition supplies." As Hua Tu Phuong had four children, the militia unit refused to accept her, but she said, "We cannot abandon our town while it is facing invasion."

When the enemy shelling of the town began, Luong Thi Ty, a 6th-year second-level school student, ran to the battlefield of the militia unit, took up a gun and asked to join in the fight. After one day the unit was reinforced by another new member, Hoang Tien Le, of the Tay minority, an employee of the Cao Bang radio station. This ex-serviceman came to the unit with his rifle.

Before the engagement, the militia unit numbered 26 fighters from four ethnic groups: Tay, Nung, Vietnamese of Chinese origin, and plains Vietnamese. Seven of its members were teenage girls. The commander was Be Duc Duong, a mechanic, who was succeeded after his death by Hoang Tien Le.

The First Battle

IT began on the morning of 20 February 1979. For two hours, the unit was subject-

ed to heavy shelling by enemy long-range guns and the fire of their infantry attempting to take

the hill. As support for the infantry, the enemy placed two B40's on the left flank of the hill and two DKZ's on the right flank, to harass the frontline of the militia unit. At the foot of the hill were installed enemy mortars of 82 mm and 60 mm, of which one was at the rear to cut off the unit's path of retreat. The whole battlefield was enveloped in a thick cloud of smoke and dust. Wave after wave of Chinese troops stormed our positions but were stopped by our minefields. As they drew nearer to our line, Be Duc Duong gave the order to open fire. Many of them were mown down. Luong Thi Ty stood up to fire at the enemy but she was knocked over by a mortar shell exploding nearby. She stood up again and resumed the fighting. In another assault, when drawing near our battlefield, the enemy received a volley of hand grenades from the militia who, before hurling their grenades, did not fail to warn each other: "Throw your hand grenades three to seven seconds after pulling out the pin so that they explode before the enemy can throw them back." Meanwhile, other members of the unit fighting in the frontline fired at the fleeing soldiers with their rifles and tommy guns. Hoang Thi Hoa was cooking the meals for the unit but she left off to throw hand grenades at the aggressors. The cauldron of rice was hit by a shell but she resumed cooking as soon as the enemy withdrew to the foot of the hill.

Soon after, the positions of the militia unit were pounded with enemy shells. In this wave of attack, cymbals and bugles were used to encourage the enemy troops to advance. Drawing on their past experience, our fighters economized on cartridges by sniping at the enemy. By their accuracy, they wiped out all of

the aggressors who managed to advance through the minefields. Be Duc Duong noticed a Chinese soldier hiding behind a hillock to guide the shelling by radio. He stood to his feet to take aim, but was hit by a bullet and his last words to his comrades were, "Try to keep the battlefield". As for Nguyen Van Lien, after throwing four hand grenades, his right arm was half torn off. He persuaded Hua Tu Phuong to cut the arm right off so that it would not impede his movement, and

collapsed into the trench after throwing five more grenades. Although hit in the shoulder, Truong Thi Ha went on fighting and had her wound dressed only after the end of the enemy's second attack.

Up to 4 o'clock in the afternoon, the enemy launched four other assaults which were all repelled by the Tan An militia unit who then started straight away to consolidate their fighting positions in prevision of further engagements.

At Night

AFTER repelling six enemy attacks during the day, the new commander, Hoang Tien Le, a mechanic, divided the militia unit into three sections. Section 1, under Hua Tu Phuong's command, was to search enemy corpses for weapons and ammunition. Section 2, commanded by Phan Quang Dan, was entrusted with the task of consolidating and defending the battlefield. Section 3 went with the unit commander to get more food and munitions from the higher authorities. The three groups, having succeeded in these tasks and also captured two enemy spies, met together at midnight. Before sleeping, they distributed weapons and ammunition and elaborated the next day's combat plans. During the next day they fought back five enemy assaults without suffering any casualty. This night, one section remained to consolidate the fortifications while another went in search of enemy troops to harass them. They attacked the enemy command post and signal centre with hand grenades. Although they did not know how heavy enemy casualties were, they reported that after the attack they could no longer hear the bleep of the radio apparatus.

The following night, the militia coordinated their actions with a regional army unit to attack an enemy formation superior in number.

OUR fighters learnt from their experiences of the first days of fighting, so they were able to defend their position and repel 26 enemy attacks, killing 300 enemy soldiers, capturing two, and seizing a large quantify of arms and ammunition.

Though small in number and not sufficiently equipped, our fighters were resolved to defend their town, they knew the terrain, built solid fortifications and strengthened them by obstacles and minefields. They set up fire-nests, solid shelters and adequate camouflage. They were thoroughly acquainted with their plan of attack, got a sufficient quantity of food and munitions and had an efficient command. For this reason they were able to foil many attacks of a Chinese regiment using "human-wave" tactics and supported by long-range artillery.

P.C.Y.

TREATY ON A SEPARATE SETTLEMENT OF THE MIDDLE-EAST PROBLEM

THE spokesman of the SRV Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement on 27 March 1979, the full text of which is as follows:

"With the arrangement of the USA, a bilateral treaty between Israel and Egypt on the Middle-East problem was signed in Washington on 26 March 1979. The treaty does not demand Israel's withdrawal of troops from the whole of occupied Arab territories, does not raise the fundamental national rights of the Palestinian people, and denies the role of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The signing of this treaty has been strongly condemned by the Arab people and progressive world public opinion.

"The recent great victories of the movement for liberation and national independence in Western Asia, the Red Sea and southern Africa, struck fear into the US imperialists and their reactionary sidekicks. They feverishly started conflicts in South Yemen and Afghanistan, stepped up supplies of weapons to US henchmen, and dispatched US aircraft carriers and warships to the Arab Gulf, in an attempt to check the revolutionary movements and protect American interests in the Middle-East.

"The signing of the above-mentioned treaty was part of the scheme of the USA and Israel to abolish the fundamental national rights of the Palestinian people, deny the role of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and divide and weaken the Arab countries. This treaty not only failed to return peace, but also encouraged the aggressive and warlike policy of the imperialists and Israel, thus paving the way for

perpetuating Israel's occupation of the territories of Arab countries.

"Together with the Arab people and progressive people all over the world, the Vietnamese people and the SRV Government sternly condemn the sinister scheme of the US and Israel, and consider that the signing of this treaty is a betrayal of the interests of the Palestinian and Arab peoples, and contravenes the resolutions of the summit conference of the Arab countries, of the non-aligned countries and of the UNO.

"The SRV Government and the Vietnamese people reaffirm their consistent stand of supporting the just struggle of the Palestinian and Arab peoples against imperialism and the Zionist aggressors. They hold that any correct solution to the Middle-East problem should include Israel's withdrawal from the whole of the occupied Arab territories and respect of the fundamental national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to set up their own state. The Palestine Liberation Organization — the genuine representative of the Palestinian people — must have the right to take part in negotiations on the Middle-East issue.

"The Vietnamese people and the SRV Government are confident that the Palestinian and Arab peoples, imbued with the spirit of solidarity and determination to fight and to win, will certainly overcome all difficulties and trials, and bring their just cause to a victorious end, for they enjoy the sympathy and support of the people in all the socialist countries and of justice- and peace-loving forces the world over."

Facts and Events

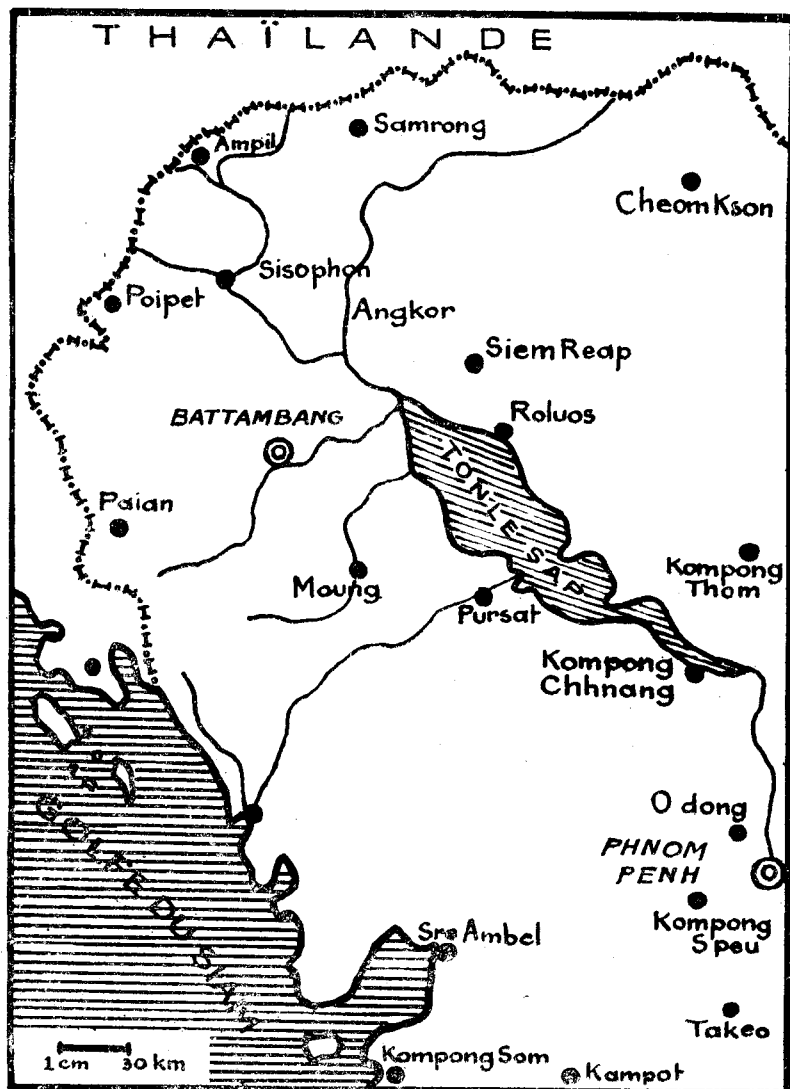
Poor China!

WHY did China launch an army half a million strong against Vietnam? In the 13 March 1979 issue of *Le Monde*, Alain Jacob reported that Peking wanted "Vietnam to take more account in her foreign policy of Chinese interests in Southeast Asia". That's all. Therefore there is nothing to worry about.

Why is China deploying several divisions along the border with Laos and trying to sow troubles among Lao's many ethnic groups?

In the same issue of *Le Monde*, Paringaux supplied the following explanation: "By openly expressing their solidarity with Vietnam the Lao leaders have aroused Chinese hostility toward them. If tomorrow Chinese troops cross the border into Laos, or if dissenting elements, instigated by Peking, rebel against them, the leaders in Vientiane will reap what they have sown."

Poor China! Bullied by Vietnam, not even respected by little Laos (population 3 million), she has no choice but to react firmly. It is clear enough which side *Le Monde* was on in this war. This helps explain more clearly why that newspaper started such a fierce campaign against Vietnam last year.



AGONY OF THE POL POT – IENG SARY ARMY

AFTER they were driven from Phnom Penh on 7 January 1979, Pol Pot and Ieng Sary, followed by the remnants of their army, fled to the mountains in the west and north-west.

In this flight, they dragged along thousands of peasants. Pol Pot, Ieng Sary and other top

men and their families were carried on litters, through jungles and across mountains.

Believing in the security provided them by the difficult terrain, and taking advantage of the proximity with Thailand for communications and supplies, Pol Pot and Ieng Sary sought to strengthen their forces, fortify

their hideout, and build up reserves of ammunition and food for a "protracted guerrilla war" against the people and the revolutionary administration. They penned up hundreds of thousands of people for slave labour, killing off anyone unwilling to work for them. More than 1,000 people were executed for this reason in eastern Amleng, Kompong Speu, in March 1979. A propaganda radio station dubbed "Voice of Democratic Kampuchea" was built for them in Yunnan, China.

An urgent task of the revolutionary administration, therefore, is to wipe out these remnants of the Pol Pot – Ieng Sary regime, to ensure a normal life for the people. To do this, attacks by the revolutionary army have been combined with uprisings of the people in enemy-held areas.

According to the Kampuchean news agency SPK, the Kampuchean armed forces launched violent attacks on the enemy's nerve centres in southern Tasseing in southwestern Battambang, some ten kilometres from the border with Thailand, and on 27 March 1979 they took control of the whole area, which consisted of a defence perimeter — placed between eight to fifteen kilometres from the centre and formed by gun emplacements and minefields — a middle ring of offices, communications installations, and shelters and, finally, the quarters reserved for Pol Pot and Ieng Sary themselves, complete with bunkers, well-furnished offices and houses.

Searches were also conducted in Pailin and western Battambang where, from 27 to 30 March, the revolutionary forces captured or killed more than 1,000 enemy troops. They also seized thou-

sands of weapons, including many big cannons, took or destroyed almost one hundred vehicles, and took over many ammunition and food depots. Tens of thousands of people were liberated.

Hard pressed, Pol Pot and Ieng Sary fled to Thailand, even leaving behind the seal of the so-called "Foreign Ministry of Democratic Kampuchea" and many Chinese-issued service passports. One passport, numbered SS 102470 and dated 27 January 1979, bears Ieng Sary's photograph and the Chinese name of Su Hao, born in Peking on 1 January 1930.

The revolutionary armed forces also assaulted the "general headquarters" of the enemy in Am-leng, Kompong Speu province. Over 1,000 Pol Pot men were put out of action, taken prisoner or surrendered. Arms depots containing tens of thousands of guns, hundreds of military vehicles, some radio equipment, and large quantities of food were seized. Almost 60,000 people detained by the enemy were set free.

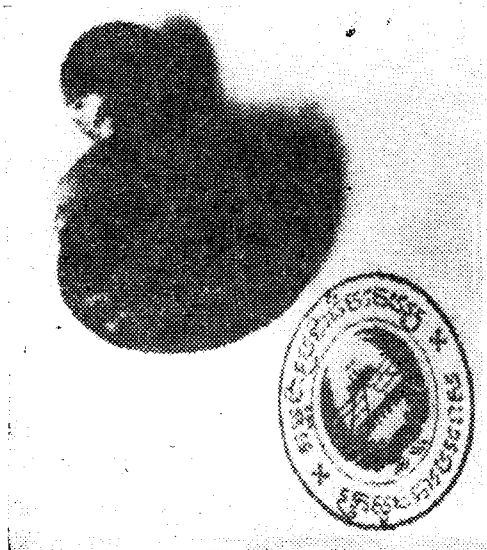
In the provinces of Takeo and Kampot, the revolutionary armed forces and population together stormed the base of the former Southwest Military Sector based on Mount Elephant, Ta Am area, wiping out or capturing more than 1,300 enemy troops, and taking many food and arms depots. They liberated tens of thousands of people from enemy coercion and helped those displaced persons return to their homes.

Action has also been taken to track down enemy remnants in Poipet, west of Sisophon in Battambang, and in Ampil, west of Samrong in Oddar Mean Chay. Hundreds of enemy troops have already been killed

or taken prisoner, together with their weapons, and large quantities of food were seized. Many others have fled to Thailand.

Commenting on this situation, the French paper *Le Monde* of 17 April said that the clique of Pol Pot and Ieng Sary had been smashed to pieces and had virtually lost all control. Observers in Bangkok have also speculated that these may very well

be the last attacks by Pol Pot forces before being driven out of Kampuchea completely with the advent of the rainy season beginning toward the end of next month. Those elements that have escaped to Thailand also show signs of desperation, and, despite covert help from certain Thai circles, there is no doubt that the end of the Pol Pot remnants is drawing near.



The seal of Pol Pot's "Foreign Ministry" (above). Ieng Sary's passport (below).



A GREAT FRIEND: INDIA

BANGKOK-DELHI on Air India was a very pleasant journey: the airliner was comfortable, the staff most courteous. My neighbour, stout and grey-haired, and apparently a businessman, began the conversation with some reserve:

"Are you Japanese?" he asked.

"No, I am Vietnamese," I said.

"Ah, Vietnam! We Indians are on your side, all of us, against China's aggression."

The ice was quickly and completely broken. It was my first contact with India.

The same dialogue was to be repeated several times during my stay in India this March—Japanese? No, Vietnamese. Ah, Vietnam! With hotel staff, university teachers and students, journalists, etc. When a shopkeeper found that I was Vietnamese he did not know what to say as I knew not a word of Hindi. Then he embraced me and raised his fist shouting, "Vietnam! Vietnam!" Stopping off in a village on the Delhi-Agra road, I was quickly surrounded by a friendly crowd. The old village chief told me—seriously or jokingly I do not know—"We have volunteers ready to go and fight in Vietnam!" Sri Yodhendrea, a man over 80 with a long silver beard, talked to me at length about the philosophy of yoga. I expected that this venerable *rishi* would not be very much interested in international affairs, so I was very surprised when as I was leaving he shook my hand warmly and said, "I feel great admiration for the Vietnamese people."

Ever since 17 February, the gates of the Chinese embassy had remained practically always closed, for there had been a succession of rallies, demonstrations and pickets outside. With all this protesting, the Chinese ambassador simply made himself scarce. Once a crowd of women came and shouted, "A big country like China attacking heroic Vietnam! Shame, shame!" There are many political parties in India, with differing viewpoints and lines, but they are united against the Chinese aggression towards Vietnam. The divisions between right and left, between different classes and castes, and religions disappear, as all come together to shout, "Total solidarity with Vietnam! Down with the Peking aggressors!"

The Indian Government formally declared its demand of total, immediate, and unconditional withdrawal of Chinese troops from Vietnam. The opposition also extended generous support. Mrs. Indira Gandhi declared, "We have been with the Vietnamese people, we are today with them and we think we shall always be with them whether in times of travail or in peace."

This unanimity of public opinion is expressed in the press of all sides. *Indian Express* of 7 March wrote that the word "punish" used by Deng Xiaoping smacks of imperialism and is reminiscent of the days of colonialism. On the same day *Hindustan Times* printed a cartoon showing Chinese troops vainly trying to get out of Vietnam. All the papers ridiculed the "lesson" that Peking said it would teach Vietnam; some also blamed Washington for what happened. The weekly *Blitz* said openly that "the atavistic hegemonic ambition of the Han empire is this time in blatant collusion with US imperialism and its NATO alliance." *New Wave* likened Deng Xiaoping to Hitler who, when he attacked Poland in 1939 thereby 'sparking off the Second World War, declared that Germany was only countering Polish provocations.

A large section of public opinion would have liked the Indian Government to adopt an even more energetic position so as to contribute effectively to the defence of peace. In the view of this section, non-alignment does not consist in making pledges all round but in resolutely defending the national independence of peoples who come under attack and in safeguarding peace. In particular, Indian recognition of the new Kampuchea Government could only heighten India's international prestige and give India the initiative in the international arena. Such is the opinion expressed by *Patriot*, *New Wave*, and *Mainstream*, and such is also the view of Madhu Limaye, General Secretary of the Janata Party at present in government.

Indian journals also mention the deep disagreements that divide the Peking rulers and the opposition trends which are taking shape in China. The *Times of India* of 15 March printed an article depicting how thousands of high-ranking officials of the Peking regime were holding parties in the Tien An Men palaces while peasants demonstrated outside in the bitter cold, shouting, "We want rice and clothing!"

It is certain that in the present conflict opposing us to the Peking hegemonists and their imperialist allies, the whole of India is siding with Vietnam, much more unanimously and resolutely than during the American aggression.

In his book on his country's foreign policy, Indian Foreign Minister Vajapayee wrote: "It is a matter of some pride that India is the first country outside the socialist bloc to which Vietnam, which is as much non-aligned as it is socialist, has turned for a close, abiding and mutually advantageous relationship."

Vietnam in turn is proud and happy to have a great friend like India.

Hanoi — Delhi
March 1979

NGUYEN KHAC VIEN

APPEAL

OF THE VIETNAM COMMISSION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD

SINCE the early days of the August Revolution, taking care of and protecting children and teenagers has become an important policy of the Vietnamese State. The Vietnamese people's fine tradition of respecting the elderly and loving children combined with the will to fight for independence and freedom, has been continually brought into full play.

The movement called "Let the whole people protect, take care of and educate teenagers and children" has inspired all branches of activity and people of all walks of life, parents, brothers and sisters, to heighten their sense of responsibility, and combine their efforts in looking after the future and happiness of children.

The socialist regime, the State and the people of Vietnam take a great interest in the welfare of the children and teenagers because they are the future builders of the country, the generation which will take up the work of building and defending the country, the source of every family's joy and happiness. "To do everything for the bright future and happiness of our children" is also one of the ideals for which every Vietnamese, father, mother, brother or sister, is yearning. And to attain that goal we shun no hardships or sacrifices, and are determined to fight for the freedom and independence of our Fatherland.

President Ho Chi Minh, the respected and

beloved teacher of the Vietnamese Revolution, taught us:

"In our ten-year-term interests, let us grow trees,
In our one-hundred-year-term interests, let us grow people."

President Ho set an example of a life devoted to the struggle for national independence, and for the freedom and happiness of the people. He also gave our children "Uncle Ho's Five Teachings". Our children have been doing their utmost to carry out those teachings well, and have made many praiseworthy achievements.

President Ho Chi Minh's deep concern expresses the essence of the noble tradition of the Vietnamese people towards the future builders of the country. With him this fine tradition has been turned into the whole people's glorious revolutionary task.

Indeed, in spite of extremely difficult conditions the country suffers to undergo a long and barbarous war of aggression by the imperialists, and in spite of an under-developed economy, our Party, Government and people have paid constant attention to protecting, taking care of and educating children. To this effect, educational, cultural, public health, physical culture and sports activities as well as the movement to protect the mother and infant, have been stepped up and

ACTIVITIES OF THE VIETNAM COMMISSION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD

— On 17 July 1978, the Prime Minister issued a decision setting up a 12-member commission composed of all the branches concerned with children, to be headed by Vice-President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Nguyen Huu Tho.

— On 23 August, the commission made a nationwide appeal on the International Year of the Child.

— In December, the commission convened a conference of representatives from all the provinces to inform them about the programmes of activities in Vietnam for the International Year of the Child. Provincial commissions were set up.

— The commission is taking steps to encourage the widest

possible participation in the international drawing competition on the theme: "How Will the Children Live in the Year 2000?" and in the competition "To Compose Songs for Children in 1979".

— The commission approved the design of a Vietnamese emblem for the International Year of the Child.

In February 1979

— The commission brought together the leaders of all the country's children's clubs to talk about improving their work.

— It reprinted and circulated widely literature on education inside the family as a contri-

bution to the movement for improved child-care.

— It held work sessions with such organizations as the Children's Committee, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture and Information, the Ministry of Public Health, the Committee for Mother and Child Welfare, the Fine Arts Workers' Association, the Animated Cartoon Studio and the Marionette Theatre on their programmes for the International Year of the Child.

— It will issue special postage stamps and envelopes for the International Year of the Child.

— The Commission took part in the international conferences on child-care and education in Athens and in Manila.

have scored many successes of which we can be proud.

In response to the 1976 Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, the Vietnam Commission for the International Year of the Child has been set up. It sets itself the task of mobilizing all State offices, popular organizations and families to make every effort to win for Vietnamese children a happy life, in which they are constantly taken care of, fully educated in the love and affection of their parents, sisters and brothers and of the whole society.

In this spirit we call on:

— The whole people of Vietnam to participate in the movement "Let the whole people protect, take care of and educate teenagers and children" launched by President Ton Duc Thang.

— Administrative organs of all branches, and at all levels to review their own programmes and plans, to improve on what they have already achieved, to work out programmes of a more concrete nature with a view to protecting, taking care of and educating children, and helping them to become the future masters of their country and their lives.

— All mass and social organizations and all families to heighten their sense of responsibility towards the younger generation; on that basis, and relying on the contributions made by the people, to mobilize a broad mass movement and to bring into play the role of the State organizations, in order to ensure the good implementation of Party policies regarding education; all this to help educate children into new people, the future collective masters of the country.

— All Vietnamese teenagers and children to study hard in a spirit of emulation, carry out "Uncle Ho's Five Teachings" conscientiously and

strive to become worthy of the title "Good nephews and nieces of Uncle Ho" and of the pride of our people and our country.

In the work for the benefit of teenagers and children in Vietnam, our people have enjoyed much assistance from other countries and international organizations. The Vietnamese people are deeply grateful for that warm and disinterested support.

Today Vietnam is an independent and unified country and the Vietnamese people are actively building socialism in the whole country. However, the Vietnamese people's peaceful labour and quiet life is being threatened by the forces of imperialism and international reaction. We appeal to people of conscience and worldwide public opinion, all those who supported the Vietnamese people in their struggle against US aggression, for national salvation, independence and freedom, to continue to support us in the struggle to safeguard our sovereignty, national independence and the peaceful life of the people and children of Vietnam.

We are confident that the efforts of the Vietnamese people and the support of friends across the five continents will enable the International Year of the Child in Vietnam to achieve good successes, marking a new step forward in the work of protecting, taking care of and educating teenagers and children, and contributing to the common struggle of the people of all countries for peace and happiness of the children all over the world.

Hanoi, 23 August 1978

THE VIETNAM COMMISSION
FOR THE INTERNATIONAL
YEAR OF THE CHILD



VIETNAM'S EMBLEM FOR THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD

The upright bamboo shoot is the traditional symbol of Vietnamese children. It was used for the insigna of the Vietnam Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade (now the Ho Chi Minh Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade).

«How Will the Children Live in the Year 2000?»

IN response to a decision of UNESCO, UNICEF and UNHCR and Air France to organize an international children's drawing competition, the Vietnam Commission for the International Year of the Child and other concerned bodies have been arranging for Vietnamese children to take part.

A ceremony to start off the movement was held at the end of 1978 at the Hanoi Children's Cultural House and was attended by 500 Hanoi children fond of drawing. Tran Van Can, a well-known painter and General Secretary of the Vietnam Fine Arts Workers' Association, was invited to preside over the jury.

"How will the children live in the year 2000?" is certainly an

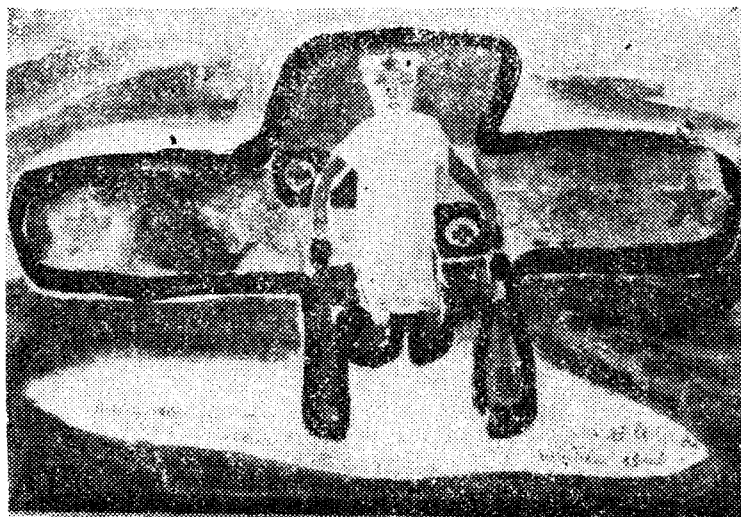
interesting topic which will inspire Vietnamese children and make them think of the good prospects for Vietnam.

Four months after the movement was launched, the competition has drawn to a close with nearly 10,000 entries sent in from children all over the country.

On 14 April 1979, the Vietnam Commission for the International Year of the Child and the Ministry of Culture and Information put on display more than 100 drawings selected from those sent in, including 10 outstanding ones chosen for the international competition at the Fine Arts Exhibition Hall in Hanoi.



The International Competition for the Composition of Songs for Children in 1979



"The Year 2000 — No more diseases on earth, so doctors will have to fly to other planets to cure the sick" by Van Tien, 11 years old, from Hue.



"2000 — New Year on the Moon" by Nguyen Nhu Phuong, 9 years old, from Hanoi.

"How will the children live in the year 2000?"

Photos: THU HOAI

FOR a long time children's songs have played an important role in Vietnamese musical life. The works of such musicians as Phong Nha, Pham Tuyen, Van Chung and Hoang Van are very much appreciated by children and also by grown-ups.

This is the first time that Vietnam is taking part in such an international competition. It is hoped that musicians will be encouraged to write new songs bringing together love of their country with the love of peace and international friendship. These songs should combine modern and national traditional elements.

The competition started in Hanoi on 10 January 1979. The organizations helping to run it include the Vietnam Commission for the International Year of the Child, the Vietnamese Musicians' Association, the Vietnamese Writers' Association, the Ministry of Culture and Information, the Ministry of Education and the Central Committee of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union. A seven-member jury is headed by musician Nguyen Xuan Khoat, President of the Vietnamese Musicians' Association.

In early April this year, the Jury's choice fell on the two following entries from two young poets:

This Earth Belongs To Us

I

*This earth is ours
A blue ball in a blue sky.
I hear a dove cooing
I see a seagull's wings caress the waves!
Let's fly together and let the earth turn!
Let's fly together and let the earth turn!*

II

*This earth is ours
Whether our skins are yellow, white or black,
Dear friends, we are all precious flowers.
The wind carries scents and the sun brightens
all colours,
Whatever the colour the flowers are precious and
smell sweet,
Whatever the colour our skins are just as precious
and sweet.*

III

*This earth is ours
Hand in hand we smile to each other
Each morning we'll sing to the happy day,
Let's study hard and build a happy life.
This planet is ours!
This planet is ours!*

DINH HAI
Hanoi

Vietnam! This Sky... This Earth...

I

*Fly away, dark clouds
Let no more the thunder of bombs be heard.
We want a clear, blue sky,
We want Peace on earth.
Set to flight, fluttering wings of birds
Roses, blossom soon!
So that this world may be a flower garden!
And this sky be filled with the wings of doves!*

II

*Let us hear a song of love
Let us go to school.
We want a blue and quiet sky
We want Peace on earth.
Let us enjoy the soft moon light
Give us a peaceful sleep
So that this earth may be a warm cradle,
And the sky gives wings to our dreams!*

DIEP MINH TUYEN
Ho Chi Minh City

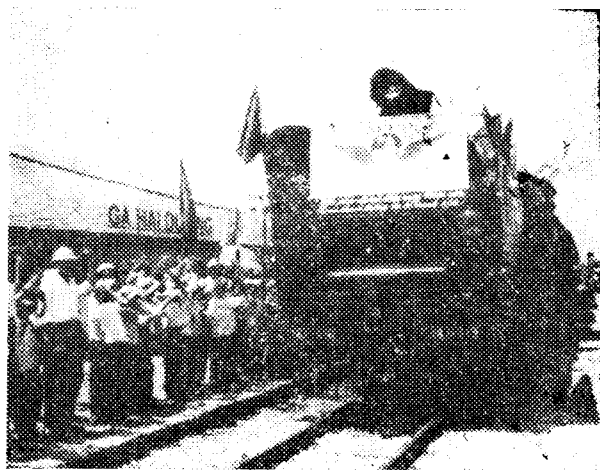
Composers throughout the country have been invited to set the above poems to music. The works selected will be performed by the Son Ca (Nightingale) Choir of the Voice of Vietnam Radio at the world competition to be held later this year.

UNCLE HO'S FIVE TEACHINGS TO CHILDREN

1. Love our Fatherland, love our compatriots
2. Study well and work well
3. Show unity and good discipline always
4. Be clean and hygienic
5. Be modest, honest and courageous



Waste Paper for a Train



ON the morning of 1 January 1979, a ceremony was held at the Hanoi railway station, colourfully decorated for the occasion. The air rang with the sound of nearly a thousand children singing. They were there to meet a train named "Vanguard Pioneer", built by the common efforts of children all over the country under their "Vanguard Pioneers' mini-plan".

This plan was fulfilled by the energetic activities of Vietnamese children and has a great educational and economic significance. Collecting waste paper and materials, doing manual labour and agricultural work and making handicrafts

(Continued on page 25)



The "19 May" crèche

Socialist-oriented Child-care *in Ho Chi Minh City*

THE socialist transformation of private capitalist industry and commerce in Ho Chi Minh City has given good results. Overcoming innumerable difficulties originating from an economy which not long ago was dependent on foreign investments, the city is deploying considerable efforts to rid itself of a parasitical lifestyle inherited from the neo-colonialist regime. From a consumer society inflated with American handouts it is now transforming itself into an important industrial and handicraft centre. The inhabitants, consumers themselves, have to produce for their own use as well as for national economic progress. Such is the general orientation that shapes life in Ho Chi Minh City. The services sector, formerly swollen out of all proportion, is being gradually reduced for the benefit of the

productive sector now in the foreground of economic activities. Public health and education, restructured to serve the labouring people, have been extended to each city ward. Another great service is being rendered to the population by the newly founded system of crèches and kindergartens. This is also a mass movement developed by the

joint efforts of the State and the people. It is sponsored by the Municipal Committee for Mother and Child Welfare, whose task includes the application of child-care to the context of a country economically underdeveloped but engaged in socialist construction without going through the stage of capitalist development.

Legacy of Neo-Colonialism

ACCORDING to information by USAID 51 of the 60 foreign charity organizations founded in southern Vietnam in 1954 were still operating at the time of liberation, with an annual budget varying between 30,000 and 3,000,000 dollars. Fifteen of these sponsored orphanages and five others maintained children's refugees. There

were also seven organizations concerned with sending "adoptees" abroad.(1) As for the 34 Vietnamese-run social organizations operating with the authorization of the Saigon Interior Ministry, one-third were devoted to the care of children.

The number of these orphanages and institutions, however, was too big for the funds availa-

ble to charity work, but too small for southern Vietnam's population of more than 20 million. An idea of this can be gleaned from the following figures:

<i>Orphanages :</i>	134
sponsored by	
— Catholic organizations :	85
— Buddhist organizations :	18
— Protestant organizations :	11
— Private individuals :	18
— the State :	2
<i>Children's institutions :</i>	413
sponsored by	
— Catholic organizations :	287
— Buddhist organizations :	83
— Protestant organizations :	4
— Private individuals :	118
— the State :	21

Thus religious patronage was given to 85% of the orphanages and 66% of the children's institutions, with at least 10,000 children.

In Saigon at the time of liberation 42 orphanages and a number of child-care centres (for a population of about 3.5 million) were transferred to the revolutionary administration from religious or private patronage. The child-care centres were mostly located in working-class areas on the outskirts. Parents, who worked all day long, sent their children to these centres where nuns looked after them to keep them out of trouble.

There were several thousand children in the orphanages. Only half of them were true orphans — children of Saigon soldiers killed in action. They were of all ages. Some were 18 or even 20 years old.

Officially speaking these institutions were sponsored by charity organizations.

Of course, international funds were often raised with the best intentions. Hundreds of religious and lay personnel devoted themselves completely to the hapless children, and many continue to serve under the new regime. Orphanages, centres for handicapped children, leprosy hospitals, and hostels, generally

speaking, did provide real shelter for the disinherited.

But it is also true that under US neo-colonialism these charity institutions were often used as covers for sinister schemes. Paramilitary, and even "humanitarian", activities had to serve "the other war, the war without guns", against communism. Crippled children and orphans were also used for political objectives. Pictures of children affected with rickets or disabled by other diseases, of illegitimate children fathered by Americans, touchingly displayed in the West, were meant to move public opinion and justify "humanitarian aid" to the Saigon regime. In a letter dated 16 April 1974, and addressed to the director of American Catholic Aid, Father Mc Veigh, director of the Vietnamese branch, said: "From a discussion we just had with USAID, we realized that one of the main objectives of the programme for the settlement of children, besides securing aid for these children, consisted in helping an ailing economy." The evacuation

of children to the United States, organized by Saigon not long before liberation, was aimed, as Phan Quang Dan, Vice-Premier and Minister of Social Affairs, in his letter No. 1388 — BXH/KHLA/VP on 2 April 1975, to Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem, cynically admitted, at "bringing about a change in American public opinion in favour of the Republic of Vietnam. These orphans particularly, once in the United States, will receive coverage by radio, television networks and press agencies, which will have a considerable impact on the public".

These charity institutions, besides, were part of the machinery of psychological warfare. The point was to exalt the "spirit of sacrifice" of the mercenaries, to soothe a suffering population subject to "pacification" campaigns and "search-and-destroy" raids. Last but not least, they allowed certain groups or individuals close to the ruling circles to cover up their misappropriation of public funds.

The Socialist Orientation

THE Committee for Mother and Child Welfare in Ho Chi Minh City is trying to transform this inadequate, disparate and wrongly conceived structure by giving it a new orientation.

This is because, in the socialist view, these institutions are not just doing charity work. They have an important socio-political character. The protection of children should not be solely motivated by affection and solicitude, but must also be prompted by the desire to fulfil a revolutionary task — to train future generations right from infancy.

The committee, in observation of regulations provided for the whole country, limits its activ-

ity to children from two months to 36 months old. (2)

By the end of 1978, 307 crèches had been set up or founded on the basis of former orphanages and child-care centres. Of these, 253 were located in the wards, 27 run by public offices and factories, and 27 situated in the suburbs. Children in their care totalled 10,085.

The figures may not be very impressive, considering the city's population of three million, including 300,000 children in the crèche age group and an equal number of kindergarten and preschool age. But, in comparison with other provinces in the South, the city has made a very good start, and the early and rapid development of the work there, in fact, is designed to cope with a new, urgent situation — the transfer of tens of

thousands of revolutionary cadres to the city, the employment of hundreds of thousands of women, many of them mothers, in factories, handicraft or small industry collectives, ward co-operatives, State stores and other enterprises. Hence the need for crèches to take care of the children while their mothers are working.

The City Party Committee, therefore, is concentrating on the protection of women and children, with emphasis on the building of crèches. Measures taken, including a month-long search for sites, will make it possible for each ward to be provided with one or two crèches, and it is expected that there will be enough crèches for 80 per cent of the children. It is the view of the Party Committee that since socialism has not yet become a palpable reality to all, children should be the first to enjoy its early achievements. This concern, of course, is shared by other municipal bodies including the Housing Service and the Building Service, whose assistance is all the more valuable, considering the present shortage of materials.

Take the "19 May" (President Ho Chi Minh's birthday) crèche, in Nguyen Du Street, First District. This former orphanage sponsored by the Association of Women of Goodwill had about one hundred children from 4 to 20 years old and was housed at No.111. The building had previously been a stable and then a warehouse.

The orphanage was transferred to the Women's Union in May 1975. Following a visit in October 1976 by Vo Van Kiet, then deputy-secretary of the City Party Committee, it was extended to include No.107 and No.109, respectively a villa of the father-in-law of ex-King Bao Dai and the former South Korean embassy. The new buildings, with their vast halls and landscaped gardens, are now used for 296 children under the care of 42 crèche-attendants. The old building, No.111, has been turned into

the kitchen. The new personnel include four former employees.

"19 May", of course, is not the only front-rank crèche in the city. There are the crèches of the Saigon Harbour, the BGI soft drinks factory, the Thu Duc power station, the Ha Tien Cement Factory, the Sewage Company and others.

The City Committee for Mother and Child Welfare also attaches importance to the training of crèche-attendants. In the absence of a specialized teaching staff the task has been assumed by the committee's 36 members (five of whom come from other parts of the country, the rest Saigonese) in conjunction with the leadership of the crèches and in the light of research on child-care conducted in the actual conditions of the city. The first batch of graduates totalled 1,643, among them about one hundred nuns. They are all between 18 and 25, and all of them have had many years of formal education — some have had one or two years of college, 400 are graduates of the 12-year secondary schools, and the rest eighth-graders. Their love of children and their devotion to their calling have been a great help in acquiring professional knowledge and in its application. The nuns, in the light of new concepts, have realized that their present work has nothing to do with the inadequate effort of a monastery or a charity organization, but it is a major task which is the concern of the Party, the State and the whole nation. It is a noble profession and is in no way a charitable work. They do not look after the children just so that their parents may go to work. They have to master the art of education to help train a new type of people. This realization gives a new scope to their love and devotion, and increases their efficiency.

Research on child-care, of course, is just beginning. Among other things it centers on an adequate diet to help ensure normal physical development,

which is no easy task in the present conditions. Not many mothers can afford to give their children the right kinds of food, and the crèches can barely do that, with monthly fees limited to 5.20 dong per child. The kitchen has to pay higher prices in the free market for fish, shrimps and vegetables, the only supplies from State stores being meat, eggs and milk.

According to Doctor Duong Thi Hanh (3), the following diets are being applied to a crèche in the Fifth District:

— Bottle-fed children: 890 calories compared to the average daily rate of 725 calories.

— Children raised on rice gruel: 776 calories compared with the average of 1,000. Efforts are being made to supplement the diet for this group.

— Children raised on rice: 1,368 calories compared with 1,100 of normal ration.

The iron content is sufficient. Also according to Dr Duong Thi Hanh, "while a child needs five milligrams of iron a day, the amount given at Le Thi Rieng crèche is 4.5 to a child raised on rice gruel, and 7.2 to one raised on rice" (4). At the "8 March" and "19 May" crèches the figures are slightly higher than average.

Preliminary investigations, however, reveal that the diet is not well balanced in protein, lipide and glucides.

Many crèches have given good examples of devotion. At "19 May", the staff raise poultry to improve the children's diet. The crèche of the Sewage Company receives gourds, eggs and bananas from a farm run by the workers of the Company.

Medical care is lavish. New arrivals are given vermifuges and treatment for skin diseases before they are allowed to mix with the other children. Meal times, recreation periods and sleeping hours are strictly regulated. Children are divided into groups for special diets. Those affected with rickets are given more milk, fruits, and tonics, and sun baths.

If it is still difficult to feed the children properly, great progress has been made in their education. Preliminary investigations reveal that children raised in crèches are much more developed psychologically than those kept at home.

As soon as they were admitted into crèches, children are helped to fight bad habits, although they are not yet conscious of the outside world and can hardly express themselves. The attendants acquaint them with sounds, colours and shapes, thus rousing their senses, stimulating their minds, making their feelings

keener and sharpening their intelligence. The bigger ones are taught to sing and dance. They are given toys to play with and are told stories. Their intellectual life is thus improved. If a child shows some natural gift, conditions are created for its full development. "19 May" manages to provide the children with coloured construction sets, drawing paper, and colour pencils.

All this, of course, is no novelty. But one should not forget the present difficulties which, as a proverb has it, "put a limit to initiative".

Problems to Be Solved

THE Committee for Mother and Child Welfare still has a lot to do. One problem is the reticence of many mothers who do not yet see the benefit of crèches or of the new methods of education. It will take time, as experience in the North has shown, to convince these people to place their children in crèches.

The villas where these crèches are situated are usually spacious and concentrated in a small area. They are an asset for the city which, in this respect, is more favoured than others, notably Hanoi. But the work of refitting and repair necessary to give these buildings a new function is not at all easy, especially at present when funds and building materials are still lacking. Moreover, in the overcrowded quarters of workers where crèches are badly needed, there is hardly enough space. In the still harder-hit outskirts, it is estimated that each production team needs a crèche for 50 children, while for each State farm from 15 to 17 crèches are necessary. So new accommodation must be built for this purpose. This, at present, poses many problems.

Besides, equipment is not up to the mark, and toys are lacking. Crèches in Ho Chi Minh

City have received from the Central Committee for Mother and Child Welfare 1,000 cots, 200 portable electric fans, thousands of metres of fabrics, and great quantities of vitamins portioned out from foreign aid which, valuable as it is, is hardly enough to meet the needs of this rapidly developing sector.

The contingent of newly trained crèche-attendants — though devoted and sufficiently qualified — poses another problem. These girls must be equipped with a working knowledge in medicine, psychology and management, and others must be trained to swell the ranks.

It is also a requirement the Committee for Mother and Child Welfare still has to resolve.

Certain organizational aspects are being studied. At "Le Thi Rieng", efforts are being made to provide the children with two principal meals and two light ones every day. Other crèches have set up a special service for the convenience of mothers on night shift, and still others have agreed to take charge of children during long absences of parents. An experiment is also being made for one kitchen to serve as many as four or five crèches at a time.

In spite of its difficulties, Ho Chi Minh City is making a point of developing its crèches. With its present industrial structure the city will be able to make equipment not only for its own use, but also for crèches throughout the country. It will produce soil-tubs, chairs and folding beds for crèches, and washing machines, refrigerators and cold storage plants for kitchens catering for 200 or 300 children.

It will also make toys and produce children's foods. Textile mills in the city will turn out mosquito nets, blankets, bed sheets, clothing, etc.

The work, of course, is too much for the City Committee for Mother and Child Welfare to do single-handedly, and a great deal is expected from the City Party Committee and other municipal bodies, from the Central Committee for Mother and Child Welfare and from international organizations.

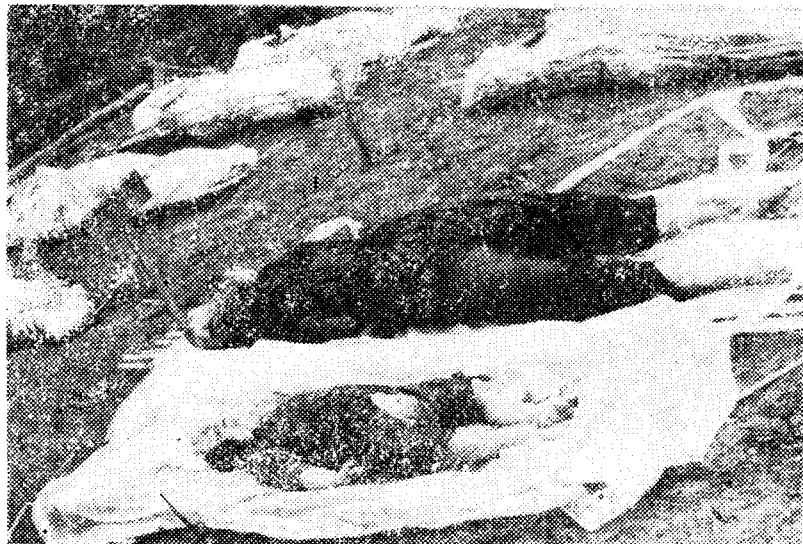
PHONG HIEN

(1) According to the September 1974 bulletin of the Social Development Study Centre, 2,688 children were sent abroad as "adoptees" from 1968 to mid-1974 (1,163 to the United States and 1,435 to France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, Great Britain and other countries). These figures, provided by the Saigon Ministry of Social Affairs, are of course far from being accurate. Just a few weeks before liberation Phan Quang Dan, Vice-Premier and Minister of Social Affairs of the Saigon administration, organized the evacuation of 1,500 children (official letter No. 1388 — BXH/KHLA/VP, 2 April 1975).

(2) The ages for kindergartens and pre-school classes are from four to six.

(3) and (4) "Food in Crèches" by Doctor Duong Thi Hanh, published in Dai Doan Ket, No. 21, 27 May 1978.

Chinese Aggressors' Crime: Massacre of Children



Ms Duong Thi Thao and her son Hoang Van Tung, aged 2, victims of Chinese atrocities.

A large number of Vietnamese children have been massacred by the Chinese aggressors with medieval barbarity. The victims were beheaded with machetes and stabbed to death with knives. Thus the body of Vi Viet Thang, a pupil of the Bao Lam first-level school, Lang Son province, was found beheaded and torn into pieces. Mr Trieu Ky Hung's seven children were woken by the aggressors to be shot dead. Their bodies were later cut into pieces and thrown in the yard of their house. In Thanh Loa and Bao Lam communes, Lang Son province, many tiny children were killed and their bodies scattered at the foot of the hills or thrown into streams. Hoang Van Duc was stabbed in the stomach at the entrance of his house. At Coc Khau village, Lang Son prov-

ince, Chinese soldiers, savagely fired machine-guns and threw grenades into mountain ravines, killing all those who were sheltering there, old and young alike. Many children were abducted to China by the aggressors.

Mr Au Viet Phan, the head of the health station at Bao Lam commune, was arrested by Chinese troops on 17 February. He was put into a prison five kilometres from the Friendship Gate, on Chinese territory. He was later blindfolded and transferred by truck to another prison some 100km from the first. About fifteen women and children were detained in these two so-called "Vietnamese POW camps". Their bodies were bruised from beatings with sticks and whips. Many children died as a result.

The Chinese invaders, however, continued cynically to brag about their alleged "good treatment" and friendly relations with the Vietnamese people. They also distributed leaflets saying:

"We set great store by the age-old friendship between our two peoples."

"We do not kill civilians; we respect the aged and love children."

THE Vietnam Commission for the International Year of the Child has set up the Commission for Investigation of War Crimes Committed by the Chinese Expansionists and Hegemonists against Vietnamese Children, headed by Dr Hoang Dinh Cau, Vice-Minister of Public Health and member of the Vietnam Commission for the International Year of the Child.

Its task is to help the localities investigate and report on the crimes committed by the Chinese aggressors against Vietnamese children and the consequences to children of the Chinese war of aggression.

The Commission also has to report on the contributions made by individuals and collectives to the protection of children during the recent war.

EVIDENCE GIVEN BY AN ORPHAN



MY name is Lang Van Dung and I'm eleven. I come from the Tay minority. I live in Bao Lam commune, Van Lang district, Lang Son province and I'm in the 5th form of the commune school.

On 17 February 1979, all my family got up very early in the morning, except my three-year old brother. My mother was cooking while we all had little things to do before work. All of a sudden, we heard the explosions of cannon shells exploding in the commune. The shells came from across the Chinese border. Half an

hour later, Chinese soldiers came rushing into the hamlet firing sub-machineguns and shouting.

My father helped my mother fasten my little brother onto her back then rushed off to his fighting position on a hill nearby, carrying his CKC rifle. I followed my mother and we went in the opposite direction cutting across fields towards the edge of the forest. My mother was crying and she was very anxious about my two big brothers, Lang Van Minh, who's 15 and Lang Van Pho, who's 13, because we hadn't seen them before we set out. Unfortunately my mother stumbled on tree root and fell down. Her toenail was nearly torn off and it was bleeding a lot. She carried on walking, but with difficulty. The gun fire was getting closer and closer. She told me to go ahead without having to wait for her. Finally, the Chinese soldiers caught up with us and luckily I had time to hide behind a bush. But my mother and lots of other people from the commune were captured. The Chinese soldiers drove them back to the commune. As my mother could hardly walk because of her injured toe a Chinese soldier hit her and my brother on the heads with his rifle-butt. My mother collapsed. Mrs Chai, our neighbour, who was slow in following their orders, was stabbed with a knife. Son, a friend of mine, the same age as me, died the same way.

After the Chinese troops had gone I ran off to the forest as fast as I possibly could. In the forest I went without food for three days before I was rescued by a local army unit. Later I found out that my father was killed in his fighting position on 17 February, just a bit after we left. Someone also told me that my big brothers were killed by the aggressors.

I've lost my father, my mother and all my brothers. My house was burnt down. Now I'm alone in the world. I cry every time I think of my family. I hate all the Chinese aggressors.

Recorded by NGUYEN HUY THONG

Waste Paper...

(Continued from page 19)

according to their ability, the children have contributed their small part to the building of the country. The movement to collect 4 million kilograms of waste paper which started on 15 May 1978 on the occasion of the 36th anniversary of the Ho Chi Minh Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade got an enthusiastic response from children all over the country. A bank account was opened for the money earned by selling waste paper. But what should be done with the money? Build houses, perhaps, or a factory? The suggestion of Ho Chi Minh City's children was accepted: to build a

train. So on 19 May 1978, an agreement was signed with the General Department of Railways, who would carry out the work.

The engine chosen was locomotive No. 215, damaged in the war against the American aggressors. It had been lying in Ninh Binh town, about 100 kilometres south of Hanoi, since 1972. When it was brought back to Hanoi and dismantled, it seemed like nothing but a heap of rusty scrap iron, but the locomotive engineering workers managed to overhaul it in two months.

The train is made up of fifteen carriages built by the Di An railway yard in Ho Chi Minh City. In the afternoon of 26 December 1978, the train started off on its 1,750-kilometre journey to the capital.

The "Vanguard Pioneer" train is only the first result of the "mini-plan", and further achievements are anticipated.

FROM LANG SON TO HANOI



A view of Lang Son town.

IN April 1979 I came back to Lang Son after many years' absence. The landscape was as picturesque as ever, with a framework of rounded laterite hills alternating with the irregular shapes of limestone crags, camphor trees smelling sweet in the spring air. But vandals had been around. They only stayed three days, and during that time they were subjected to endless counter-attacks from the Vietnamese forces, but it was enough. Before leaving, they blew up all the important buildings: offices, schools, hospitals, factories, houses. Only lack of time stopped them destroying everything. The bridge crossing the clear waters of the Ky Cung river, carrying both road and railway line, had been destroyed. We had to cross the river by a ford. Thousands of people were crossing there to reach the town and the nearby villages which had been evacuated on the arrival of the aggressors. They usually found their houses burnt down, or emptied of their possessions. The herds had been massacred at their farms and the machinery either taken away or dismantled.

Any Vietnamese person coming to Lang Son thinks at one of the famous caves of Nhi Thanh and

Tam Thanh, because we have all heard since our early childhood a nursery song which evokes their mysteries. The Peking troops disfigured these caves by heavy charges of explosives. I can hardly imagine what motivated this vandalism, there are many caves in these limestone crags and they have no economic or military value. Only by comparing these actions with the destruction of the Coc Bo Grotto in Cao Bang province can the real meaning be understood.

By disfiguring Tam Thanh and Nhi Thanh caves in Lang Son, the aggressors wanted to strike a blow at what they know to be one of the basic constituents of our national consciousness and culture.

Those days spent in Lang Son made me realize just what it would cost for our people if ever by misfortune the country came under the sway of Peking. I admired the perspicacity of one of my nephews, only 16 years old, who had an unshakeable wish to join up to go and fight. When I asked him why he was so impatient, he replied, "If the Chinese invade us, our country will suffer the same horrors as Kampuchea under Pol Pot!"

*
* *

Huu Nghi Quan, the Friendship Gate, is crossed by the road and the railway which link Vietnam to China and to the other socialist countries beyond. It has also been the route during twenty centuries for armies of aggression of the imperial Chinese dynasties, who left by the same route each time, soundly beaten. In 1967 I wanted to go right up to the gate and set foot on that historic site. The comrades from the border station dissuaded me. There "they" will invite you to have tea in their station, greet you courteously, offer you the Little Red Book, take your photo holding the famous book; and then tomorrow you will see a headline in their newspaper proclaiming that Vietnamese cadres have acclaimed Chairman Mao and the Great Cultural Revolution. Peking had waited for years with ill-restrained impatience for the tiniest gesture of approval on the part of the Vietnamese people for the so-called Cultural Revolution. But there was none.

We knew too well that this revolution, in no way cultural, was in fact a massive extermination of militants. The number of victims reached several millions and finally the Chinese Communist Party was thoroughly destroyed. We had also seen the

spectacle of Chinese technicians who had to read out some lines from the Little Red Book before every meal, as did their football teams who visited our country.

Twelve years later I was back near the Friendship Gate. This time we had to leave our car four kilometres away and had to be preceded by a scout unit. People of Chinese origin who had left for China were returning to Vietnam every night to plant mines on the roads. The scout unit had also to check that there were no snipers waiting to fire on us. The arrival in Hanoi of the Chinese negotiator Han Nianlong had not stopped the Chinese armed forces from continuing their daily provocations along the border. As a scout said, "You risk them sending you a gift of some well-aimed bullets or shells at any moment."

In 1967, the gift was the Little Red Book, the political weapon sent to subvert the supposedly revisionist Vietnamese Party from inside and instal a pro-Chinese leadership. The Red Book succeeded in Kampuchea, but in

Vietnam they found no Pol Pot. When their political weapons failed, next came the 17 February invasion.

ON our return we made a long stop at Chi Lang, 100 kilometres from Hanoi. The road passes through a ravine between two limestone crags and cuts through an earthen rampart, built many centuries ago. In the past large armies of aggression coming from the North were stopped there on many occasions. It was there that the general in command of the Sung army, Hou Renbao, fell in 981. Then in 1427, Liao Sheng, commander of the huge Ming army, was killed at the same place. Chi Lang crowned with victory the ten-year resistance led by Le Loi and Nguyen Trai against the Ming occupiers — the Dien Bien Phu of the fifteenth century. Hou Renbao and Liao Sheng were preceded by draconian imperial edicts which ordered the Vietnamese resistance to surrender without a fight and bow down to beg for-

giveness from the Chinese Emperor, otherwise "there will be nothing but grass on Vietnamese soil!"

Is history repeating itself? Yes and no. With the elimination of the genuine revolutionaries in the Chinese Communist Party leadership, the chauvinist and expansionist tendencies have triumphed, taking China back onto the path of the old empires. But we are in the twentieth century: the new emperors find new forces facing them, in China itself as well as in the rest of the world.

The "imperial" (1) policy had a chance of success during certain periods in the past, but it is now doomed to failure from the outset.

N. K. V.

(1) "Imperial" in the historical sense of the word and not "imperialist" in the modern sense. Imperialism needs capital and technical knowledge which Peking does not possess.

Vietnam Advances

International Conference on Computer Science in Hanoi

THE International Conference on "Fundamental Problems in the Application of Mathematical Methods and Computing Techniques" was held in Hanoi from 5 to 10 April 1979. It was organized by the Multilateral Commission of the Academies of Sciences of Socialist Countries and the Vietnam Centre of Scientific Research.

Nearly 50 lectures and scientific communications on the fundamental problems regarding the application of mathematical methods and computing techniques were presented and discussed.

Out of over twenty main reports presented at the Conference, four were delivered by the Vietnamese delegation:

1. Research and Application of Mathematical Methods and Computing Techniques in Vietnam (by Phan Dinh Dieu).
2. Application of Mathematical Methods and Computing Techniques to the Management of the Economy (by Nguyen Tu Qua and Nguyen Quang Thai).
3. On Some Problems of Nonlinear Programming and their Applications (by Hoang Tuy).

4. Some Applications of Mathematical-Physical Methods to Hydro-Gas Dynamics (by Le Van Thiem).

Vietnamese scientists presented numerous papers on their research topics directed towards the solution of problems being raised in the practice of production and in the management of the economy in Vietnam.

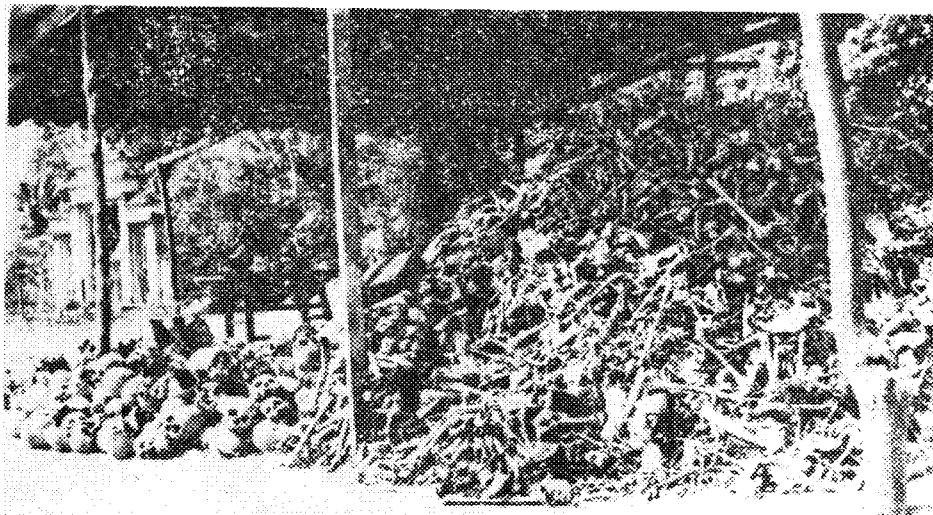
The rich content of the lectures given at the Conference and the exchanges of views helped the participants, and especially Vietnamese scientific workers and technicians, to keep abreast of the latest achievements and experience in the field of research and application of mathematical methods and computing techniques.

On behalf of the foreign participants, Professor Dr M. Dombrowski, Deputy Director of the Polish Institute of Scientific, Technical and Economic Information, read the Conference Statement which stressed:

"All of us, foreign participants to the Conference, are indignant at the Chinese aggression against Vietnam. We stand for solidarity with the heroic Vietnamese people and are dutybound to do our utmost to give effective assistance to our Vietnamese colleagues..."

Pol Pot's Version of Peking Socialism

2,015 skulls and other human bones unearthed after the massacre of Vietnamese civilians by Pol Pot troops at Ba Chuc commune, Bay Nui district, An Giang province.



Vietnamese journalist Thanh Tin has just returned from a visit to Kampuchea, having had several meetings with the revolutionary authorities as well as with ordinary Kampucheans of all walks of life. His report "The Peking Model" was serialized in the daily Nhan Dan in March 1979, and we print some excerpts here, having added the title and subtitles.

The Reverse of Socialism

DIU PAO, a Kampuchean worker and revolutionary, handed me a thick exercise-book saying, "This is the note-book of a military zone commander in Kompong Chhnang province." It took two days for Sok Khan, the interpreter, to explain the contents to us.

Inside the exercise-book was everything from Central Committee resolutions and directives from the Phnom Penh regime to military and economic policies. Some make a good illustration of

the strange, Peking-based model of socialism.

For instance, this comment on the forcible evacuation of city-dwellers to the countryside: "The evacuation of the cities constituted one of our most important policies after 17 April 1975. The exodus of over two million people from the cities was an unprecedented and wonderful event. In this way we eliminated all opposition forces and became the masters of the whole country. The citizens, dispersed into the

country, would be ruled by the lowest strata of the population and by the *xahacos* (cooperatives); they would all become peasants." The Pol Pot clique took the policy "to use the countryside to encircle the cities" and extended it to become "to swallow up the cities with the countryside".

In Pol Pot's view, "17 April 1975 marks the one hundred per cent completion of the national democratic revolution. It also marks the one hundred per cent completion of the socialist revolution. No longer are there exploiting classes or private ownership in Kampuchea. There is only shortage of materials. Abundance of materials will bring about socialism for ever..."

One sentence appears every two or three pages: "We are making a great leap forward, tremendous progress, marvellous pro-

gress", like an ironic, cynical refrain.

In a resolution on sports, this sentence, "In Democratic Kampuchea, sports and physical culture are useless activities to be permanently wiped out. Our sport is digging the soil."

I saw the results of this policy at the Olympic Stadium in Phnom Penh, which had once seated nearly 70,000 and is now completely deserted. The basket-ball and volley-ball courts are overgrown. Nowhere in the country was there a football pitch left. In any case there were no footballs, ping-pong balls or even children's toy ball! Sports-lovers over the whole world who are enthusiastically preparing for the 1980 Moscow Olympics should know about this radical annihilation of sports! As Diu Pao said: "They were terrified of everything and above all of gatherings of people. That's why they destroyed culture, from sports to dancing and even the pagodas, where large numbers of people used to resort. If not, friends could meet to talk about the state of the country and to plot against the regime."

About social mores they said: "We must eliminate the habit of adorning oneself. Wearing long hair, coloured or patterned clothes, or shoes are all attempts to beautify. They are backward and harmful. Self-adornment is imperialist, feudalist and capitalist. To ensure correct social behaviour, we must arrange separate living quarters for men and women." So, in all Kampuchea the girls' hair is cut short; everyone goes barefoot or clad in a pair of heavy black sandals. Even children are dressed in faded black clothes! But not of course the families of Pol Pot, Ieng Sary and other top members of the Angkar (Organization).

Thus, the "great leap forward, tremendous progress, marvellous progress", the "leading nation that sets an example for Southeast Asia and the world" was drab, joyless, austere and dreadfully poor, an affront to common sense.

Peking's right-hand men in Phnom Penh stated that "China's aid in all fields is immense, and the most precious of all is Mao Tse-tung thought, which is applied with so much vitality in Kampuchea!"

Other passages of interest read: "Democratic Kampuchea has completed the building of socialism". "Kampuchea is opening a new way for Southeast Asia and the world to follow!" "The socialist regime in Kampuchea is moving by leaps and bounds towards communism!"

The various resolutions of Angkar in 1978 laid down an objective of starting the country's advance forward from the *xumuhaphiep* (communal) form. The few factories still left in the cities were also applying the communal system. Apparently, communism was already in sight.

Our Kampuchean friends are studying with great attention the complicated and entangled history of the Pol Pot regime. Let's listen to Sary, a revolutionary army officer from the Brigade defending Phnom Penh: "Their socialism," he said, "was only on paper and in their speeches. The reality was the very reverse of

socialism. Socialism implies valuing highly the contribution of the people: not massacring millions. It means bringing out all the talents of the working people: not reducing them to slaves. Socialism implies respect for the products of labour, but they destroyed machines, vehicles and possessions, left them to rust and moulder. Socialism means moving towards abundance and happiness, but they fed the people on rice gruel and kept them illiterate, gave no medical treatment to the sick, took toys away from the children and overworked the old."

I must agree with Sary. "Peking-style socialism" is a falsification, a monster. Its theory and class outlook are a hotchpotch of ill-based notions: from utopianism, egalitarianism, childish leftism and extremist opportunism to nihilism and fascism, with some shades of petit-bourgeois fanaticism and the blinkered outlook of peasants when not yet enlightened by Marxism-Leninism.

According to the Kampuchean Minister of Information, Press and Culture, the People's Revolutionary Council hopes to invite a number of well-known and justice-minded sociologists, historians, and other scholars to come to Kampuchea to study the country's situation during the four years of domination by Peking through the persons of Pol Pot and Ieng Sary.

Pol Pot's Kampuchea: A Neo-colony of Peking

THE former Chinese embassy in Phnom Penh is three times as large and luxurious as the US fortress-embassy in Saigon. It is also fronted by a reinforced wall as protection

from hand grenades. It is far bigger than the French and the American embassies, which were built before 1970. This fact shows that Peking's expansionist

schemes are of rather long standing.

Chinese books, magazines, newspapers, pictures and goods can be found anywhere there are signs of life in the city. On the roads and open spaces just outside the city there are Chinese cannons, anti-aircraft guns, and military vehicles. A large pagoda in the Pochentong area was turned into a store for Chinese bombs.

Hotels, palaces, villas, the defence ministry, the foreign ministry, the general staff headquarters; all bear the traces of occupation by Chinese advisers and specialists who gave advice and instruction to the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique.

Sun Hao, Peking's ambassador plenipotentiary and extraordinary in Phnom Penh, could well be called the Chinese expansionists' "governor general" in Kampuchea. Many friends from the Kampuchean Ministry of Internal Affairs told us that there is abundant and irrefutable evidence that Sun Hao was the number one instigator of the aggressive border war against Vietnam and the bloody repression of revolutionaries and patriots in Prey Veng, Kompong Cham, Kandal and Battambang in 1978.

Sun Hao's right-hand man was Tang Kun-shan, a Chinese general and military attaché at the embassy. General Tang was in charge of the thousands of Chinese "specialists" and "advisers" in Kampuchea. He directed various military study missions made by Peking's general technical department, air force, navy and ministry of arms production, as well as running the military schools on Kampuchean territory. Once a week, Tang himself inspected the activities of the

general staff and operation department of Pol Pot's army, in Norodom Street. Many Kampucheans told us that Tang Kun-shan was the actual commander and overseer of all the military activities of Pol Pot's army at the Vietnamese, Lao and Thai borders, and on the Southern Sea. Assisting Tang was Wang Mao-shen, a logistics general in charge of the transport of tens of thousands of tons of arms and military equipment for the puppet army.

The other man close to Sun Hao was Ly Fa-qi, economic adviser at the embassy. Ly was in charge of the exploitation of local resources for the war against Vietnam and other neighbouring countries. According to many Kampucheans, large numbers of economic and trade agreements between the Chinese and Kampucheans have been gathered. The content of the agreements makes it clear that the Chinese intended to plunder Kampuchea's national resources under the pretext of "compensating the supply of weapons"!

These resources included hundreds of thousands of tons of rice and dried fish, tens of thousands of tons of copra, sugar, rubber sheeting, rubber tyres and high quality wood; large quantities of precious stones from Ratanakiri province, and the red stone of Siam Reap. Add to this: pepper, tropical fruit, salt beef, frozen fish and prawns, natural dyes and thousands of crocodile skins. (When visiting a farm in Siam Reap rearing about 1,000 crocodiles I was informed that the Pol Pot clique used to throw patriots' bodies into the water to feed the crocodiles). To increase the effectivity of this plundering, early in 1978 Peking called counsellor Wang Yu-pei from the Chinese embassy in the

Federal Republic of Germany to Phnom Penh to step up the exploitation of Kampuchean resources. Many Kampucheans remarked: Our compatriots had to eat rice gruel almost all the year round, there were no sweets for children, the people were never given any soap (supposedly unnecessary for black clothes) and many people suffered from scabies. This situation stemmed directly from the exploitation by the Chinese.

I was impressed by the words of Ms Nuon Varin, a Kampuchean teacher: "Our country has immense ricefields, the Tonle Sap abounds in fish, we have 'thot not' sugar and the people are hard-working. But for the Chinese who came and disrupted everything, we should have been very happy and lived in plenty! Not a single Kampuchean wants trouble or war with Vietnam. It is stupid and against our wishes! Even the reactionaries in Kampuchea were never so foolish as to want to oppose and destroy Vietnam. All the tragedy came from the Peking rulers, and the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary clique who sold out to them!"

The prisoners of war, officers and men of Pol Pot's army, whom I talked to in Phnom Penh, all said that without Chinese presence and domination in Kampuchea, Pol Pot would never have dared to attack the border region of Vietnam. Sok Kham, an intelligence company commander, testified: "Weapons and ammunition came from China: long-range guns, mortars, tanks, armoured vehicles and trucks, even telephones, dry cells, compasses and maps. We non-commissioned and field officers fully understand that the attacks on Vietnam were carried out at the desire of the Chinese."

An artillery officer captured in Vietnam's Tay Ninh province on 26 December 1978, said: "China supplies us with 36 long-range 130 mm guns, type 59, and 36 122 mm mortars, type 54, with 46,220 gun shells in all; more are being brought via Kompong Som port. All this weaponry was to be used at the Vietnamese border. Only small-calibre mortars were deployed at the frontier with Thailand..."

Now all is clear. The war from April 1977 to January 1979, which ravaged eight provinces along our country's southwestern frontier, disrupting the labour of nearly half a million of our compatriots from the coastal area of Ha Tien to the mountain region of Dac To and Tan Canh, and causing tremendous material

and human losses, was kindled by the reactionary Chinese rulers, 100 per cent a Peking war. It was a special type of aggressive war, directed from behind the scenes, an odious war according the formula: Chinese arms, Chinese strategies and tactics, Chinese conduct of the war plus the puppet troops that the Pol Pot clique had sold out to the Peking expansionists. Was it just part of a single scheme to undermine Vietnam, a prong of attack added to another at the northern border to grip Vietnam as in a vice? Certainly it was also a trial run to get experience about the Vietnamese forces, try out weapons and the "human-wave" tactics. It might also be called the Chinese expansionists' first war of aggression. The second one

was the invasion of Vietnam's northern border region which began on 17 February 1979, after Sun Hao, Tang Kun-shan, Wang Mao-shen and the others had learnt from the first, which they had completely lost because of the spontaneous and widespread uprising of the Kampuchean people. The uprising was quite a surprise for them and they did not expect Pol Pot's troops to be smashed by the Vietnamese forces at the border.

Enslaving one country, then using that country for the purpose of enslaving another, this is a double crime of the Peking expansionists. And they have reaped a double defeat.

THANH TIN



Skulls found in a pagoda in a suburb of Prey Veng town after liberation.

CHRONOLOGY

16 March — 15 April 1979

MARCH

16. At the UN Security Council, the Soviet Union vetoes a draft resolution proposed by the ASEAN countries linking the Chinese war of aggression against Vietnam with the so-called "Kampuchean problem".

17. The SRV Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues a statement exposing Peking's hostile policy towards the People's Democratic Republic of Laos.

18. Communique of Vietnam's Ministry of National Defence: Since 17 February 1979 the Vietnamese people and armed forces in border provinces have put out of action 62,500 Chinese aggressors, destroyed 280 tanks, 270 lorries and 115 cannons and mortars, seized a large quantities of war materials and captured many Chinese troops.

19. *Nhan Dan*: The Jury of the Leipzig (GDR) Spring 1979 International Fair award a gold medal to Vietnamese maize fibre carpets.

20. Vientiane: The Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Laos holds a ceremony to award Orders and Appreciation papers to Vietnamese agricultural experts for their assistance in training Lao technical workers.

22. The SRV Government recognizes the Revolutionary Government of Grenada.

23. The spokesman of the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues a statement strongly condemning the interference in the internal affairs of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan by imperialists and international reactionaries.

27. The SRV Ministry of Foreign Affairs sends a note to the Chinese Foreign Ministry saying that one day after Chinese troops are withdrawn from all the places they still occupy on Vietnamese territory, the Vietnamese side will be ready to start negotiations.

— The Kampuchean revolutionary armed forces launch attacks on the headquarters of the routed Pol Pot army in Battambang province near the Thai border.

— A delegation of the Vietnam Federation of Trade Unions led by its President Nguyen Van Linh, arrives in Berlin on a friendship visit to the GDR. After the GDR the delegation will visit some other Eastern European countries.

28. Signing in Phnom Penh of an agreement on professional co-operation between the Kampuchean News Agency SPK (Sapreamean Kampuchea) and the Vietnam News Agency.

29. At its 89th session held in Moscow, the CMEA Executive Committee issues a statement expressing all-round support for the just struggle of the Vietnamese people and demanding that China withdraw all its troops from Vietnam, and stop its expansionist provocation against Laos and Kampuchea.

APRIL

1. Signing in Hanoi of an agreement on radio and television co-operation between Vietnam and Cuba.

3. Ha Van Lau, SRV Ambassador to the United Nations, writes to UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, asking him to take measures to end the activities of Thiounn Prasith, who is making use of the UN machinery to slander Vietnam and the People's Republic of Kampuchea.

— The first Vietnamese ambassador to Socialist Ethiopia presents his credentials.

— In a reception given to lawyer Phan Anh, the Indian President Sanjiva Reddy and Prime Minister Morarji Desai reaffirm the stand of the Indian Government and people to fully support the Vietnamese struggle and demand that China unconditionally withdraw all its troops from Vietnam.

4. Opening in Hanoi of an exhibition "Victory over the Chinese aggressors".

5. Opening in Hanoi of an International Conference on Fundamental Problems in the Application of Mathematical Methods and Computing Techniques (5-10 April, 1979).

9. Truong-Chinh, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam and Chairman of the National Assembly Standing Committee, receives French history professor Philippe Devillers, member of the National Committee of the Franco-Vietnamese Friendship Association.

10. The General Council of the World Federation of Trade Unions holds a special session in solidarity with Vietnam in Sophia (Bulgaria) approving a resolution to defend Vietnam's independence and oppose the Chinese aggression.

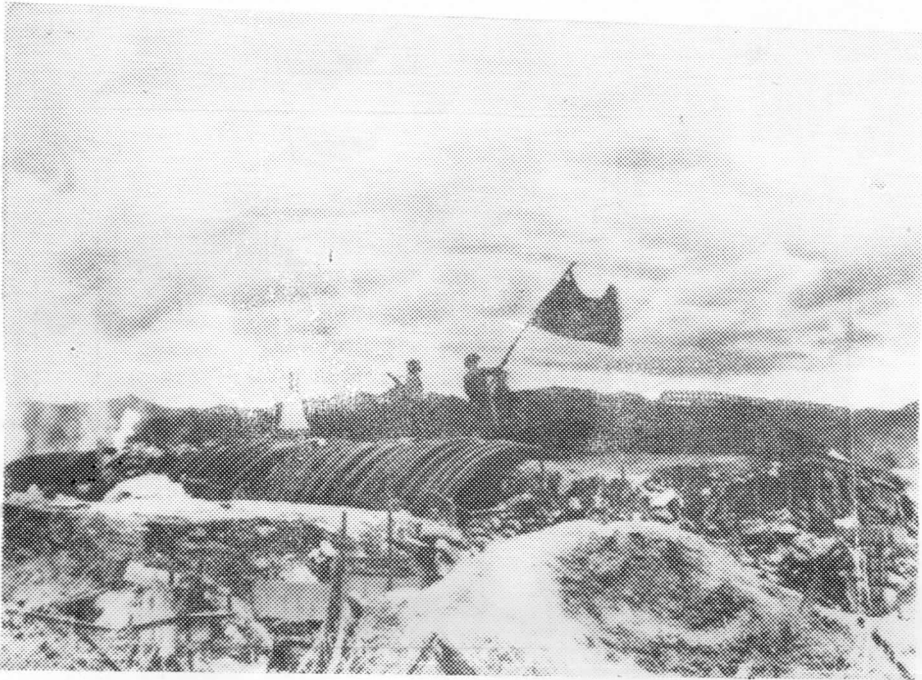
13. A ceremony is held in Hanoi for the exchange of the instruments of ratification of the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the People's Republic of Kampuchea (signed in Phnom Penh on 18 February 1979).

14. VNA: The population of Ho Chi Minh City and of the provinces of Gia Lai — Kon Tum, Long An, Dong Nai, and Hau Giang have sent as aid to the Kampuchean people 2,000 tons of goods including rice seed, salt, food, agricultural tools and household utensils.

— A Chinese Government delegation led by Vice-Foreign Minister Han Nianlong, arrives in Hanoi to start the negotiations with Vietnam.

15. A combat plane with markings of the Chinese Air Force enters Vietnamese airspace over Ha Nam Ninh province and crashes in Truc Phu commune, some 25 km south of the provincial town of Nam Dinh.

DIEN BIEN PHU — PAST AND PRESENT

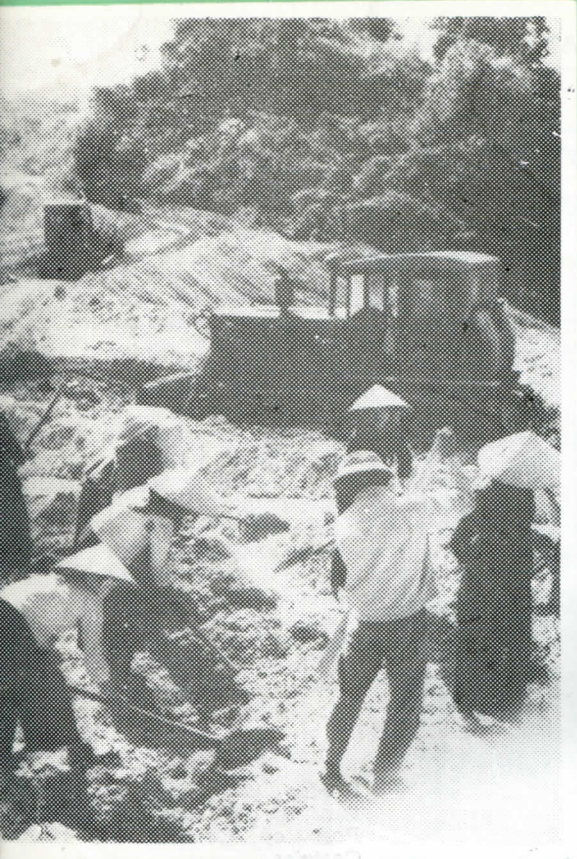


7 May 1954: The seizure of the Command Post of General De Castries.



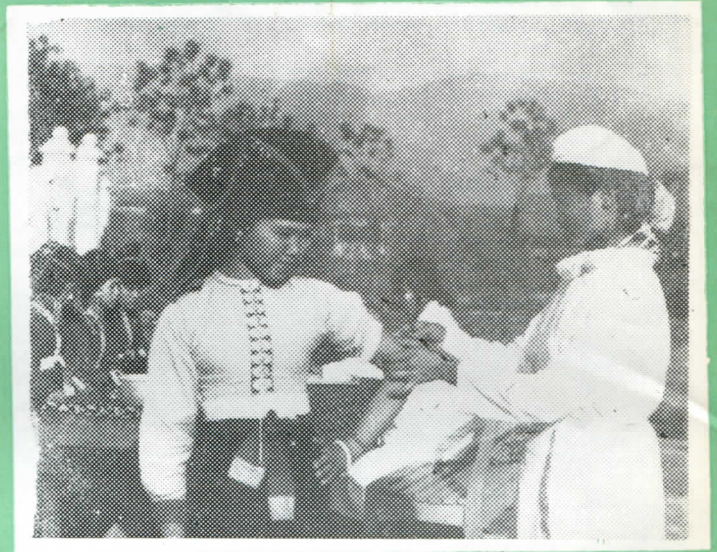
Dien Bien Phu plain after liberation.

DIEN BIEN PHU



Land reclamation.

Vaccination at Noong Luong commune.



The Dien Bien Phu air-field.

XUẤT BẢN BẰNG CÁC NGŨ:

- VIETNAM COURIER
- LE COURRIER DU VIETNAM
- HOBOCTH BЪETHAMA
- EL CORREO DE VIETNAM

BÁO ĐỐI NGOẠI **TIN VIỆT NAM**

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In tại Hà Nội.

Chi số: 12462