

Vietnam courier



VOLUME 17
A MONTHLY REVIEW

● POLITICS

● ECONOMICS

● CULTURE

● SOCIETY



• EDITORIAL OFFICE:

46 Tran Hung Dao,
Hanoi, SRV.

• DISTRIBUTED BY:

Xunhasaba,
32 Hai Ba Trung,
Hanoi, SRV.



1. Uncle Ho with Vietnamese and foreign children.

Photo VNA



2. A dance performed by the nurses and pupils of the Mam Non (Young Bud) nursery school in Hanoi.

Photo NGOC QUAN



3. Le Duan calls at the First National Festival of Uncle Ho's Good Nephews and Nieces, held in Hanoi in 1981.

Photo TRAN AN

● Our Monthly Comment	1
● 36th Anniversary of the August Revolution and the National Day: — Post-war National Construction: Achievements and Problems	3
● The Non-Aligned Movement: Its Present Position in the World and the Problem of Safeguarding Its Principles	5
● South Africa Continues to Commit Crimes of Aggression	8
● The Revolution and the Fate of the Reactionaries	9

Contents

● Another Adventurist Act by the United States	11
● In a Lao-Thai Border Area	12
● The Vietnam Institute of Sciences Over the Past Five-Years	13
● Economic problems: Rehabilitation and Development of Coffee Production in Vietnam	14
● Tropical Storms in Vietnam	15
● A Commune in a New Economic Zone	18
● Vietnamese Women in the 80's	19
● "Oriole" Art Troupe	23
● Wild Field	24
● A Trip to the Northwest Borderland	25
● Chronology	32

Front Cover:

Feeding the Birds

Photo: THUY ANH

**Vietnam
Courier**

10 - 1981

OUR MONTHLY COMMENT

BEIJING and Washington have been urging Khmer elements in exile to rally together with a view to prolonging the presence of so-called Democratic Kampuchea at the U.N.O. Actually the increasing tendency, even in Western countries, is to expel the genocidal Pol Pot clique from the international community, or to leave vacant the Kampuchean seat at the United Nations, and the erroneous vote at the UN General Assembly on 18 September has not changed this.

By using Son Sann and Sihanouk as a screen for the Khmer Rouge, the imperialists and hegemonists think that they can mislead public opinion, but unfortunately these three horses that they want to harness to the troika still refuse to co-operate. Therefore the hope they have been nurturing for more than one year — to rally all the Khmer counter-revolutionary elements against the Heng Samrin Government — has not materialized.

The meeting of Khmer emigrés in Singapore shows how blatantly foreign powers have interfered with the internal affairs of Kampuchea. Sihanouk has outspokenly declared that he has been forced by the Beijing rulers to sit at the same table with the Khmer Rouge, who had detained him and murdered so many members of his family, as a condition for Beijing to give material aid to his gang. As for Singapore and Bangkok, they openly stated their support and protection for the meetings against the Kampuchean people held on their own territories.

Once again we can see the work of those who are running counter to the people's right to self-determination and who have created tension in South-east Asia.

Events in the last month also proved that with the closer collusion between China and the USA, the Beijing rulers are taking further steps in their schemes and acts against the Indochinese peoples. Along the Chinese border with Vietnam and Laos, land-grabbing operations started by the Chinese side have continued with an alarming tempo. In Vietnam, where after the February — March 1979 aggression 12 points were still occupied by the Chinese side, now the number has increased to 38. Some of them lie about 1500m inside Vietnamese territory, and often are heighis used as springboards for another aggression, for teaching Vietnam a "second lesson".

Groups of Chinese scouts have been constantly sent into Vietnamese territory to conduct sabotage or reconnaissance activities in order to pave the way for new military ventures. In this month alone, 23 Chinese agents — out of a larger number of scouts captured — have been released by Vietnamese authorities and sent back to China, after having admitted the crimes committed by them under the guidance of Beijing rulers.

Psywar methods are being tried by the Chinese side along the border: distributing leaflets, using high-power loudspeakers, with a view to spreading rumours and sowing confusion among the population in the border area. As the population there belongs to the same minorities who live on the other side of the frontier, the Chinese make use of this to bribe them, to undermine our economy and sow division among them.

If in Kampuchea there are Sihanouk, Son Sann, In Tam and Lon Nol, there are Vang Pao, Kong Le, and Phoumi Nosavan in Laos, and Hoang Van Hoan and Truong Nhu Tang in Vietnam. These counter-revolutionary and traitorous elements have been mustered by the Beijing rulers in an attempt to oppose the people's power.

In the meantime China has once again refuted the proposal on the resumption of the Vietnam —

China negotiations made on 13 June 1981 and renewed on 31 August 1981 by the Vietnamese side.

During the Vietnam — USSR talk on 7 September 1981 on the occasion of Comrade Le Duan's visit to the Soviet Union, it was assessed that: "The American warlike policy and the Chinese hegemonist ambitions have rendered the world situation, especially the situation in Southeast Asia, very complicated. The people of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea could not enjoy conditions to pool their efforts in the peaceful building of their countries. Chinese provocations backed by the US Administration constantly threaten the security of the three countries in Indochina. China and the US scheme to blockade these countries politically and economically, and to this end they openly bring pressure to bear upon the ASEAN countries. That policy runs counter to the aspirations of the peoples and is certainly doomed to failure."

For its part, as has been stated by Comrade Le Duan on the same occasion, "the Socialist Republic of Vietnam will consistently strive for a lasting and equitable peace in Asia, especially for a peaceful and stable Southeast Asia. To that end our people wish to develop relations of friendship and co-operation with the great Indian people and the people of other Asian countries.

"The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is ready to normalize relations with the People's Republic of China on the basis of peaceful co-existence, respect for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity of each other and of solving disputes by negotiation. The present situation is worsening and the Chinese side must bear full responsibility for this"

25 September 1981

**36th Anniversary of the August Revolution
and the National Day**

POST-WAR NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION: ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROBLEMS

A grand meeting was held in Hanoi on 1 September 1981 to mark the anniversary of the August 1945 Revolution and the 36th National Day of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. In his speech at the meeting, To Huu, member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Vietnam, and Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers, outlined the achievements of the Vietnamese People in national construction since 1975 and at the same time pointed to the shortcomings that have limited the successes. He elaborated on the three immediate tasks which face the Vietnamese people:

— To stabilize and improve the material and cultural life of the people.

— To selectively build the material and technical foundations of socialism;

— To consolidate national defence and security.

Reviewing the achievements in national construction, the Vice-Chairman said:

"On millions of hectares of rice-fields still littered with bombs and mines we have re-sown the green of plentiness, opened another million hectares of crop land, acquired another twenty thousand tractors and built many more State farms and new economic zones.



"The factories damaged or destroyed during the war have been restored. A series of large-scale industrial projects, crucial for the development of the national economy, have been or are being set up. These include the Hoa Binh hydro-electric power plant with a capacity of nearly two million kilowatts, the Pha Lai thermo-power plant with a capacity of more than 600,000 kilowatts, the natural gas and oil prospecting projects at Vung Tau and Thai Binh, coal mines and cement plants producing millions of tonnes per year and a series of

other plants such as engineering, shipbuilding, spinning and paper. The tens of thousands of small industry and handicraft establishments in all localities are making important contributions to the production of many commodities essential for daily life.

"Almost all the roads and bridges damaged or destroyed during the war have been rebuilt and many more have been added to bring the total length of railways and highways to thousands of kilometres. Hundreds of thousands of tonnes of ocean-going ships have

been built and many ports strengthened or expanded.

"Socialist transformation has also recorded important successes. Agricultural co-operation has been completed in the main in the Central and Central Highland provinces. The movement to build production collectives and solidarity production teams is making headway in the southern provinces. Compradore capitalism has been abolished and the private industrial and trading businesses have been transformed and reorganised into production establishments beneficial to national economy.

"Education, culture, art, health and social work have brought about an ever better spiritual life. Illiteracy has almost been eradicated in the South. More than 16 million people are studying at general schools, job training schools, secondary vocational schools and universities. The scientific and technical forces totalling hundreds of thousands of workers and specialists are exercising a positive effect on the economy and national defence. Literature and art are flourishing and more talents have emerged. Social vices and vestiges of the culture of the old regime are being effectively curbed. Millions of persons from the old regime are enjoying the life of citizens of an independent and free country.

"An event of historic significance in the political and spiritual life of our people in the recent adoption of the new Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam by the National Assembly, 6th Legislature."

To Huu then pointed out the difficulties and shortcomings:

"However, all these successes are only the beginnings in the long and arduous work of building socialism. For the time being, we are facing many difficulties, especially in the supply of food, commodities, raw materials and materials, fuel, energy, and in transport and communications. These difficulties mainly stem

from the fact that our country is not yet industrialised and the material and technical foundations are still weak and defective. On the other hand, we have to pay constant attention to strengthening our national defence and security. These are objective difficulties, the resolution of which will take time. But, apart from these objective difficulties it should be pointed out frankly that we have made a number of mistakes, especially in economic and social management. First of all, due to our lack of practical experience and to some extent due to our subjectivism and bureaucracy, we have failed to fully deploy the strength of our system of collective mastery and the creative power of tens of millions of working people and hundreds of thousands of capable cadres in all spheres of activity: political, economic, cultural, scientific and technological, in order to discover and implement the best solutions to the country's problems. It is clear that we have not executed well the correct and creative line mapped out at the 4th Party Congress, nor carried out our planning work with firm steps and effective measures in order to ensure the realisation of the strategic aims in the initial steps of the period of transition to socialism. We have not concentrated adequately on agricultural production, especially food production which is the foremost task, as well as on the production of consumer goods and export goods. We have failed to realise fully the two greatest potentials of our country which are labour and land. We have not made good use of the existing material and technical foundations to achieve rapid economic efficiency. Neither have we concentrated sufficiently our investments, first of all on key projects of appropriate size, nor conducted well the building of these projects, leading to waste and too great a stagnation of funds. We have not closely combined transformation and construction,

nor created a rational industrial-agricultural economic structure on a national scale as well as a concrete agricultural-industrial structure in each district. We have failed to institute a managerial mechanism which is both strict and flexible in order to ensure the harmonious development of central and local economies and the centralized management of the State while developing the initiative and creative power of the localities and grassroots. We have also failed to achieve good combination of manual and mechanized work, between economy and national defence, between production in the country and international co-operation. We have been slow in finding ways to harmoniously combine the three interests (the interests of the entire society, the interests of the collective and the interests of the working people) to motivate the system of collective mastery and develop the dynamism of the producers, increase labour productivity and gradually improve the life of the people."

The Vice-Chairman noted that to overcome these shortcomings, efforts are being made at the central as well as local levels to change the method of economic management.

He said:

"Recently, at the central and local levels as well as at the grassroots, efforts have been made to improve the economic management and encouraging results have been obtained, creating a more dynamic, flexible and effective style of management. In many fields of production and business, new factors have emerged, demonstrating the creative power of the masses and opening up very promising prospects. Shortcomings remain, but on the whole these are outweighed by the inspiring results. We need to give them active support and assistance so that these factors may quickly develop and make their impact felt ever more strongly on our economic life."

THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT: ITS PRESENT POSITION IN THE WORLD AND THE PROBLEM OF SAFEGUARDING ITS PRINCIPLES

Editor's Note: On 14 September 1981, at a grand meeting celebrating the 20th anniversary of the First Summit Conference of Non-Aligned Movement held in Hanoi, SRV Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Vo Dong Giang delivered a speech analysing the history of the Movement, its trials and successes. The Vice-Minister also mentioned certain problems presently facing the Movement. This excerpt outlines Vietnam's point of view on these problems.

THE INDEPENDENCE AND POSITION OF THE MOVEMENT

SINCE the Movement came out of the period of crisis between 1965 and 1969 and entered into a new period of vigorous development in which a growing consensus and greater successes have been obtained in the struggle against imperialism, colonialism and other reactionary forces, various imperialist and reactionary forces have raised and increasingly stressed the question of "the independence of the Movement" with bad intention. They have contended that today the Movement has lost its independence and there is a need to restore its "original" nature, which was supposed to stay "outside blocs", "neutral between blocs" and "opposed to blocs". They have noisily claimed the need to "identify, expose and get rid of attempts at depriving the Movement of its anti-bloc independence". They have distorted and dubiously made use of a correct criterion of the Non-Aligned Movement, which has been widely accepted by member countries, that is "not to join military alliances", making this criterion synonymous with their intentionally vague concepts of staying "outside blocs", "between blocs" and "opposed to blocs" considering them as the highest standards for the maintenance and manifestation of the independence of the Movement. They tried to describe the struggles for independence, peace and social progress by the people in various countries as rivalries

between "blocs", between "super-powers" and therefore "opposition to blocs" should be the highest goal of the Movement.

The truth is that the criterion of "not joining military alliances" and those concepts of staying "outside blocs", "between blocs" and "opposed to blocs" appear semantically the same, while differing totally in substance.

The Non-Aligned Movement is opposed to the establishment of aggressive military alliances and fights for their abolition, regarding them as a constant danger to world peace and the sovereignty and security of nations.

For us, the best thing is to remove all military alliances and military bases, to eliminate all sources of conflict. But the way to it cannot by any means be to equate the aggressive and war-like forces with those of peace and national independence or to raise the question of "opposition to blocs" in a vague way, but to struggle and stop, roll back and foil all manoeuvres and acts of aggression, war provocation and counter-attacks by imperialism and international reactionaries. The vague claim of "opposition to blocs" in fact aims at defending and favouring the forces of imperialism, colonialism and aggression and attempts at hindering the anti-aggression and anti-war forces. It is certainly not the way to safeguard peace but just the reverse.

The emergence of the world socialist system is an objective

inevitability, absolutely in line with the trend of historical evolution and the right of nations to determine their own destiny and the path of their development. This phenomenon in itself does not cause tensions in the world, something comparable to the choice of national independence by many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America or the emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement itself. On the contrary, history has testified to the fact that these forces are the factors to be counted on for the preservation of peace and the promotion of historical developments, among them the system of the socialist countries is the backbone and the strongest mainstay for the struggle for peace, national independence, democracy and social progress.

In a situation where two social systems exist in the world, the objective necessity to avoid war and preserve peace is to accept and carry out the principle of peaceful co-existence between countries of different social systems. Yet, with their aggressive and war-like nature, imperialism and colonialism have never been willing to accept and implement this principle, because the coming into being of the world socialist system and the birth of a good number of the newly-independent and developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America have reduced and caused a disastrous collapse of their system of domination and exploitation in an irreversible process. It is not "the rivalry between the two blocs"

or "the rivalry between the two super-powers" but the furious and immoral counter-attacks, staged by the imperialist and colonialist forces against the newly emerged forces which are changing the old social order, that cause tensions in the world.

Everyone is aware of who is creating tension, intensifying arms build-up in various places in the world, and exerting pressure to set up new military bases. Who is using the slogan "oppose international terrorism" to focus the attack on the national independence movement in the world? Who is exercising an expansionist and hegemonist policy in South-east Asia, threatening peace, security and stability in this region and undermining detente, creating confrontation among the nations, and lending support to genocidal and racist regimes? Who has been and is opposing the legitimate demands of the non-aligned countries on the questions of national independence, peace, social progress, and the establishment of a new world economic order? It is none other than the U.S. imperialists, the Chinese expansionists and other reactionary forces who are working hand in glove with them.

The claim of standing "outside blocs", "between blocs" and "opposed to blocs" is also an attempt to bring into the Non-Aligned Movement an irresponsible and indifferent attitude towards justice and injustice. The correct criterion of the Non-Aligned Movement's "not joining military alliances" and the principle of "maintaining its independence" do not mean that the Movement and each member country must "stand between" the right and the wrong, and refrain from supporting the right and objecting to the wrong. To the Non-Aligned Movement, the criterion to distinguish right from wrong is not because they relate to this bloc or the other, but because they conform to or run against the objectives and interests of the movement, namely, national independence, peace and social progress. When the Non-Aligned Movement supports the right and objects to the wrong things from wherever they may come, it does not mean that the movement has joined this or that bloc and lost its independence; on the contrary, it only means that the Movement stands by the side of justice, of the interests of national independence, peace and social progress, and of its own objectives.

It is obvious that to the Non-Aligned Movement as well as to all progressive, justice and peace-

loving forces, there is no question of "standing between" the aggressive and bellicose forces and the anti-war and anti-aggression forces. Neither there is a question of "standing outside" the struggle for independence, peace and social progress. The argument for the movement to "stand outside", "stand between" and "opposed to blocs" is in fact a wicked attempt to draw the movement away from the objective of fighting against imperialism and colonialism, to cause it to lose its vitality and dynamism, to cover and defend the imperialist and reactionary forces who are furious and reeling under the massive attacks by the world revolutionary movement.

This argument is also an attempt to separate the Non-Aligned Movement from the other peace-loving, democratic and progressive forces, to turn it into an isolated force which cannot combine its own strength with that of our time, and therefore cannot be strong enough to succeed. This theory is totally at odds with many of the movement's resolutions, which came to the conclusion that "The policy of non alignment together with other peace-loving, democratic and progressive forces constitutes an important and irreplaceable factor in the struggle for the freedom and independence of peoples and countries, for general peace and equal security for all states, for the universal application of

the principles of active and peaceful coexistence, for the democratization of international relations, for general and equitable cooperation, for economic development and social progress" (Excerpt from the Political Declaration of the 4th Summit Conference).

It is not by chance that the theory of "opposing blocs" has emerged simultaneously with that of "opposing the two super-powers" by Chinese expansionism, when imperialism and colonialism have been under repeated attacks and when Chinese expansionism has thrown off its revolutionary mask and openly colluded with U.S. imperialism and other reactionary forces in the world. Nowadays, there is hardly any one who does not understand that the slogan of "opposing the two super-powers" raised by the Beijing reactionary rulers means, in reality, collusion with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union and the forces of peace, independence, democracy and social progress which include the Non-Aligned Movement. It is obvious that the slogan trumpeted by Beijing about "opposing the two super-powers" and the other about "standing between the two blocs" are but concerted moves by imperialism and international reaction in their frantic attempts to divert and weaken the struggle of the world's people for the objectives of our time, to turn back the wheel of history and bring about their hegemonist ambitions.

THE MOVEMENT'S PRINCIPLES AND THE HYPOCRISY SURROUNDING THE SO-CALLED "DEFENCE OF THE MOVEMENT'S PRINCIPLES"

DURING the late 1970s, the liberation movement and a good number of the newly independent countries uniting with the peace-loving and progressive forces in the world, first and foremost with the socialist countries, won great successes in overthrowing dictatorial regimes acting as henchmen of imperialism and international reaction, putting an end to their neo-colonial rule in many important areas in Asia, Africa and Latin America and also in defending and consolidating national independence, thereby bringing their countries onto the path of progressive development.

Parallel to this historically significant development of the national liberation movement, imperialist and reactionary forces,

principally U.S. imperialists and Chinese expansionists aroused a campaign against "interference", against "international terrorism" and against "hegemonism", and their spokesmen in the Non-Aligned Movement raised the so-called "defence of the movement's principles". It is a most odious hypocrisy which abuses the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement, the United Nations Charter and international law—originally made to safeguard the independence and sovereignty of all nations, ensure peace and international security and defend human rights—to cover up and lend a hand to the U.S. imperialists and the Chinese expansionists who are the most reactionary forces, hostile to those ideals, and thus oppose the

progressive forces which are conducting the most resolute struggle for these ideals.

Since its inception and throughout the process of its activities, the Non-Aligned Movement has proceeded from the objectives of the struggle for national independence, peace and social progress and has defined more and more thoroughly those principles guiding the movement's action in solving international issues, uniting the movement on the basis of its common objectives. The defined principles have proved to be correct and conform to the reality of life, international law and the trends of our time and are all aimed at ensuring first and foremost the respect and full implementation of the fundamental rights of all nations and human-beings, eliminating oppression, injustice and all sources of conflicts and war, and safeguarding world peace.

These principles which have become the tradition of the Non-Aligned Movement lend strong support to the movements and peoples fighting for independence, freedom, the right to life, against the dictatorial and fascist regimes acting as henchmen of imperialism and international reaction. The Movement expelled from its ranks the imperialists' puppet Tsombé (1964), the fascist Pinochet (1973), the genocidal butcher Pol Pot (1979), and acclaimed Cuba for helping the liberation struggle of the peoples of Portugal's colonies, praised the assistance of the front-line states, the socialist countries and other countries in the struggle for the liberation of Southern Africa, and acknowledged as natural the legitimate help to the Ugandan revolution by Tanzania to overthrow the dictatorial Amin regime, etc...

Running counter to this fine tradition of the Movement, some people have put up the so-called "principle of non-interference", singing in tune with U.S. imperialism and Chinese expansionism to describe the uprising of the Kampuchean people who, assisted by the army and people of Vietnam, have smashed the Pol Pot genocidal regime, henchman of the Beijing expansionists, as an illegal act, an interference and aggression by Vietnam, to play up the so-called "Kampuchean question" so as to

make it an international crisis. They attempted to impose on the Non-Aligned Movement the erroneous resolution of the United Nations on Kampuchea, lobbying within the movement for a condemnation of the legitimate action of Vietnam, and trying to bring back the Pol Pot clique to the Movement in defiance of the decision of the Havana Summit Conference.

Therefore, what is the real intention of those who are making a big noise on "defending the principles of the Movement?" Evidently, they do not defend justice, morality or any legal principles. They defend only the corpse of the genocidal regime of "Democratic Kampuchea", thus serving the schemes of the Beijing reactionary clique in collusion with the U.S. imperialists to bring back Pol Pot and his clique to Kampuchea with a view to sabotaging the process of resurrection and development of the Kampuchean people, opposing the young People's Republic of Kampuchea, and reversing the situation in favour of international reactionary forces. One may ask at a time when the Chinese expansionists, through the Pol Pot genocidal regime, were turning Kampuchea into a slaughter house, a hell on earth, and a springboard for war and expansionism in Indochina and Southeast Asia, why did these people keep quiet and say nothing about defending "the principle of non interference" and defending "human rights"? When the Beijing reactionary ruling circles sent 600,000 troops to invade Vietnam, why did they keep silent about the principles of non-interference, and non-aggression?

Had the people of Kampuchea and other peoples in Indochina acted exactly in the way in which these gentlemen "interpreted" the principles of the Movement, what magic could have helped the Kampuchean people escape the genocide so as to survive, resurrect and develop as they are doing today? And what would have happened to peace and stability in Southeast Asia?

To the disgrace of the U.S. imperialists, the Chinese expansionists and their spokesmen in the Non-Aligned Movement, the Movement has proved to be highly vigilant with regard to their perfidious tricks. The Ministerial Conference

in February 1981 in New Delhi reaffirmed the expulsion of the Pol Pot regime from the Movement, and firmly upheld the decision taken at the Havana Summit Conference, which rejected the erroneous resolution of the United Nations on Kampuchea. In the final declaration adopted at the Conference, there was no such thing as "the question of Kampuchea", but only the question of peace and stability in Southeast Asia, there was no question of convening "an international conference on Kampuchea" but only the question of promoting dialogue between the countries in Southeast Asia, there is no question of "withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea", but only the question of withdrawal of all foreign forces from Southeast Asia, and of ending the menace to the independence, and sovereignty of the three Indochinese countries and to peace and stability in the region.

Those who are raising a hue and cry over the defence of the "non-interference principle" are also attempting to use this to distort and undermine the just struggle of the people of Afghanistan who are assisted by the Soviet Union to safeguard the gains of the April 1978 Revolution against the interference and aggression by the U.S. imperialists in collusion with the Chinese expansionists and other reactionary forces.

It is not accidental that the sponsors of the campaign of the so-called "defence of the non-interference principle" are the same persons who demand that the Movement should stand "between two blocs", should oppose "two super-powers". They are also the persons who insist that the Movement should go back to its original objective. It is not surprising that now as before, they are speaking for the interests of the imperialists and other reactionary forces. They pretend to be very much concerned about the future of the Movement but in fact, they split the Movement and attempt to erode its viability and go against the trends of history. This has led, is leading and shall always lead them to defeat.

SOUTH AFRICA CONTINUES TO COMMIT CRIMES OF AGGRESSION

IN spite of the protests of world public opinion, South African troops, with their cruel tactics of "killing all and destroying all", have mounted large-scale attacks on many populated areas in Angola. What is going on contradicts the allegation of the South African rulers: they do not withdraw their troops, but instead continue to further their aggression.

People realize more and more clearly who stands behind the Pretoria Administration. The debate at the UN on the aggression of South Africa against Angola has revealed the hypocrisy of the United States and some other Western countries. It is they who find an excuse for their henchmen's aggression while pretending to "complain" about their action.

In invading Angolan territory, the South African rulers and their masters cynically opposed the UN Resolution on Namibia. Because of the Pretoria Administration's impudent and stubborn attitude, the Namibian problem has not been settled for 35 years and the country never regained its independence. The US and many other Western countries still protect the racists and lend a helping hand to the barbarous apartheid regime, which tramples underfoot human rights. As everybody knows, the US sabotage of the Geneva Conference held in January 1981 has led to defiant aggression of the Pretoria Administration against Angola. It is the US imperialists who must bear full responsibility for the serious situation in southern Africa.

World public opinion strongly condemns the South African

aggressors and their supporters. To defend Angola is to defend peace, justice and international laws. The African National Congress (ANC) while expressing solidarity with the people of Angola, pointed out that the reason for the aggression lies in the policy of the South African rulers and the encouragement given by the US and other Western countries to this policy.

The people and army of Angola are determined to fight the aggressors to defend their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Angolan Government declares that it is ready to apply Article 51 of the UN Charter, i.e. to implement joint-defence treaties with their allies to defend southern Angola and to fight off the South African aggressors.

The criminal aggression of South Africa against Angola supported and aided by imperialism and international reactionaries is a challenge to the African peoples and mankind as well. It carries dangers and serious consequences for the peace and security of all nations.

The Vietnamese people, once again, reaffirm their standpoint: to give full support to the struggle of the Angolan people against the aggressors. Together with world public opinion, we demand that South African troops be withdrawn immediately from Angola. The South African racists and the imperialist forces, above all the US imperialists, must take responsibility for their crimes of aggression.

NHAN DAN
9 September 1981

THE great war for national defence waged by the Soviet people against the fascists had shifted to a new stage with resounding victories. On the world plane, this was a golden opportunity for the colonised peoples to rise up and liberate themselves. In Vietnam, the Viet Minh Front, set up in 1941, led by the Indochinese Communist Party, was able to rally all strata of the Vietnamese people to oust the French and Japanese.

Foreseeing that the victory of the Soviet Union and the allies was imminent, the Jiang Jieshi clique made preparations for the entry of Chinese troops into Vietnam. Plotting to rig up a puppet administration in Vietnam, the Chinese authorities consolidated the Viet Cach (1). The Guomindang generals trumpeted that they would come to help the Vietnamese revolution and that the Vietnamese revolutionaries would have only to help them in intelligence service, mass mobilization, supply and interpretation. Seeing through their dark design, the patriotic-minded Vietnamese residents in China and the Vietnamese revolutionaries opposed this idea. From Guangdong, Guangxi and Yunnan, the Jiang Jieshi clique recruited the following traitors among the Vietnamese residents:

- Nguyen Hai Than, native of Ha Dong, who had followed Phan Boi Chau (2) to China in 1905 and studied at the Whampoa military school. After graduation, he served in Jieshi's army as a company commander. He styled himself successor of Phan Boi Chau after the death of this patriot. Though he had no forces of his own in Vietnam and China and had no political acumen, the renegade who forgot his mother tongue and liked to take the lead though he had no talent, was at first put by the Guomindang at the head of the Viet Cach.

- Then came Truong Boi Cong, native of Ha Dong who took part in the Viet Nam Quang Phuc Hoi (Association for the Restoration of Vietnam) and went to China where he studied at the Baoding military school and served as an officer in Jiang Jieshi's army rising to the rank of brigadier. "Denationalized", he too forgot his mother tongue and killed Vietnamese revolutionaries living in China. But, he had no forces.

As Truong Boi Cong was promoted to the rank of general, Jiang Jieshi had more liking for him

THE REVOLUTION AND THE FATE OF THE REACTIONARIES

Editor's Note: Manipulated by Beijing and Washington, Khieu Samphan, Son Sann and Sihanouk have met in Singapore to find ways and means to oppose the Kampuchean people. This is not the first time that such a meeting has taken place. At the end of World War II, to sabotage the Vietnamese Revolution, the then Chinese authorities—Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kaishek)'s Goumindang—also summoned Vietnamese reactionaries of all kinds to Liu Zhou for the same purpose. At that time, the position of the Vietnamese revolutionaries was not so strong as that of the Kampuchean patriots today; nevertheless the plan of the foes of the Vietnamese revolution fizzled out.

than for Nguyen Hai Than, and replacing the latter, Cong became head of Viet Cach. Jiang also contemplated making him head of the Vietnamese provisional government when the "Chinese troops entered Vietnam".

Little love was lost between Truong Boi Cong and Nguyen Hai Than. Once it happened that Nguyen Hai Than refused to hand the stamp of Viet Cach to Truong Boi Cong. Guomindang general Zhang Fa Kui had to send a company of troops armed to the teeth to encircle the H.Q. of Viet Cach. Only then did Nguyen Hai Than surrender. He became despondent and did nothing except to go regularly to receive his pay.

— The third man was Vu Hong Khanh. He had a small force. He was member of Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang (3). After the failure of the Yen Bai insurrection, he took refuge in Yunnan, forsaking his country and the revolution. He distinguished himself by his selfishness, arbitrariness, greed and cruelty. He always thought of consolidating his position and defending his personal interest. He discarded and even suppressed by most barbarous means those of his friends who were not to his liking. Capitalizing on the prestige of the Yen Bai insurrection, he was able to hoodwink certain people and recruited hooligans in his force. This force was not strong but it was an asset for bargaining with his Chinese bosses and the revolutionaries. Attracted by this resource of Vu Hong Khanh's in 1942, Jiang Jieshi sent Nghiem Ke To from Chongqing to Kunming to persuade Vu Hong Khanh to join Viet Cach at Liu Zhou.

— The fourth man of the clique was Nguyen Tuong Tam, a native of Quang Nam. After studying in France, he returned to the country and lived in Hanoi where he was editor of the *Phong Hoa* (Customs and Culture) review, later became *Ngay nay* (Today) after the revolutionary upsurge of 1930-1931. His pen name was Nhat Linh. The goal of his papers was to carry out reforms, to fight the feudal relations between the sexes and in the family and to extol bourgeois romanticism. With the return of Bao Dai, a king groomed in France, the romantic movement found a vantage ground from which to develop, as it suited the administrative policy of the French colonialists at that time. In 1942, Nguyen Tuong Tam joined Dai Viet, a pro-Japanese party. Together with some friends, early in 1943, he went to China through Kwang Cheou Wan and was arrested by the Chinese authorities. Later he was released by Jiang Jieshi who sent him to Liu Zhou to strengthen Viet Cach. Nguyen Tuong Tam loved vain glory and hedonism and had ambitions of becoming a leader.

On Jiang's order, other Vietnamese traitors also went to Liu Zhou to carry out counter-revolutionary activities

Believing that they could feather their own nests joining this "revolutionary" organization, many Vietnamese traders in Canton also flocked to Liu Zhou, but were disappointed when they found that the "revolutionaries" received their pay from Jiang Jieshi and scrambled for power only.

At Liu Zhou, Tran Trung Lap — adoptive son of Cuong De, a

Nguyen prince living in Japan—set up a pro-Japanese armed unit called "National Restoration Army" of about 500 members, including 30 women. Tran Trung Lap was an officer in the Chinese army but surrendered to the Japanese. When the Japanese took Lang Son on September 3, 1940, Tran Trung Lap and Hoang Luong, using honeyed words, called on the youth in the border areas to join them to fight the French. Many people were taken in. However, when the French surrendered to the Japanese on the latter's conditions and Lang Son was returned to the French, the members of the "National Restoration Army", left in the lurch, were mercilessly massacred by the French. The remnants, under Hoang Luong's command, fled to China, but were disarmed by Jiang Jieshi's troops and trained to serve as tools for the "entry of the Chinese army into Vietnam". Owing to his pro-Japanese leanings, Hoang Luong was kidnapped by Jiang Jieshi.

All these cliques and individuals were anti-communist to varying degrees. They all opposed the joining of the Viet Minh to the Viet Cach. They were utterly unaware of the seething revolutionary movement in the country, but thought of convening a meeting to elect an executive committee for Viet Cach. Wrangling for power, they constantly quarrelled amongst themselves. The executive committee was sponsored by the Chinese military delegation headed by Jiang Jieshi and represented by Zhang Fa Kui, commander of the 4th Army Area. It was directly guided by general Shiao Wen who worked out a programme of action and defrayed all the expenses,

including the wages of the Viet Cach members.

Jiang Jieshi's primary scheme was to convene a Vietnamese nationwide conference to set up an executive committee entirely at his beck and call and to oust the delegates of all the genuinely patriotic organizations having their own forces who had developed through the patriotic movements.

At that time a Viet Minh cell worked clandestinely at Liu Zhou, a Viet Minh cadets' force was set up in Guangxi, a liberation association (a genuinely revolutionary organization) was active at Liu Zhou and a Viet Minh overseas office was set up at Zhin Shi, but their activities were controlled by Jiang Jieshi. Taking advantage of their legal status, these patriotic forces also gathered at Liu Zhou to speed up their revolutionary work for Vietnam. They advocated the policy of profiting from the Viet Cach by fighting against its ringleaders and demanding that the Viet Minh cadets and other patriotic organizations be represented at the Viet Cach conference.

From mid-1943 onward the situation reached a turning point.

In the country, the revolutionary movement to fight the French and the Japanese under the Viet Minh banner was increasing from north to south. Many revolutionary bases were set up, the Viet Bac liberated zone was licked into shape.

Pressed by the development of World War II, by the Americans and public opinion, and in face of the legal struggle of the Vietnamese revolutionary forces, and to show that Viet Cach was not masterminded by him, Jiang was forced to accept a delegation of the Viet Minh force to the overseas conference to elect a preparatory committee for the Viet Cach national congress.

This conference was held at the end of 1943 under the name of Conference of Overseas Comrades. It was attended by delegates of many patriotic organizations such as the Yunnan Vietnam Liberation force, the International Association against the Aggression - Vietnam Branch, the Viet Minh Office at Liu Zhou, the Viet Minh Cadets, the National Restoration Army, Dai Viet, Quoc Dan Dang (Nationalist Party) in Yunnan. Knowing

that he would be denied the leadership of Viet Cach, Nguyen Hai Than did not attend the conference and earned his living as a soothsayer. Dissatisfied at not being elected as member of the executive committee, Nguyen Tuong Tam went to Kunning where he joined Vu Hong Khanh and lived on Jiang Jieshi's subsidies.

After the conference, in their capacity as organizers of the national congress, the Viet Minh delegates returned to the country and carried out legal activities, making preparations for the general insurrection. Truong Boi Cong stayed in Liu Zhou to consolidate his position, leaving everything to his Chinese bosses. In Kunning, Vu Hong Khanh and Nguyen Tuong Tam prepared their forces, each his own way, without coordination.

The situation in the world and in Vietnam precipitated towards changes. The Soviet Army dealt a stunning blow to the Guandong army and Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945. On August 19, 1945, led by the Viet Minh Front, the general insurrection was crowned with success, and the revolutionary power was set up on September 2, 1945. On behalf of the entire people, President Ho Chi Minh read the Declaration of Independence. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam was born.

When, in the name of the Allies, Jiang Jieshi's troops came to Vietnam to disarm the Japanese army following the resolution of the Potsdam Conference (16 July 1945), the Viet Cach then torn by the scramble for power became weak. Truong Boi Cong died from an illness. The "National Restoration Army" was disbanded. Some politically conscious elements sided with the revolution, others left their ranks in search of a living. The remaining, 300 members of the Nationalist Party, organized by the Chinese authorities in four columns, entered Vietnam in the wake of the Chinese troops through Hai Ninh, Dong Dang and Bao Lac. As Truong Boi Cong was dead, Shiao Wen called back Nguyen Hai Than and appointed him president of Viet Cach, assuming concurrently the function of commander of the "National Revolutionary Army". Other columns were hurriedly patched up composed mostly of bandits operating along the frontier who had com-

mitted many crimes against the Vietnamese people.

On the borderland, the Viet Minh movement kept mounting. The revolutionary power and mass organizations were set up everywhere forming a comprehensive network. The slogan "defend the villages, save the country" was strictly applied, the bandits were checked in their misdeeds. The "National Restoration Army" was encircled, the politically-minded elements among its members rallied to the revolution.

The Chinese troops entered Vietnam from two main directions: the column from Yunnan was commanded by Lu Han with Vu Hong Khanh tailing behind. From Guangxi the column under the command of Shiao Wen swaggeringly crossed the frontier followed by Nguyen Hai Than.

But they faced an irreversible situation: the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was established, and its prestige rose high with the support of the entire people. In the face of the clever policy pursued by the Vietnamese revolutionaries, the traitors to the country could do nothing, they vented their anger by committing the most perfidious acts of sabotage.

Having come to Vietnam on the bandwagon of the Chinese troops, these reactionaries now tailed after them in their withdrawal from Vietnam early in 1946.

TU CAU

(1) Short name of Viet Nam Cach Mang Dong Minh Hoi (Vietnam Revolutionary League) set by up the Guomindang in 1942.

(2) Phan Boi Chau (1864-1941) was a wellknown patriot fighting against the French colonialists.

(3) The "Vietnam Nationalist" Party set up by the petty bourgeois to fight the French (1927-1931). It led the Yen Bai insurrection in 1930 but met with failure.

ANOTHER ADVENTURIST ACT BY THE UNITED STATES

THE official announcement of the White House on 8 August that President Reagan had decided to go ahead with the production of the neutron bomb has aroused stormy protests among friends of peace throughout the world.

The warmongering forces in the Pentagon boasted that this weapon can kill massively through its extremely intense radiation while causing little damage to constructions or buildings. To human beings, this is the most barbarous and inhuman weapon. Ronald Reagan's decision only lends more credence to his reputation as a "hawk".

Not that it came as a complete surprise. The idea had already been embraced by the Carter Administration which intended to deploy the neutron bomb in Western Europe. But Carter had to "suspend" his plan in the face of strong opposition from the people of Europe and the broad peace-loving public of the world, including the United States.

Since taking office the Reagan Administration has on many occasions voiced its special interest in producing neutron-weapons.

One of the most vocal proponents of this plan is Secretary of Defence Caspar Weinberger. He pleaded that the deployment of the neutron bombs in Western Europe is "to restore the East-West military balance". Now, in disregard of public opinion and scoffing at its own allies, the Reagan Administration decides to go ahead with its criminal plan.

This act of the US president represents first of all a new and dangerous step in the implementation of the policy of the United States and its allies to step up the arms race. It shows that some military circles in the United States still stick to the assumption that a rapid deployment of these inhuman weapons would help the United States regain its lost military superiority. In fact, this is sheer day-dreaming.

Reagan's decision is further evidence that his administration is turning its back on international détente and is unwilling to negotiate with the Soviet Union and the other peace-loving forces on measures aimed at effectively reducing tension. By deciding to produce neutron weapons, the White House has effectively turned down the reasonable proposal of the Soviet Government that the two governments agree together to renounce the production of this dangerous weapon. As was rightly pointed out by the Soviet News Agency TASS, "the Soviet Union could not remain indifferent before the US decision and is obliged to take appropriate counter measures in the interest of its own security and the security of the socialist community and all progressive mankind".

What is more, President Reagan is not ignorant of the fact that even before he took this ominous decision there was throughout the world, from the Federal Republic of Germany, Sweden, Britain, France, Belgium, Holland to Japan, a wide protest movement against the arms race, against the deployment of medium-range missiles in

Western Europe, and against the stock-piling and deployment of nuclear weapons. This act cannot be interpreted as other than the worst provocation and an open challenge to the whole of progressive mankind. It is increasing world tension and poisoning the international atmosphere.

Ironically enough, while the world resounds with protests against this dangerous move, Reagan has received some very laudatory and even admiring words from the expansionist ruling circles in Beijing. *AFP* reported from Beijing on 9 August 1981 that China had not concealed its satisfaction at the decision of the Reagan Administration and regarded it as "an important step towards strengthening the security and defence of Western Europe." Also according to *AFP*, Beijing held that "the manufacture of this weapon, and not its parts, would make the deployment of this bomb in Europe easier and quicker."

Let there be no mistake! By rushing headlong into the nuclear armament race the United States cannot reverse the balance of forces which is continuing to evolve in a way unfavourable for US imperialism. Neither can it stem the flow in support of peace and negotiation for international détente which is growing ever stronger in Western Europe and the rest of the world.

The warmongering forces in the United States are playing with fire. They are blindly embarking on a dangerous course with incalculable consequences.

NHAN DAN
11 August 1981

IN A LAO-THAI

BORDER AREA

IT was mid-July 1981. I stood at Tha Deua, a border checkpoint facing Nong Khai, in Thailand, across a narrow strip of the Mekong river about 20 km South of Vientiane. From this side of the river I could see two white men in civilian clothes escorting big, carefully wrapped crates. I counted 29 crates in all. "Is that foreign aid?" "I asked my Lao friends." Aid? Don't you see that they are Americans? At Nong Khai, nobody, not even a child, could mistake them." Those two Americans delivered all the 29 crates to a group of people who were quickly identified by my Lao friends as Lao exiles. Thus, the US is openly delivering arms and food to Lao reactionaries right on the Lao - Thai border.

At Borikhane, a border district 100 km north of Vientiane, a Lao friend told me that not long before several groups of Lao bandits operating on Thai soil had crossed the border and plundered a lot of draught animals from the Lao population. They were all armed with American carbines and anti-tank guns. Many of them were killed or captured by Lao border guards and militia. Those captured later confessed they belonged to platoon or company-size units whose commanders had received training in Maoist-type guerilla tactics from Chinese advisers at camps inside Thailand.

I was introduced to M., a member of the Kor ethnic minority and commander of the militia of village K. in Muong Dinh district, Luang Nam Tha province, bordering on China, more than 500 km north of Vientiane as the crow flies. He was wounded in a battle at the foot of Hill 1878 against a group of bandits smuggled in from China. He was receiving medical treatment at the Loi Xam army hospital, at the time of my visit to Luang Nam Tha.

The group of bandits coming from China was intercepted and wholly wiped out by the militia squad under M.'s command. One

bandit was captured. His name is Khamkhien Uyakhan, 25, married, with one son, of the Thai Phuon ethnic minority. He does not speak the Lao Lum, the most widely spoken language in Laos, but is quite fluent in the Lao Sung (also known as Meo) dialect. He was born in Sayabury in Laos. Orphaned in his early childhood, he and his two sisters hired their services to a Meo family then drifted to Thailand when he was ten years old. He later adopted Thai citizenship and lived at Vai Khau village, Chiang Mai province. He testified: "Early in the year 2520 I joined the Thai army and was assigned to an infantry unit of the 3rd Military Sector. In the middle of the year 2522 a group of men from China came to my camp. They recruited many Lao, and I was one of the group. We were later taken to China where we were assigned to the Mang Yeng training camp in Yunnan. There we received training from two Chinese officers known only as Lin and Zhang. We were taught Chinese boxing, handling of assault rifles and anti-tank guns, mine laying and grenade throwing. A year later, we were hustled into a van and driven for ten hours on end in the direction of Muong La..."

The mercenary Khamkhien recruited by China to "make the revolution" did not know how to use the solar calendar but only knew how to count time on the Buddhist calendar. According to this calendar, we were in the 9th month of the crescent moon (there are two 9th months, one of the crescent moon and the other of the waning moon). Thus, on the Christian calendar, he joined the Thai army in 1977, and in 1979 Beijing took him to China to be trained as mercenary. On July 7 of the same year his group composed of twelve bandits, led by Chai U and Khamkhiet, started from Muong La camp. They were under instructions to kidnap men from the refugee camps in Nam Ke and Muong Coc both lying on the border province of Chiang Rai

in Thailand opposite Luang Nam Tha and Sayabury in Laos. Disguised as Lao civilians, they crossed the Chinese border and entered Huoi Nakha in Muong Man village. But they were quickly discovered by Lao farmers who immediately informed the militia. The intruders were captured at the foot of Hill 1878 while they were felling bamboos. Eight of them who resisted were killed on the spot and some escaped. Their plan had been to cross the river on a raft onto Burma, the river being a natural border between Laos and Burma. Then they would follow the forest track along the Burmese border and enter Thai territory at Chiang Rai.

Here it would be useful to recall an old story related by our Lao friends. In the early 70's the Western press referred to the Maoist groups in Thailand as "Maoist Thais" and described them as rebel groups whose main activities were to spring ambushes, cut off communications and kidnapping. In those days, the Maoists in Thailand began building a system of base camps along more than 500 kilometres in the northwestern part of Nan and Chiang Mai provinces bordering on the Sayabury and Luang Nam Tha provinces of Laos. They even ran a radio installed in Kunming (China). Some other Maoist groups had their bases scattered on this side of the border in Sayabury province. In 1975 when the Lao People's Army came and liberated this area, it came across abandoned houses littered with the little red books of "Mao Zedong's Thoughts" amidst heaps of empty tins of food "Made in China."

Our Lao friends said that every year at the start of the dry season the Thai army launched mopping-up operations against the Maoists but more often than not the raiders came back empty-handed since the elusive "rebels" always had decamped before government troops moved in, only to reappear at the beginning of the rainy season

to continue their sabotage activities in the border region with Laos.

In 1979 the genocidal Pol Pot regime was overthrown, followed by China's invasion of Vietnam. The Lao Government asked Beijing to withdraw all its military personnel disguised as "road-building workers" in the northern part of Phongsaly province. The ultra-rightists in Thailand openly sided with China in opposing Vietnam and Laos. The Chinese cynically declared that Thailand is "a Chinese bastion against Vietnam in Southeast Asia," and to please Bangkok, they began to "sacrifice" some Maoist Thais and even agreed to close the latter's radio in South China. But in the meantime, deep in the dense forests of the Lao-Thai border China continued to supply arms and food for the Maoists. When the Thai authorities raised the question, Beijing explained that "state-to-state relations are different from party-to-party relations". The Thais living on the bank of the Mekong are not taken in by this threadbare bluff. They read in the newspapers that hundreds of Maoists have surrendered to the government but they remain wary of the hundreds of their comrades who continue to make frequent night forages into the villages to plunder and massacre. They are asking a lot of questions about the whereabouts and activities of Vichit Chongenith, a "communist leader" who is reported to have surrendered to the government in 1979 and up to now concerns himself only with planting coffee and rubber in Thachana district. According to figures made available by the Thai Supreme Command, in the provinces of Surathani, Nakhon and Sithanarat alone, 200 Maoists surrendered in 1979. But the same source said that in the following year 800 persons took to the maquis to follow the Maoist bands. As a matter of fact, in order to concentrate forces on opposing Vietnam and Laos, Beijing has ordered the Maoist bands in Thailand to reduce their armed attacks against government forces in Northeastern Thailand. Meanwhile, it is stepping up the activities of the Maoist band in the southern provinces close to Malaysia. In this way Beijing hopes to divert Bangkok's attention from the activities of the Maoist groups in the provinces of Nan and Chiang Mai, thus enabling China to open new roads of infiltration, develop its forces and build more guerrilla bases in this area, considered by Beijing as a

sanctuary for its henchmen, the Thai and Lao bandits.

These sinister manoeuvres of Beijing are arousing justifiable concern in some political circles in Bangkok. This explains Bangkok's present dual policy with regard to China: while toeing China's line in opposing the People's Republic of Kampuchea, it continues its "sweeps" against the Maoist bases in the Northeast. Troops of the Thai Government are in fact encircling several liaison centres of the Maoists codenamed T4 and T6.

Standing on the wooden stairs of a house-on-stilts in a border village of Laos in Sayaburi province and looking westward, I saw clearly armed helicopters and T.28 bombers of the Thai Government

circling and diving on the jungle. The thudding of bombs could also be heard very distinctly. My Lao friend explained: "By striking at the Maoist Thai groups at this time, the Thai Government is striking at the very instrument used by China for a double purpose: lending a hand to the Pol Pot remnants and at the same time disrupting the inner security of Thailand." He added: "Beijing intends to use the Maoist groups in Thailand as liaison posts on the supply route for the Pol Pot forces which runs from China to Kampuchea passing through Burma and Thailand."

THIEU QUANG BIEN

Correspondent of the army paper
Quan Doi Nhan Dan

THE VIETNAM INSTITUTE OF SCIENCES OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS

RIGHT after South Vietnam was liberated, the Government decided to set up the Vietnam Institute of Sciences as the country's biggest research centre in natural sciences and a number of scientific and technical branches. Over the past five years, the Institute has built up its forces while carrying out scientific research, and has begun focusing on major themes, co-operating with the fraternal socialist countries, international scientific organizations and progressive scientists the world over.

The Institute investigated and studied the natural wealth and conditions of the country. Many cadres con-

ducted a general survey of the Central Highlands, the Northwest, and the Thuan Hai - Mink Hai sea-board, a survey of our wealth from space, a study of the repartition of areas likely to have earthquakes, of the phenomenon of earth fissures... The results are being analysed, for introduction into the map of general survey (which is in the process of been drawn up at the Institute) and formulated as recommendations for the use and preservation of the country's natural wealth.

In the tropical zone many biological problems are being tackled so as

(Continued on p. 31)

REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF COFFEE PRODUCTION IN VIETNAM

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

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

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

Appropriate concern and encouragement has not been given to the development of coffee production. While striving to extend acreage, many localities and State farms did not pay attention to fostering existing plants. Worse still, in some places coffee was replaced by other crops and fruit-trees. Planning for coffee-growing with regard to labour, technical means and irrigation potentialities was not developed. A good policy was lacking to encourage workers to increase production and raise their own productivity by devoting themselves to tending the coffee plant. Nor was there a policy to help cooperatives and individuals develop coffee production. What is more, production organization and managerial apparatus were still beset with irrationalities.

The above-mentioned weak points are being removed step by step to put coffee production on a larger socialist scale. After many years of research, the first works have appeared in the study of coffee ecology and the planning of

coffee plantation for export. According to an inquiry by the Ministry of Agriculture, coffee has decreased in area and yield in a number of localities, but it has on the contrary risen to over one tonne of grain per hectare in others with similar soil and climatic conditions. In other places it has stood at 2 tonnes year after year. Therefore, more input will certainly give higher yield to the existing 19,815 hectares.

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

50,000 hectares is a small area for a big coffee producer, but in the conditions of Vietnam it requires a huge effort and an homogeneous co-operation of various economic branches.

At present, our State already has a policy and overall measures to encourage coffee production. Our investments being still small, we set great store by co-operating with the socialist countries to build large-scale coffee plantations and by developing coffee-growing with modest investments and quick returns in favourable places. Our

policy is to develop coffee growing in all the three economic sectors: State farms, co-operatives and peasant households so as to promote the compound strength of the State and people. However, priority will be given to build State farms into advanced production units with a high level of specialization, intensive farming and application of advanced technique, with high labour productivity and coffee yield, good managerial organization, thus setting a model in the areas specialized in coffee growing.

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

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

TRAN PHU THANH

VIETNAM lies in the monsoon region frequently visited by tropical storms, showers and floods with exceptional intensity. According to data of the World Meteorological Organisation, each year storms and floods in the tropical zone cause material damage estimated at 1,500-2,000 million dollars and take more than 5,000 lives. In the Southeast Asian region in particular, the damage caused by storms and floods accounted for 90 per cent of the total damaged caused by natural disasters, and in some countries it represents as much as one per cent of the gross national product.

Every year, an average of 62 storms originate from five tropical regions of the oceans known as "storm nests", the biggest being the Northwest Pacific "nest" in the vicinity of Vietnam where 22 storms (or 36 per cent of the

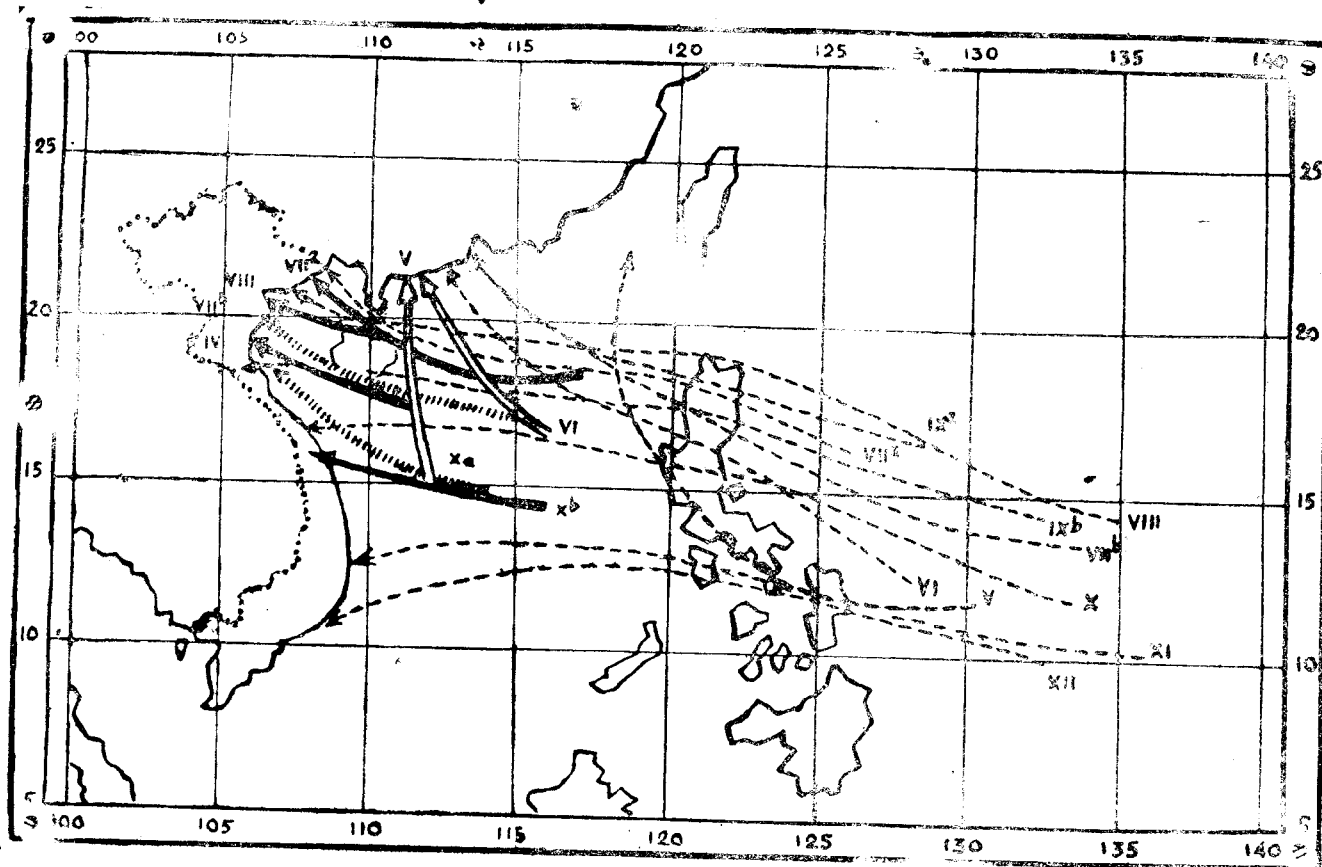
total) are formed. A tropical storm has an average radius of action of about 200-500 kilometres and even 800-1000 kilometres in exceptional cases. Wind speeds may exceed 50 metres per second and 100 metres in exceptionally heavy storms.

According to data gathered over many years, the Eastern Sea is visited by an average of 10 storms per year, of which four hit the Vietnamese coast, to say nothing of the tropical depressions with winds of 39-61 km per hour.

The storm season in Vietnam usually begins in May or June and lasts until November and occasionally December. But storms chiefly occur in July, August and September (about 70 per cent of the total). It has also been observed that in most cases the North is the first to be visited by storms in the year.

Observations made over many years in Vietnam show that whirlwinds may reach 48 metres per second as at Van Ly in the storm in September 9, 1964, and

TROPICAL STORMS IN VIETNAM



Average path of storms in the Eastern Sea between May and December.

rainfall during 24 hours may reach 788 millimetres such as in the storm on September 27, 1978. The highest level of rainfall in Vietnam so far was recorded at Phu Lien during the storm in September 1927, reaching 1,023 millimetres. To have an idea of the intensity of a tropical storm and rainfall let's compare it to the rainfall level in a temperate zone; the yearly precipitation in many areas of the temperate zone is only equal or less than the rainfall generated by a tropical storm in a few days. Let us note by the way that the average yearly level of rainfall of Asia is only 742 millimetres.

Tropical storms and the accompanying heavy rains and floods have caused big natural disasters in Vietnam. The damage was particularly serious when the storms caused breaks of river or sea dykes. Heavy winds which changed directions all the time along with high waves constitute a great danger to fishermen and the coastal population.

Before the August Revolution in 1945 there was practically no storm forecast, hence the serious losses to lives and property caused by the storms in the low land and the coastal areas. Old people in coastal villages still recall the distressing scenes in fishing hamlets where the wailing of those families who lost their loved ones at sea continued for several days after the storm. Since the inception of the revolutionary power, especially since the complete liberation of the North, ever better weather forecast have been broadcast over the radio and carried in the press which helped greatly reduce the death rate from shipwrecks or inundations.

Diversity of storm season in Vietnam

Vietnam lies squarely in the tropical zone but its territory stretches over almost 15 degrees

latitude from close to the Equator to Tropic of Capricorn, in the typical monsoon zone on the south-eastern fringe of the Euro-Asian continent, almost surrounded by oceans on three sides.

This explains the great diversity of Vietnam's weather and climate and also the great fluctuation of its storm season. There has never been a complete repetition of any storm, either in terms of direction and intensity or the level of rain and the other accompanying consequences. This is apparent when we look back at the past decade (1971-1980).

In the said period all the coastal provinces of Vietnam from Phu Khanh to Quang Ninh came under the impact, direct or indirect, big or small, of storms. But the hardest hit were the provinces from Quang Ninh southward to Thai Binh (17 storms and depressions), Binh Tri Thien (13), Thanh Hoa (9), Nghia Binh (10), Nghe Tinh (5), Phu Khanh (6). In particular, during 1973 and 1978 almost all provinces from Phu Khanh northward were affected by storms or depressions. Also in these two years, storms hit Minh Hai province in the southernmost tip of Vietnam, an event rarely seen.

The number of storms varies from year to year. The greatest number was recorded in 1973 (11 storms or depressions). The figures were 10 for 1978, 8 for 1980, none for 1976 and 3 in 1977.

The points of entry gradually shift from the North to the South according to a widely observed rule, but they may also change very abruptly. Thus, in 1971 the first storm of the year landed in Nghia Binh province in Central Vietnam very early (May) and in 1978 a bit later (June) while the normal time is October or November. Likewise, Binh Tri Thien also witnessed a very early storm in 1979 (June) while the normal time for this area is October.

These were very rare exceptions for the period since the beginning of this century.

An inverse phenomenon takes place in the North which is usually visited by storms earlier than the South. For instance, storms hit Quang Ninh province in October 1973 and 1978 while the normal time is July, and Thanh Hoa in October 1974 while the normal time is August.

For many years past, under the direct or indirect impact of storms Vietnam has witnessed some of the heaviest rains and floods in different regions of the country.

The flood in August 1971 in the northern delta with a water level measured at 14.13 metres in Hanoi was the biggest this century, and the flood in October 1978 in the Mekong River delta was the biggest since 1966. Heavy floods also occurred in Nghe Tinh province at about the same periods. In October 1975 the second biggest flood in the century struck Central Vietnam, after the one in 1953.

The storms were accompanied by heavy flooding; it destroyed hundreds of thousands of hectares (July-September 1971, August-September 1973, October 1975, August-October 1978 and July-November 1980).

To be taken into consideration also are consequences which are very important but often thought to be indirect.

The flood in August 1971 was very heavy but it was not brought about by the rains accompanying any storms.

It was caused by the successive storms originating in China which

hit the upper reaches of the Red River and penetrated deeply into its lower reaches. A similar flood happened in the Mekong river following a succession of storms in Central Vietnam which caused prolonged and heavy rains in the middle reaches of the Mekong.

Serious damage to crops and population might have been avoided if the storms were equally divided in terms of time and space according to some specific rules. But, in fact, not a few storms have repeatedly struck a small area within a short period of time. That is the case of the floods in August 1971, the biggest so far this century which followed four storms in July and another in the middle of August. Another instance is the storms and accompanying rains that caused heavy flooding during August and September 1973 as a result of four consecutive storms and depressions that struck an area stretching from Quang Ninh to Thanh Hoa within the space of only 21 days (August 25-September 15). In autumn 1978 a heavy and prolonged flood occurred in the Mekong delta and another sudden flood submerged large areas in Central Vietnam as a result of four tropical storms and tropical depressions which successively hit Central Vietnam within only 17 days (September 15 to October 1).

Experience over the past ten years shows that storm-related disasters may happen in very diversified forms, mostly through the destructive force of storm winds and heavy rains in the areas directly visited by the storms. But on many occasions, the main harm is done by the heavy and prolonged rains which cause flooding of hundreds of thousands of hectares at the same time or by heavy swelling of the rivers, as was the case with

the floods in Central Vietnam. Damage was also caused by sea flooding such as in Haiphong in July 1971 and on coast of Thanh Hoa in September 1980.

During the storm in September 1955 the sea water rose suddenly and broke through several portions of the sea dyke in Haiphong-Kien An area causing the loss of more than 20,000 hectares of rice.

Lastly, it should be noted that not all the effects of storms are negative. Sometimes the storms may have salutary effects on the crops because they carry with them humidity to large areas affected by a prolonged drought right in the rainy season. That was the case of the storms in September 1977 when Vietnam and the whole of Southeast Asia were affected by a serious drought.

A major scientific and social problem of international significance

Since tropical storms are a complex and important natural phenomenon and at the same time one of the major disasters of human society, they have received special attention from world scientific circles and international bodies. The United Nations and many other international organisations such as the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), the International Union of Scientific Councils (IUSC) the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have considered tropical storms one of their prime concerns in their scientific, economic and social development programmes.

In recent years world scientists have pooled their efforts in long-term research programmes on global atmosphere using modern equipment and techniques such as tropical experimentation, observation of storms from aircraft, ground-based measurement equipment, oceanographic observations, the use of special observation planes capable of traversing a storm, or the use of radar, meteorological rockets and satellites...

It is hoped that with improved theories on quantity and the results of careful scientific investigations especially on tropical storms we may have appropriate solutions to tropical storms and provide more accurate forecasts in the coming years, especially with regard to complex cases.

The Vietnamese meteorology and hydrology service has been taking an active part in international cooperation programmes on storms within the World Meteorological Organisation and, cooperating with many other countries especially the Soviet Union in research on tropical meteorology and storms. Vietnam also receives the sympathy and active assistance of many international organisations in the forecasting of and protection against storms and floods and in the timely resolution of their consequences.

It is certain that with the constant broadening and consolidation of international cooperation, the study of tropical storms as well as the whole protection and defence against storm-related natural disasters in Vietnam will improve to the benefit not only of Vietnam but also the whole international community.

NGUYEN NGOC THUY

A COMMUNE IN A NEW ECONOMIC ZONE

FIVE years ago, the living conditions of the people on the two sides of Bridge 14 (south of Buon Me Thuot provincial town) were quite different from each other. On this side is the Hoa Phu commune, a rich one, but on other side (now Chu Dut commune) was an unknown area with immense stretches of abrasins and wild grass. Only 11 families of the *Kinh* (Vietnamese from the plain) lived there and the villages inhabited by the E De and M'Nong ethnic groups were all very poor.

Nowadays, Chu Dut commune comprises 1,026 families totalling 6,198 persons, among them 455 families of ethnic groups totalling 2,850 persons. There are now 3 agricultural co-operatives, one brick-making cooperative, a coffee-planting team and some other sideline teams of sawyers, carpenters and blacksmiths in the commune. More and more *Kinh* families have arrived to settle down here.

This was one of the three communes of Buon Me Thuot which had to receive relief rice from the State in 1976 and 1977, now the people of Chu Dut commune, from their own labour, live a much better life. Timber houses amount to over 50 per cent and here and there brick or storeyed houses can be seen. There is good order and security. The commune health station and buying and selling co-operative give regular services. There are first-and second-level

general education schools in the commune and the children of ethnic groups also attend school.

Market-gardening constitutes an important income for the people of the commune.

Take the case of Mr Vu Thanh Dat for example. A native of Ha Nam Ninh province in northern Vietnam, he emigrated to Ho Nai (Bien Hoa) in 1954. In 1974 he moved his family to Dac Lac. Now, he has a beautiful wooden house with a cement floor. He owns 4 sows, one weighs 300kg, the other three are 70 kg each, and ten piglets. He also raises some 50 chicken, ducks, and geese. Behind his garden there are 2 fishponds totalling 500 sq. m. where pikes, speckled tenches and anabas are bred. Banana, jack-fruit, grape-fruit, orange, lemon and papaya trees, 100 clumps of sugarcane, 7 tea and 7 coffee trees, 16 cocoa trees and 50 pepper plants are planted in his 1.2 *sao* (one *sao* equals 360 sq. m.) garden, bringing 15,000 *dong* each year. In his 11-member family there are 3 farmhands and 4 able-bodied persons. Apart from the income obtained from the co-operative, the average income from the garden is more than 100 *dong* per head per month. Mr and Mrs Chin A, his neighbours, earn no less than 13,000 *dong* a year from their two-*sao* garden.

Food production in Chu Dut commune is making headway thanks to the development of

wet-rice cultivation. Here are some figures on crop cultivation in the 4 villages inhabited by the E De ethnic group of the Quyet Tam co-operative: from 7.5 ha of wet-rice with a yield of 1,500kg per hectare and a total output of over 11 tonnes in 1977, the figures rose to 50 ha; 2,700 kg and 135 tons respectively in 1980. In four years, total rice-output has increased tenfold. The area planted with maize has been raised from 3 to 30 ha. Now the cooperative has 5 ha of green beans and 6 ha of groundnut. The practice of growing crops on slash-and-burn fields has been reduced.

According to the chairman of Ama Reo co-operative, one *sao* of slash-and-burn field requires 27 workdays and gives 700 kg of paddy whereas one *sao* of wet-rice needs only 17 workdays and gives 2,700kg. Working the slash-and-burn fields people had to burn the forests and live a nomadic life. From being reluctant to grow wet-rice, ethnic people now can use the plough as the *Kinh* do, using buffaloes and oxen. Young men of the E De ethnic group can now transplant rice in straight lines as young girls in the delta. At the same time as enlarging the wet-rice area, the Quyet Tam co-operative applies advanced techniques in farming and uses new high-yield rice varieties such as NN8, IR 36, and IR 38. The co-operative delivered 5.8 tonnes of paddy, 405 kg of groundnut and 850 kg of green beans as its tax quotas to the State. In 1980, it delivered 5.5 tonnes of paddy to the State, and sold 400kg of green beans, 300 kg of groundnut and 629 kg of maize to the State. Similar successes have been achieved in Quyet Thang and Quyet Tien co-operatives. The wet-rice fields are now very dear to the people of Chu Dut commune. More and more people come here to build their new life and very few of them have left.

LE THAU

VIETNAMESE WOMEN IN THE 80's

THE Socialist Republic of Vietnam is embarking on its 3rd five-year plan (1981-1985). What do women think of life and their work? That's the topic of a teach-in organised recently in Hanoi under the sponsorship of Nguyen Thi Dinh, President of the Vietnam Women's Union. Those attending represented a wide cross-section of women: weavers, engineering workers, members of agricultural co-ops, technicians, scientists, doctors, professors, researchers, women with leading posts in State organs and mass organizations...

The following are excerpts from their speeches:

Nguyen Thi Dinh, President of the VWU, opening the teach-in:

"In the past years, we have made big strides in the cause of women's liberation, in the realisation of equality between men and women. The social standing and the role of women in the family have been raised, especially in the South six years after liberation.

The female workforce accounts for 42.8 per cent in the total workforces of the country. The rate is particularly high in some branches, such as 65 per cent in light industries, 61 per cent in food industry, 64.7 per cent in education and 61 per cent in the trade service. Women have played their part in the production of material wealth

for society, with more and more taking part in the managerial and distribution systems of this wealth. Today women as presidents of agricultural co-ops, presidents of village and district People's Committees, or directors of factories are quite a common occurrence. Women hold 23 ministerial or vice-ministerial and corresponding posts in a total of 40 ministries. Let us recall that 15 years ago, in the sixties, the Government Council issued an instruction on increasing women personnel in public offices and factories and urged the various levels of leadership to pay still greater attention to training and promoting women in the managerial apparatus. Later our State applied practical measures for the preferential treatment of women in education, school examinations, job training, along with actively developing the system of creches and kindergartens throughout the country, all being aimed at quickly raising the cultural, scientific, technical and managerial levels of women. The figures I mentioned above are indicative of the effectiveness of such measures.

But these figures also reflect the efforts of women now conscious of their rights and duties. From the movement 'Three Capabilities' (capable of replacing their husbands and sons who have gone to the front, capable of doing the work in the rear in replacement of those who are fighting at the frontline, capable of serving the fight and joining the fight when

necessary -Ed.) during the anti-US resistance to the present movement 'New Women in Building and Defending the Motherland, successive revolutionary movements have stimulated Vietnamese women to strive continuously especially in scientific and technical study, an essential condition for promoting their social standing and achieving equality with men. At the time of the first Five-Year plan (1961-1965) in the North, the majority of women were workers and peasants newly freed from illiteracy. Today, women account for 47 per cent of the enrolments at general education schools and 30.1 per cent at the universities and colleges. Hundreds of thousands of women have attained higher education level and the number of women doctors and candidate doctors have run into the hundreds. Nine women have received the titles of professor and associate professor which were officially instituted in 1980.

With their higher social position, women also have gained a higher status in the family. For these 20 years in the North and the past six years in the South women have been protected by the Law on Marriage and the Family. Added to this, their increasing contribution to the family economy has raised their status as leader of the family on a par with their husbands. On many occasions during the past they joined the armed struggle or replaced their husbands in running the families, thus playing the key role which

had been until then only reserved for men.

However, due to the heavy consequences of long years of war and the present threat of invasion by the Beijing expansionists and also due to our own shortcomings in economic management, life remains hard for the working people in general and more particularly for women. There are also the vestiges of the feudal and neo-colonialist regimes which put no small obstacles to women's progress. On the other hand, it is obvious that our women's standard in all fields needs to be much improved if we are to meet the requirements of the new situation.

The third Five-Year plan presents us with many heavy tasks. How do we appraise what has been achieved and what remains to be done? Let's exchange views on the following questions which are our daily concerns:

- the present social position and role of women;

- limitations and obstacles to women in their contribution to national construction;

- what is to be done to increase women's contribution? What are our proposals to the State and the Women's Union?

Your suggestions at this teaching will help the Union to better understand your problems and aspirations, take more appropriate organisational measures, and make more concrete proposals to the Party and Government."

Nguyen Thi Ban, 45, pharmacist, director of the Pharmaceutical Factory No. 1, Hanoi:

"At our factory 80 per cent of the personnel are women. But of

the four members of the board of directors three are men. In the past 25 years we have always fulfilled our State plans. We have been awarded 8 Labour Orders, four congratulatory certificates of the Government, three certificates of merit of the Ministry of Public Health for our achievements in production, in organizing complementary and vocational education for our personnel, in the implementation of family planning and the building of crèches.

When I first assumed the directorship I thought that the only quality men would acknowledge in women in such a position as mine is our conciliatory attitude in a dispute. They did not trust our capabilities as a leader in technical work. My situation was compounded by the fact that two of my male colleagues are very proficient in their technical jobs. You can imagine how much effort I had to make study, which was no easy job considering the big portion of time I had to devote to my family. The best course of action for me was, I think, to modestly learn from my male colleagues while striving to improve my standard in my capacity as a director. The result was that we achieved a harmony within the leadership of the factory which greatly enhanced the workers' confidence in the board of directors. This has been a significant factor in our factory's successes so far.

Here I want to raise a question. Considering the double burden weighing on a woman employee or worker—at the factory and at home—why should she not be entitled to a double wage? That's only a joke, of course, but I do mean seriously that some policies or regulations must be instituted to encourage and remunerate women in the discharge of these two equally important tasks. I know that the State is thinking in

this direction. In fact, the Ministry of Labour has issued a circular stipulating that any office or factory with more than 100 women is allowed to take on an extra ten women to relieve the women on maternity leave or who have to stay home to look after their sick babies. But I don't know how many offices and factories have implemented this circular. I hope some inspection will be done and the Women's Union would help in the enforcement of the circular."

Pham Thi Cham, 24, worker at the Nam Dinh Textile Combinat, who has for three consecutive years fulfilled her quotas before schedule:

"I was born in the textile town and I entered the combinat at the age of 19 where my parents also worked. We the young generation did not experience nor understand the sufferings of the preceding generations under the colonial yoke. Instead we enjoy the gains of the revolution and an equal status with men in society and the family. We, men and women alike, are judged solely by the amount and quality of work we contribute.

The biggest obstacle we encounter is our poor economy and the backwardness of our production. This can be seen easily in our factory itself. Right at the start of the current Five-Year plan our factory had an acute shortage of raw materials and energy. There was not enough long-staple cotton, not enough spindles and in some months the electricity supply was available for only fifteen days. To fulfil our plan, we put up the slogan: 'Make the most of time'. We stood ready beside our machines at all time to start the machines whenever power was re-established. We did not wait for others to bring us the spindles

but went about to collect them to eliminate unproductive time.

I am one of the 22 women in the factory honoured with the title 'outstanding weaver'. But we care not only for quantity but also quality. We have only one dearest hope: to produce more and better cloth for our people. The shortage of raw materials is a problem which will not be resolved quickly. But I think that if we have a better management, if we can avoid waste and make the most of the materials available in the country, it will not be too serious a problem. But we can't overcome the shortage of power which requires efforts of other branches."

Le Thach Lan, 36, engineer of chemistry, Industrial Chemical Institute:

"Women engineers and technicians account for half of the institute personnel and all are still young with only one or two children because all have seen the advantages of birth control. We see this as a favourable condition for our contribution to the common task. Needless to say, the economic difficulties have affected our work to no small extent. But we know that the only way is to do our share in overcoming those difficulties. In this sense we have been focusing our research on promoting agricultural production.

"Many of our projects have been put into practice. Recently we have succeeded in producing a new kind of insecticide which we named KITAZIN, an organic phosphorus, which has been recognized as effective by the seminar on agricultural sciences and authorized by the Ministry of Agriculture for widespread use throughout the country.

The State has granted a noxiousness allowance to all chemical workers. I propose that a special

regulation be applied to women in the chemical industry, for instance, a longer annual leave, higher health protection allowances, etc".

Le Thi Kim, 38, acting director of the Mai Linh Sericulture Centre, Ha Son Binh province:

"In our country, sericulture should be strongly promoted to meet both the demands of our people and export. As early as 1970 our centre succeeded in producing a kind of bivalent silkworm with white cocoons. In 1976 when the Chinese stopped supplying us with eggs of this species we were not taken aback but were able to immediately supply these eggs to our silkworm raising farms. Now we have introduced a new kind of silkworm with 1,000 metres of thread and are studying the production of worms with 1,500 metres of thread. We have also crossbred the white and golden-cocoon worms to produce a new type of cocoon of an ivory colour that is much sought after on foreign markets. We have also been able to curb the pebrine disease, and eliminate the eggs of flies on silk worms. A recent success of ours is the treatment of the grasserie disease (*Bombyx-nosenia*) which has been officially sanctioned by the Ministry of Agriculture. We are helping Lam Dong province on the Central Highlands fight against this silkworms' disease.

All this is the result of assiduous efforts on the part of all women cadres at the centre. We are confident that women as well as their men colleagues are capable in scientific research. If there is any limitation in our work, that's mostly due to the heavy burden of family work which not only costs us a lot of time but also affects our health. I believe that

with a better organization of family life and better social services, these limitations will be gradually overcome. Women at our centre have all agreed that family planning is very important for a happy family life as well as for our advancement in work. Those with the biggest families have only three children. So, we have made the crèche work an important concern of our centre. Since our centre is far from any market we have assigned a woman worker to look after the provisions of the whole centre. Each of our women employees is striving towards the slogans put forward by the Women's Union 'Raise healthy children and ensure their good education' and 'Build democratic and harmonious families'.

The only remaining obstacle is the feudal concept of making light of women. While we were concentrating on the fight against the grasserie disease not a few of our male colleagues did not hide their scepticism or simply did not care about our efforts. When the magazine *Phu Nu Viet Nam* (Vietnam Women) published this success and mentioned my own contribution as the sponsor of the project, some of our male colleagues reacted angrily and they set about discrediting our work as 'unworthy of such overpraise'. Their reaction reached its climax when the Ministry of Agriculture designated me acting director of the Sericulture Centre. Written protests were sent to the Council of Ministers, so that the Ministry had to send an investigation team to our centre and organise an opinion poll. The result was that more than 90 per cent of the pollsters agreed to my appointment. Some of our male colleagues still openly declared their objection, but they were a small minority.

To promote women to responsible posts is a State policy. But it still meets with many obstacles.

We propose that all levels of the administration take firmer steps to enforce this policy and initiate a powerful movement of public condemnation of any tendency to play down the role of women. For their part, we women should make still bigger efforts in study to become proficient in both our specialities and in leadership. We must have self-confidence and should not waver before the reaction of those obfuscated by obsolete feudal ideology”.

Do Thi Ngot, 38, president of Minh Tan commune, Gia Luong district, Ha Bac province

“I am one among the millions of Vietnamese women who matured in the (Three Capabilities) movement, taking charge of the families and social work and the defence of our native villages while our husbands and sons were at the front fighting the aggressors.

But the lingering vestiges of the feudal ideology place a serious hurdle in our way. I was made president of the commune when only 27 years old. But even today, some of my villagers stubbornly refuse to come to me but instead go to the deputy president (a man) whenever they need a signature from the commune authorities. My husband who fought in the liberation army in the South was reported killed in action in 1975. I was left with a daughter and was thus disadvantaged in two ways: in the family of my husband because I had no son, and in the commune because I have become a widow. Some jeered at me: “Look, a widow is now looking after court affairs!” They even played shabby tricks on me by jokingly mating me first with an old man, then with an invalid in the commune. Even the women folk did not hide their jealousy.

But I was too busy with my work to concern myself with such backbiting. My commune which is located at the mouth of the Red River has three vital portions of dike which, if broken, would cause inundation not only to two districts of my native province of Ha Bac but also still greater damage to the neighbouring Hai Hung province. As president of the commune I am also president of the anti-flood committee. With the approach of the season we took very active preventive measures: evacuating the families living outside the dikes, looking to the safety of the State stores, moving some of the State property into solid private houses. We organized an anti-flood team composed of young and able-bodied women and men to cope with emergency contingencies. When the fields were flooded, we rowed a boat to patrol and supply food to the stranded people. My devotion spurred some villagers to come to my home and take care of my daughter when I was out in the fields. That moved and encouraged me a lot. My commune consequently received an award from the government for the good anti-flood work.

As president of the commune I also hold four other presidencies: the Account Committee, the Military Recruitment Committee, the Military Service Council and the Family Planning Committee. Added to this is my heavy workload at home: doing the household chores and tending the fields. At times I felt really exhausted and wished to resign and become a simple co-op member. But at the trust shown by my villagers and the district authorities I had second thoughts: I must overcome all these difficulties. As president of the commune I have my salary but it does not make both ends meet so I have to work extra hours to supplement my salary. I don't think any man in my condition could work so hard. In my commune, two-thirds of the co-op

managing committee and five among the thirteen secretaries of the production teams are women. Women also head the medical committee, the stockraising farm and the control committee. The commune physician and vet are also women. Practice has shown that women can do any job in the commune.

Today, our State has already promulgated definite policies regarding women. The Constitution also provides for the rights and interests of women. But that does not mean that everything will be smooth sailing.

I propose that the Women's Union and the Ministry of Labour pay more attention to the protection of women's labour in agriculture: to supply enough mesh cloth for women's puttees against leeches during rice transplanting, more overalls, rain coats and boots for women working in water. I also propose that the State have more concrete policies regarding women's labour such as health protection, childbirth allowances, as have been applied in a number of frontrank co-ops. As for women peasants, they must strive to improve their standard in all levels and overcome the obstacles to their progress, especially the remnants of the feudal ways of thinking.”

Nguyen Thi Dinh summing up the discussions:

“We have had very lively and interesting discussions through which we have seen more clearly our women's capabilities and qualities which are very necessary in the present stage of our revolution. These are the sense of collectivity in work, modesty in learning, solidarity with their men colleagues and among women themselves, persistent effort in fulfilling their tasks to contribute to the common good. At the same time we have better understood their problems. The road ahead of

women is still an arduous one. I joined the revolution at the age of 16 and I am now already 60 and in the course of my revolutionary activities I have met difficulties I would not have been able to surmount had I not been spurred by an unshakeable ideal: to continue the struggle to liberate our homeland and myself.

But we must realize that some difficulties and complexities arise from our own selves, from our own feudal ways of thinking which has its deep roots in a long tradition, and these difficulties will not disappear overnight. The feudal ideology still persists in the leadership, among men, and among the people. Women have to carry on a very hard, sometimes very bitter, struggle against prejudices of all kinds. Often men prefer being led by men. In the eyes of our society it still is an abnormal phenomenon if in the family the wife earns more than the husband. This struggle against vestiges of the feudal ideology must be carried on persistently.

There are other difficulties, but I think they can be solved step by step. Our present economic difficulties are only temporary and our State has already taken a series of measures which have brought about initial successes. There is no doubt that our economy will improve and so will our living standard. Also it is certain that some of our policies regarding women, including the Law on Marriage and the Family, must be amended or complemented. In particular, our discussions have clearly pointed to the need to formulate new policies to improve women's health, especially in heavy duty work. You have made many concrete and practical proposals. Some of these policies have begun to be applied in a number of localities, though still inadequately. Other localities have so far failed to give them serious consideration.

In the name of the President of the Women's Union, I promise to submit your suggestions and proposals to the government and to strive harder for the improvement of the conditions of the working women. As for us women, in order to meet the requirements of our times, we must learn to improve our cultural and professional standard and our skills. That is the firmest basis for the implementation of the policy regarding the promotion and liberation of women."

MAI THI TU

Vietnam Advances

"ORIOLE" ART TROUPE

FOR many years the Vietnamese people have been acquainted with a pioneer song troupe of Nam Dinh textile town (Ha Nam Ninh province) named "Oriole". The troupe is now twenty years old.

Although fifteen years ago "Oriole" was only a group of singers performing for the radio, many pioneers in Nam Dinh dreamed of becoming orioles.

On 31 December 1975 the Nam Dinh Pioneers' House of Culture was set up which provided new activities for the town pioneers in general and to the troupe in particular. Now the troupe goes in for many arts: singing, dancing, music, circus, puppet show, spoken theatre. Its band comprises a score of people with various national and modern instruments. Singers and dancers gather in groups according to their age: the oldest include secondary school pupils, the youngsters are elementary school pupils, and the smaller ones are recruited from primary schools and even infant classes. Now the "Oriole" art troupe has 170 members — 66 among them taking part in performance groups.

Year after year many other "Oriole" art troupes were born. To date 9 of the 17 basic general education schools in the town already have their "Oriole" group: Oriole One, Oriole Two, Oriole A, Oriole B, etc. Twice a week, under the guidance of the House of Culture and the schools, the budding artists meet in the House of Culture. To become an oriole, one has first to be a good pupil. The movement "study well and sing well" finds a warm response among the pupils, linking the schools to the House of Culture.

The repertory of the troupe is rich and varied. Songs include such long-pieces as the "May Suite" in praise of Uncle Ho, "Vo Thi Sau suite" lauding the young heroine fallen in the war of resistance against French aggression... The troupe has carved out an originality of its own in the content, programme and style of performance. The theme "Our native town" has become a bright keynote of its programme with a number of songs like "My textile mill", "I like the textile town" bringing a strong local touch to the troupe.

NGUYEN LE

'WILD FIELD'

THE film "Wild Field" set during the period of US resistance in South Vietnam tells the simple story of a young couple and their tiny baby living in a little hut on stilts built in the immense Plain of Reeds. The plain is submerged under water and weeds and all looks deserted, but there in fact is the liaison station of Ba Do and his wife, whose duty it is to maintain a communication line for revolutionaries in defiance of enemy's bombs and shells during the years of the war. The technique is simple, but spectators can witness the grim battles between that little family of three and the huge American war machine with its ultra-modern lethal means. The Americans wanted to turn the whole area into an uncultivable and uninhabited, deserted, waste land and to quench the will to resist of a whole nation. Nevertheless, the liaison fighters of the Plain of Reeds managed to cling to their post in the native land ploughed by enemy bombs and shells, and to keep the communication line open. Their life is an artless epic, lucid and lyrical.

The film, based on the scenario by writer Nguyen Quang Sang, was made by Nguyen Hong Sen, director; Duong Tuan Bui, cameraman; Trinh Cong Son, musician; with Lam Toi and Thuy An in the two principal roles.



Lam Toi and Thuy An in "Wild Field".

For Director Nguyen Hong Sen, Wild Field marks the coming to maturity of a talented film-maker. Leaving the work of a cameraman, a domain where he was successful with Water Has Reached Bac Hung Hai, a gold-medal documentary at the Moscow Film Festival in 1961, Kim Dong, a Bandung prize-winning best feature film for children at the Afro-Asian Film Festival in Jakarta in 1964, the Road to the Front, a gold-medal winner at the 1969 Moscow International Film Festival, and Arts for Children's Sake which won the golden "Apsara" medal at the 1968 Phnom Penh International Film Festival, he has succeeded in the new realm of director. He has made a rapid reputation for himself: his first two feature films The Adverse Wind and Wild Field—won the Silver Lotus 2nd prize and the Gold Lotus 1st prize respectively at the 5th Film Festival of Vietnam in 1980.

In July 1981, at the 12th International Film Festival in Moscow, the Gold Medal, the highest prize of the Festival, and the only award of the International Federation of the Press and Cinema, went to Wild Field. It was the first time that a Vietnamese feature film received the highest prize at an international film festival.

With Wild Field, Vietnamese cinematography has made a worthy contribution to the confirmation of the ever-increasing role and position of the cinema in the struggle for humanitarianism, peace and friendship among nations.

VU HONG

LEAVING behind us the Dien Bien valley we went north toward Lai Chau by the Pavie trail as it is called.

In a cloud of dust we passed a few scattered hamlets still plunged in their morning torpor. On the verandas or behind the openings of houses on stilts stark naked babies looked at us, nonplussed. There's little traffic and few travellers on the road, pedestrians for the most part. Even buses and bicycles were scarce.

Lai Chau valley, considerably deeper than that of Dien Bien, is 40km as the crow flies from both the Chinese and the Lao borders. Of the old French residential quarters there only remained a church, a few bunkers and the storied house of Deo Van Long, known here as the "Thai King". In 1946 he had set the local White Thai against the Black Thai of Muong Then (Dien Bien) who supported the Viet Minh (1). Today the new administrative quarters rose in tiers over a much larger area, at the confluence of the Black River and the Nam Na torrent, practically dried up.

We were welcomed by comrade Pham Hung, deputy-head of the province and member of the Party provincial committee.

"What is special about Lai Chau's", he said, "is its 314km of border with China (2). Our province ranks fifth in Vietnam for size - 17,09 square kilometres, 85 percent of which are forests and highlands. Six mountain ranges tower at 2,500 and 3,000 metres. The population, 310,000 people (that is 18 per sq. km.) comprises 23 ethnic groups: Thai and Hmong (formerly called Meo) for the most part, then Kinh, Ha Nhi, Zao, etc."

A grey-haired and robust man of over fifty, comrade Hung is himself a Thai, while the head and the military commander of the province are respectively Hmong and Tay. The largest but

also the most backward of Lai Chau's seven districts is Muong Te near the borders of China, Laos and Vietnam, where, as the saying goes, if a cock crows, people in three countries prick up their ears.

The history of this far-away northwest province all the same reflects the stages of Vietnam's national resistance. November 1945 saw the return of two French battalions which had taken refuge in Yunnan (China) under the Japanese domination of Indochina. Then, in July 1946, 5,000 soldiers of the expeditionary corps sent from the metropolis came to give them a hand in setting up an "autonomous Thai country" with Deo Van Long as King. A great part of the province was liberated in 1952 and the Provincial capital in December 1953, while Dien Bien basin was occupied by French paratroops from 20 November 1953. After the victory of Dien Bien Phu, it was not until August 1954 that the area was definitively rid of the bandits who scoured it. In May 1955, with the neighbouring provinces of Son La and Nghia Lo, Lai Chau made up a "Thai Meo autonomous zone", later re-named Northwest autonomous zone, disbanded in 1976.

A TRIP TO THE NORTHWEST BORDERLAND

The first US bombardments started on 2 July 1965, first on Dien Bien, then on the communication lines and bridges of the whole Northwest. In 463 days and 81 nights of bombardment, 6 districts and 67 villages were hit, and 14 US planes shot down. As in nearly all Sino-Vietnamese border areas, the first serious "frictions" with China (encroachments, infiltrations... problems with the Hoa minority) began in 1968. They came to a head on 17 February 1979 with the open aggression of Chinese troops which only withdrew on 10 March 1979.

Defence and production

If in the rear the tasks of production take precedence over those of defence, here, on the front line the order is of course the other way round. This situation of constant war should be remembered, as well as the heavy legacy of the colonial period, and the fact that the population was mainly nomadic, when one examines the achievements of 26 years of socialist building since 1955.

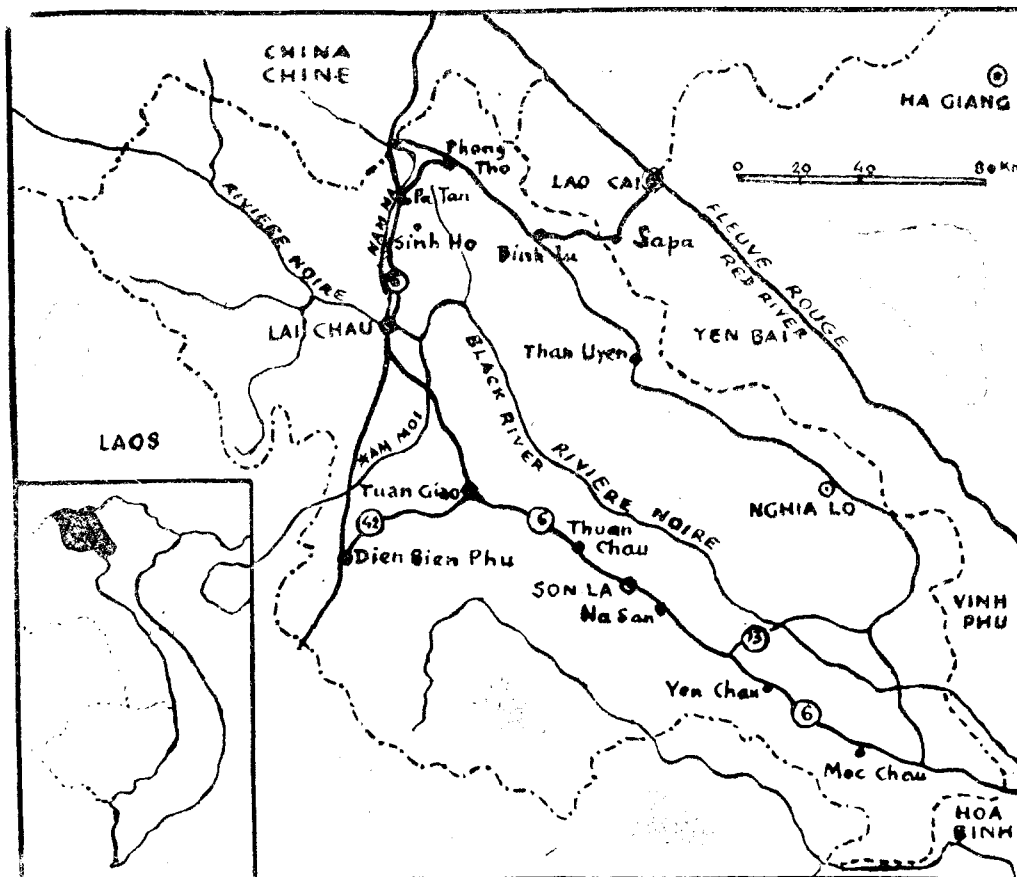
"Malaria and epidemics played havoc", Pham Hung told us. "So did an endemic shortage of food

which compelled the population to live on tubers unearthed in the forests for 4 or 5 months of the year. Now, 70% of households have joined cooperatives, but only in the ricefield areas and not on the highlands. Thanks to the development of water conservancy freeing people from the inclemencies of the weather, to the application of chemistry and the use of new seeds, rice-yields have jumped from 17-18 quintals per hectare to 30, 50 and even 70 in some places. Between 1975 and 1980 the population went from 260,000 to 318,000, or an increase of 19%. In contrast to the plains where family planning is actively campaigned for here the ethnic groups are encouraged to grow for the shortage of food is no longer a problem. The

communications network has also been developed for both economic and military reasons. Under French rule our province was crossed by 90km of Colonial Highway Six. Now, our network is ten times wider, reaching right down to the districts. One can choose between three roads when travelling to Hanoi."

Co-operativisation has reached only 70% due to the scattered nature of the population and the difficult terrain. The family economy is very important and the terraced ricefields are often privately owned. Here many families are self-sufficient and the circulation of goods is less than in other regions, bowtering still exists and money is hoarded

In order to rapidly improve the miserable lives of the northwest montagnards in the 60's, the government set up a settlement policy. What is more, in the 70's thousands of people from the plains settled there to realise the full economic potential of the region and relieve the overpopulation of the Red River Delta. This policy is still the order of the day. To Huu, vice-president of the Council of Ministers, on the occasion of the National Day, 2 September 1981, declared that "we must draw up a plan for the best use of the great potentials—the labour force and the land." He added "It will be necessary to gradually establish new specialised regions, particularly in the Northwest of the country." Lastly "We shall



Map
of Lai Chau.

lead millions of workers to the open spaces which are as yet underpopulated."

After laying stress on the two main tasks, namely the defence of the border and the production of cereals so as to depend to the least possible extent on the supply from the central administration and the plains, Pham Hung added: "We would like to develop step by step the strong points of this mountainous area, that is tea and stick-lac, but China will not leave us in peace... We also have to help Laos in every possible way, particularly the Lao province of Phong Saly with which we are twinned, even sharing each grain of salt, as Souphanouvong aptly said..."

Helped by economic progress, cultural and social life in Lai Chau has taken wing. Our host went on: "Before liberation there were only two primary schools with four teachers here. In 1980, school enrolment reached 36,000, not to mention 17,000 children in kindergartens. Attention has been paid to the formation of cadres from the various ethnic groups and the strengthening of inter-ethnic solidarity. This has required stressing a rapid economic and cultural development for the minorities to bridge the gap between them and the ethnic majority, helping the former to blossom in their particular skills. At present, the province numbers 540 cadres of university level. The State takes charge of the pupils in central-run boarding schools and helps those in village schools. In the sanitary field, under colonialism the province had only one French doctor and one *Kinh* junior doctor, assisted by five nurses. Now the provincial hospitals have 1,323 beds, that is 42 for 10,000 people. Each village has its own junior doctor.

A Strategic Stake

The next day, accompanied by lieutenant-colonel Nong Hoang Tho, a Tay, deputy-commander of

the provincial armed forces, we made a trip north up to the China border at Pa Tan and at Phong Tho. The trail we followed is a northward continuation not only of the one that led us from Dien Bien to Lai Chau but also National Highway Six running along the Black River from Hoa Binh to Lai Chau through Moc Chau, Son La and Tuan Giao. Practically the entire network of the area was built or enlarged by Chinese sappers during the anti-US war. Now, the Vietnamese find to their cost—having had the experience in February 1979—that these roads can serve as axes of attack launched from Yunnan. This is a curious analogy with the 1962 Sino-Indian war as regards a strategic road built by the Chinese in a contested zone of the Himalayas, just like the present tension between China and Laos to whom Beijing proposed not long ago to link its road network to that of "democratic" Kampuchea under Pol Pot.

After a sharp bend of the road we came across the deep and yellowish gorge of the Black River. The trail skirts the Nam Na torrent up to and beyond Pa Tan with a fine landscape of mountains and deep passes which offers so many prospects for tourism when peace will be restored for good.

A little before Pa Tan the trail splits. One section leads to this place at about 10 km from the China border as the crow flies, and another to the plateau of Sinh Ho, the real stake in the military confrontation in the area in February 1979. "To lose the Sinh Ho plateau is tantamount to losing Lai Chau", lieutenant-colonel Tho confided to us. From Phong Tho the trail continues northward up to the Chinese town of Jinping. We saw groups of people's militia armed with rifles. Should one distribute weapons to minorities? "No army can replace the local population," comrade Pham Hung had said to us the day before. "Had



A good rice-harvest

we not won the hearts of the mountain people, we could not fight the Chinese aggressors."

Another stake in the February 1979 aggression and present-day clashes are the bridges formerly built by Chinese sappers which Chinese commandos now seek to destroy. On the road from Lai Chau to Phong Tho lieutenant-colonel Tho had shown us a cemetery overgrown by wild grass. "The graveyard of Chinese engineers who died while building the road", he said without any hatred or emotion. By what strange upheaval or deviation from history has China thus sacrificed some of her sons in the peaceful construction and defence of this

roads against US bombardments only to sacrifice even more in a policy of hostility towards Vietnam aimed at destroying what she had helped build?

Spreading a map before him and pointing at Height 551, lieutenant-colonel Tho undertook to explain to us the battles of February 1979: "Our province borders on three Chinese districts. Besides their thrust at Phong Tho, they simultaneously attacked five other places, fielding an entire army corps with artillery and armoured cars. They wanted to occupy Phong Tho, Pa Tan, Pan Tao heights, then to rush to Binh Lu and join with their forces striking at Lao Cai, and lastly to threaten Lai Chau. They hoped to rouse the minorities of the area thanks to their agents but we had captured many of them before their offensive. We had seen through their schemes without however expecting such a large-scale onslaught. Thus one defence which we began only to build in October 1978, were not very strong: one battalion of regional forces with a strong network of Ha Nhi, Hmong and Thai people's militia. The aggressors had hoped to occupy Phong Tho within two or three days but it took them eleven days to reach there. They had difficulties in attacking Lai Chau in spite of their numbers for they were compelled to follow the only access route, a deep pass where their tanks constituted easy prey for our B40, B41 and our anti-tank mines. Therefore they were held up at the border for three days and forced to replenish their troops because of losses. Their tanks could only reach Nam Cay at 12 km from the border. Then having made no progress, their artillery attacked Pa Tan destroying everything before they withdrew.

During a whole day at about ten kilometres from the front we did not hear any explosions or gun reports. However, the Chinese

forces did continue to occupy some hot spots in Si La Lao, Si Co Lao and Ma Li Chai, particularly by firing artillery shells (which we return shot for shot, explained Tho), by carrying out provocations, infiltrating commandos to spy on the Vietnamese forces, destroy bridges and depots, or lay mines. The Vietnamese militia, however, usually spot them pretty quickly.

We lunched at Phong Tho in the barracks of a battalion under a Hmong major and his deputy, a Zao. The sleepy sun-drenched camp comprised a few mud huts roofed with elephant grass.

During the siesta, a few soldiers played pingpong. Here boredom prevails rather than psychological war. In truth, Beijing's tactics is devilish, compelling Vietnam to stay mobilized against her "strange dirty war", a long war of economic erosion. Second lieutenant Nguyen Huu Yeng, 30, has spent 14 years in the army, practically half of his life. He enlisted after the first US bombardments on his native town Phu Tho and in 1965 he participated in the 1971 southern Laos campaign, then in the Ho Chi Minh campaign which liberated Saigon in April 1975, and found himself at the border with China in 1978. Married for three years and a father of two daughters, he has only one month and a half home leave each year: "Of course, I would like to live near my loved ones" he said with disillusioned smile, "but with these Chinese..."

Of what had once been Phong Tho there only remained blown-up bridges, destroyed houses, heaps of bricks, basements of razed houses. Such things do not seem impressive if one forgets that in a tropical and poor country like Vietnam the luxuriant vegetation rapidly camouflages the wounds of war.

Complication of the Hostilities

From what Tho and Hung said one can piece together the pattern of hostilities with China. The first Hoa to stir up the area were the Guomindang generals and their bands after the liberation in 1954. Then Hoa traders settled in Lai Chau but they did not leave kind memories here. The building of roads around Lai Chau by Chinese sappers was carried out during the period of Cultural Revolution. "We had to struggle against them bringing their Cultural Revolution into our country too", explained Tho bitterly. Between 1966 and 1968 many Hoa who had settled in Vietnam followed the Chinese sappers when they withdrew to China. Then they come back one after another and began contacting their neighbours, causing problems. Owing to socio-economic difficulties created by the Cultural Revolution, many Chinese also came to Vietnam in the late sixties and early seventies. Then too we had to struggle to send them back, for they were soon discovered as Chinese agents spying on our military situation and economic resources. Some of them guided many units during the February 1979 Chinese aggression. However, this is not a reason to adopt a policy of blind ostracism. Even today in Lai Chau part of the trading is in the hands of Hoa. One of them sits on the People's Council and is held in high esteem by the population. One has to discriminate between the Hoa and Beijing's agents and educate our people to make this differentiation. One has also to help these Hoa earn their living according to Vietnamese law and be aware of Beijing's schemes."

Hung and Tho's revelations constitute a fairly precise picture of the tension and uneasiness caused by the Chinese hostility in the area. Western observers tend to see and describe this conflict as

a Sino-Vietnamese antagonism, which is only partially true. In particular, that amounts to ignoring the basis of the problem, namely the current struggle (China's pressures and attempts at "seduction") for the allegiance of the minorities who constitute the truly aboriginal population (and not the Han or the Kinh) on both sides of the border. In the period of Sino-Vietnamese understanding, the border of "friendship" was in fact inexistent. Without passports, Hmong and Zao etc. crossed it to visit relatives and friends or attend festivals and market-days on both sides. Often they took wives or husbands from a hamlet on the other side of the border. "So", explained Tho, "our people were accustomed, particularly during the anti-US war of resistance, to Chinese goods: radiosets, material, thermos flasks... Even now, some people slyly cross the border to buy various articles in special stores at dirt-cheap prices from Chinese who

are past masters in psychological war. Moreover, the enemy sends gifts to the heads of people's councils or Party secretaries of certain villages to make their superiors suspect them. On festive occasions, they drift gifts downstream, fly balloons or fire shells, filled with leaflets. Another means consists in spreading rumours which are always rapidly carried about in the areas of minorities, according to which the Chinese are ready for a new offensive. This is meant to keep up anxiety so as to sabotage production by diverting the population from their peaceful agricultural work. But you know, the minorities on the other side of the border inform us from time to time that they have no desire to cause us trouble..."

On our way back, Tho told us in a confidential mood: "I have spent all my life in the army. Now I want to retire but I cannot because of this new conflict, and

I don't know how long all this will last." Heavy indeed is the mortgage that Chinese hostility wittingly imposes on Vietnam's development. Its least evil is not to condemn so many young Vietnamese generations to improductivity but particularly to deprive them for ever from any chance of professional training for the future

Revelations on the ethnic groups

Visiting Lay Nua, a village of White Thai at 5-6km from the chief town, we were received in a classroom by Thum, the head of the village, and Lo Van Sim, the head of the co-operative. To judge by the streamers not yet removed, it had just been used as a polling station. As a matter of fact, the whole of Vietnam had elected a new National Assembly on 26 April 1981, which has a high proportion of minority people: 73 out of 496 deputies. Wherever we went, we noticed a wide ethnic representation in all co-operatives and people's committees of various levels. The minorities are truly in charge of their own affairs.

At our request, the responsible cadres told us about the evolution of habits and customs.

Formerly, it was explained to us, if some one fell ill a sorcerer was invited to exorcise the evil spirits. Now they go to the doctor and take the medicine he prescribes. In the past a burial lasted several weeks; now it is done within 48 hours. In the old days a young husband had to work for



Bamboo from the forest

his in-laws for at least ten years; nowadays the marriage is registered at the village people's committee and the bridegroom lives at his in-laws 2 or 3 years at most. The bride price (sometimes a buffalo in the past) is now smaller. Inter-village solidarity has also developed: everybody comes to help you build your house so you can move in after one year instead of nine.

Our sejour in Lai Chau gave us the opportunity of an exciting meeting and talk with a number of local cadres belonging to various minorities. Apart from their candour and their readiness to talk, what was striking about them is the evident care for the well-being of their ethnic group.

Hoang Xuyen, a Thai, is a member of the provincial Party Committee and the secretary of the provincial People's Council. Born in Dien Bien district, he was twelve when his father died fighting in 1950. Brought up by his maternal grand-mother, he later on studied at the State School for Pioneers and went to China in 1953 (a period of good relations) to study education. Back home in 1956, he carried on his studies in Hanoi until 1960. Two years later, he married a Thai girl, a teacher from Son La. Xuyen made a point contrasting the superstitions of yore to the freedom of education at present. Stories of medicinemen and of the effects of opium abounded. The most elementary rules of hygiene such as boiling drinking water were then unknown. Flies and mosquitoes swarmed everywhere and buffaloes were kept under the houses on stilts. Cholera and malaria played havoc while epidemics decimated whole families. Misery continually threatened Muong Then valley even though it is considered the rice granary of the northwest. To send one's children to school was unthinkable. Formerly, if women took it into their head to go to

school or simply to wear shoes, people would laugh at them... Now Xuyen has a son who is preparing to enter university and three others in the 9th and 8th forms and the kindergarten.

Ha Thi Phuc is a Thai doctor born in Son La, a member of the provincial Party Committee and the head of the provincial health commission. She has only one child, a daughter, which is unusual here. Her native village lies near the old French base of Na San. She remembers the poverty of her childhood. Back in 1945, her father joined the revolutionary forces, and as a result her entire family was put into the prison of Son La. She herself was jailed at the age of twelve, from 1951 to 1952. After liberation, she was sent to school. Having finished secondary education in 1962 through intensive courses, she entered the Hanoi School of Medicine from which she graduated in 1968 and was appointed to Lai Chau. Of her seven brothers and sisters, three have graduated from university, two are studying there now and her youngest sister is finishing general education. Phuc laid stress upon the old inequality between man and woman. It was forbidden for a woman to sit while her family received a guest, she could not travel or pursue her studies.

Then came the turn of Po Go Su, a Ha Nhi member of the Standing Committee of the provincial women's union and of the provincial People's Committee. At first shy, it was not long, however, before she began to confide her memories with a restraint not lacking in vehemence and passion as the intonation of her voice and the flash of her eyes revealed. She was born in Mo Ca, Muong Te district, seven days walk from Lai Chau. The Ha Nhi, one of the most backward and oppressed ethnic groups under colonialism, were then called "U Ni" — which means soot-black ignorant people.

Their language belongs to the Tibeto-Burmese group of the Sino-Tibetan family of languages. Traditionally wretched, they had no house and lived in caves which they left when the fertility of the land around was exhausted. Su was visibly moved by her recollections of women's former inferior status. Boys and girls, she explained, could not meet face to face. No man could approach a pregnant woman nor put his hand on her belongings. A woman could not take a meal with her father, husband, the latter's elder brother or uncle. She had to eat in a corner or on a stool, and not at the common table. In the past, men kept their hair in buns while women hid theirs in a headscarf, wore a long black jacket and walked bare-footed. At that time, men were addicted to opium, ruining themselves to smoke it or going to the length of killing their wives and children for want of money. Su then told us about the most memorable periods of her life. Born in 1947, she soon became an orphan and was brought up by her uncle, her name Go Su meaning uncle's adoptive child. Her youth was marked by troubles caused by Guomindang bandits who spread the most alarmist and fantastic rumours about the Kinh having teeth big like bananas, selling children's grilled meat, cutting off women's breasts... Out of panic, a part of the local population followed the ruffians. It was not until 1959-1960, six years after liberation, that the Vietnamese Communist Party made its influence felt in Mo Ca. A school was opened affording board and lodging to 100 pupils. Go Su, a vanguard pioneer, studied there under the influential guidance of Nguyen Van Bon, a Kinh teacher from Hai Phong. Since then, she explained, people began to trust in the Party. While no Ha Nhi had fought in the revolutionary ranks against the French colonialists, many Ha Nhi youths did enlist against the US aggressors. In 1961 Go Su was sent to

Lai Chau School of Ethnic Minorities, then in 1964 to Son La Agro-Industrial Technical School.

From 1969 to 1973 she studied at the Central Party School in Hanoi. Her husband, also a Ha Nhi, studied at the High School of People's Police. Mo Ca now boasts seven University graduates while the Ha Nhi ethnic group has eight University graduates and one student in medicine.

These sketches put in relief the considerable effort made by socialist Vietnam to train, right from the beginning, in spite of difficult war conditions, a truly indigenous contingent of cadres from all minorities, including the most unfortunate, so as gradually to fill the gap in the development between plains and highlands. Of course, everybody knows, and does not try to hide the fact, that much remains to be done.

DANIEL ROUSSEL
Humanité Correspondent

J.P. DEBRIS

1. Front for the Independence of Vietnam opposed to the French colonialists.

2. Lai Chau also has 360km of border with Laos.

THE VIETNAM INSTITUTE OF SCIENCES...

(Continued from p.13)

to boost the rapid development of agriculture and ensure good health for the people. The Institute has therefore increased its biological research, laying particular stress on how to serve agriculture.

Our biologists succeeded in applying the advanced technique of culturing vegetal tissues to multiply the strains of potato, pine-apple, sugar-cane, tobacco; in culturing zygotes to rapidly multiply good strains, in obtaining better varieties of soya, maize and rice through experimental mutations in the pre-embryonic stage (See Vietnam Courier No. 9-1981 Phan Phai: A major breakthrough in genetics).

The research into more proteins for plants, animals and men also received particular attention, witness the study of the biological properties and the cultivation technique of azolla and highly-nutritious algae, and of the stimulation of ionized radiations upon the yield and quality of soya.

A product called Bacillus, a non-noxious and highly efficient micro-organic pesticide devised by the Institute, is now widely used in production.

Another major theme of research was to lay the scientific foundations for a number of technical branches. The Institute managed to manufacture semi-conductors for electronic industry, resins for printing industry, insulator paints for electro-magnetic wires, paints for tins... Many natural compounds, oils and vegetal essences made by the Institute went into home consumption and export.

The Institute maintains close contact with production bases and participate in solving their technical problems: eliminating machine vibration, calculating the dynamics of a foundation, studying the structure of automatic machines, reckoning the flow of water for the building of hydro-electric power stations, drawing up the balance of combustibles and energy for the whole country.

Informatics which provides a practical contribution to the management of economy and society constitutes a major theme of research in the Institute. Mathematicians and cyberneticists have already seen their first fruits from the application of infinitesimal calculus and informatics to production management in a number of ministries.

Besides meeting the immediate requirements of the national economy, the Institute must also pay appropriate attention to the development of the country in subsequent stages. Many

good results have been obtained in research on the theory of mathematics, physics and mechanics.

Through scientific research the Institute has fostered the training of cadres. Thus, over the past five years many cadres have had candidate's and doctor's degrees conferred upon them.

Vietnamese scientific workers have raised their qualifications thanks to international co-operation which acquaints them with new achievements in science and technique. They successfully made investigations and coordinated research with their counterparts in the Soviet Union and other fraternal socialist countries. Particularly important was the participation in the scientific programme of the Vietnamese-Soviet coordinated space flight (July 1980) and of the subsequent flights to photograph the country's natural resources.

Over the past five years, in spite of many difficulties, the various branches in the Vietnam Institute of Sciences have rapidly grown in number and quality, and followed through correct themes in their activities. The Institute's position and role have been established in scientific circles both at home and abroad.

Recently the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Vietnam issued a Resolution on the policy on Science and Technique, a very important document setting out guidelines and tasks for science and technology in the coming five years and subsequent plans (See Vietnam Courier No. 8-1981, Policy on Science and Technology). The Resolution also set the orientation for promoting and developing our scientific and technological potential, including the strengthening of the system of research and follow-up bodies, the building of the State's highest scientific research body—the Vietnam Academy of Sciences will create favourable conditions for the various scientific branches to develop and strengthen the relations between natural sciences, social sciences and science and technology, and satisfactorily solve the even more complex scientific and technological problems raised by our country's task of developing economy, culture and society.

Professor
NGUYEN VAN DAO
Deputy-head and General Secretary of the Vietnam Institute of Sciences.

CHRONOLOGY

(16 August — 15 September)

August

16. Signing in Hanoi of an agreement on scientific and technological co-operation for 1981 between Vietnam's Ministry of Agriculture and Laos' Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Conservancy.

19. At the invitation of the Afghan Foreign Ministry, a delegation of the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry led by Vice-Minister Vo Dong Giang paid an official friendship visit to the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan from 16 to 19 August. During the visit a co-operation agreement between the two ministries for the 1981-1985 period was signed.

— The 1981 Children's Paintings Exhibition, displaying 210 paintings by children throughout the country, opens in Hanoi.

20. In an interview with *VNA*, Nguyen Huu Tho, Vice-President of the State Council, said: "The Vietnamese people and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam vehemently condemn the Reagan Administration's decision to produce neutron weapons..."

23. 305 children from 40 provinces throughout the country attend the Congress of Uncle Ho's Good Nephews and Nieces in Hanoi from 21 to 23 August.

— A high-ranking delegation of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party headed by Nouthak Phoumsavan pays a visit to Vietnam, beginning on 21 August.

25. *VNA* rejects fabrications by Radio Beijing and by a spokesman of the Thai Army and a Thai paper alleging that Vietnamese troops have transported and used toxic chemicals in Kampuchea.

27. At a press conference of the Vietnam Commission for Inquiry into Chinese War Crimes held in Hanoi on 27 August, its Vice-Chairman announces that since early this year, the Chinese side has committed more than 1800 armed provocations, infiltrations, ambushes, shellings and encroachments on the Vietnamese border area. Meanwhile, Chinese armed vessels made thousands of incursions into Vietnamese territorial waters, and flights of Chinese fighter planes on dozens of occasions penetrated many kilometres into Vietnamese airspace.

28. The State Council decides to ratify a protocol on protection of victims of international armed conflicts adopted on 8 June 1977 by "the diplomatic conference on reaffirming and developing humanitarian international law applied to armed conflicts".

— The State Council confers the title of People's Army Hero upon 14 units and 6 individuals of the People's Security Forces and 21 units and 6 individuals of the Vietnamese People's Army for their outstanding achievements in fighting for and building the country.

30. A protocol on co-operation in maritime transport for 1981-1985 between Vietnam and the German Democratic Republic is signed in Berlin.

31. Isidoro Malmierca Peoli, Cuban Foreign Minister, pays an official friendship visit to Vietnam at the invitation of the SRV Government. During the visit, the two Foreign Ministers of Vietnam and Cuba signed:

- a consular agreement between the two countries,
- an agreement on the exemption of entry visas for citizens of the two countries,

— a plan for cultural and educational co-operation between the countries.

— The Vietnamese Foreign Ministry sends a note to the Chinese Embassy in Hanoi proposing that an immediate end be put to armed conflicts and all activities likely to cause tension in the border area between the two countries, and that the third round of Vietnam-China talks be started as soon as possible.

— Signing of minutes on co-operation in post and tele-communication for 1981-1985 between Vietnam and Laos

September

3. The meeting of Sihanouk-Son Sann-Khieu Samphan Kampuchean reactionary forces held in Singapore attempting to organise a government of coalition "to oppose the Kampuchean revolutionary government" fails as there are many contradictions between them.

4. Signing in Hanoi of a protocol on communications and transport between Vietnam and Laos.

5. Beginning of the new school-year, the 1st year in implementing the educational reform programme following the January 1979 Resolution of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

7. At the invitation of the CPSU Central Committee, Le Duan, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, pays an official friendship visit to the Soviet Union from 3 to 9 September.

— The Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues a statement totally supporting the just position and viewpoint of the Cuban Government in its statement on 3 September 1981 rejecting the slanders of the US Government which said that the Soviet Union had supplied a record amount of weapons to Cuba and that part of these weapons had been channelled to some other countries in Central America.

13. The 12th session of the Interim Mekong River Committee opens in Vientiane. It reviews the implementation of the 1981 programmes and sets forth concrete tasks for each member country for 1982.

14. A high-ranking Party and Government delegation from Cuba led by Sergio Del Valle, Political Bureau member of the Communist Party Central Committee, and Minister of Health, concludes its official visit to Vietnam from 6 to 14 September. During the visit, the delegation attended the inauguration of the Vietnam-Cuba Friendship Hospital at Dong Hoi, a 450-bed hospital with a total area of 21,17 sq.m. A protocol on co-operation in health work for 1981-1985 between the two countries was signed.

— A delegation of the Kampuchean Women's Union led by Mien Xam An, President of the Union, pays a friendship visit to Vietnam from 7 to 14 September.

— Signing in Prague of a protocol on co-operation in manpower for 1982 between Vietnam and Czechoslovakia.

— On behalf of the SRV Government, the Vietnamese Friendship Gate Border Post hands to the Chinese side 23 Chinese spies who illegally infiltrated Vietnamese territory.

15. Signing in Prague of an agreement on long-term co-operation in geology between Vietnam and Czechoslovakia.

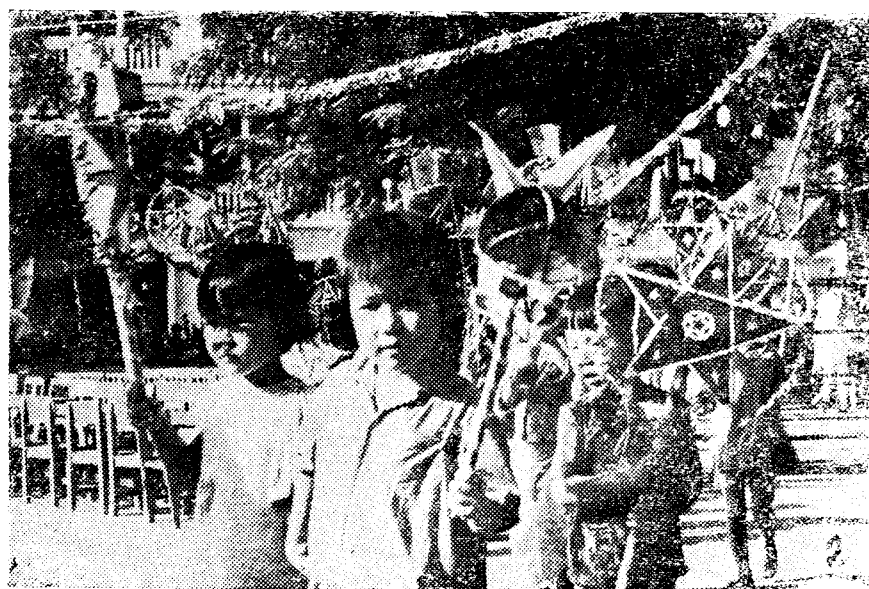
— Vietnamese agricultural, handicrafts and traditional pharmaceutical products are awarded the Gold Medal at the 18th International Fair in Algiers (Algeria).



1, 2, 3.

The 1980 mid-Autumn festival at the Sao Sang and Chim Non (Bright star and Young Bird) nursery schools (Hanoi).

Photos: CHINH VAN



Cover IV:

1. Winners of the 1981 National Children's Table-Tennis Tournament.

Photo: NGOC QUAN

2. One of the free exercises performed at the 1980 National Children's Gymnastics Competition.

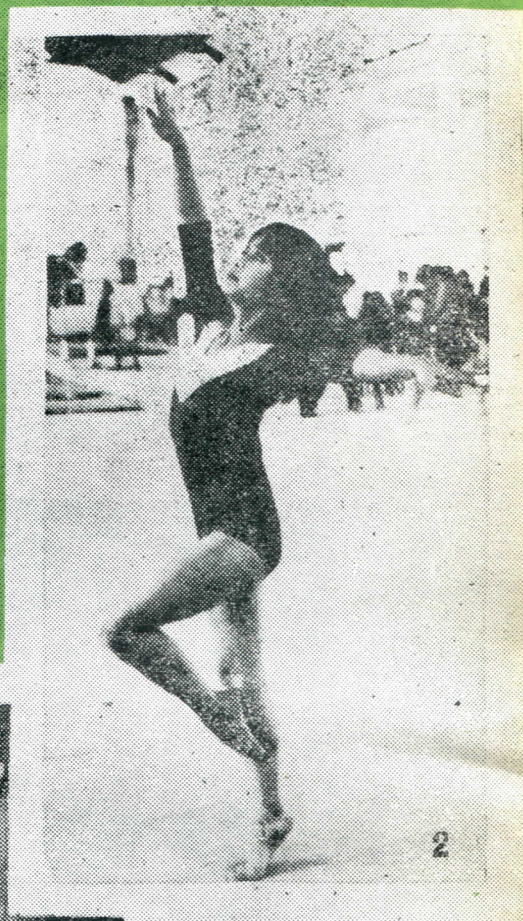
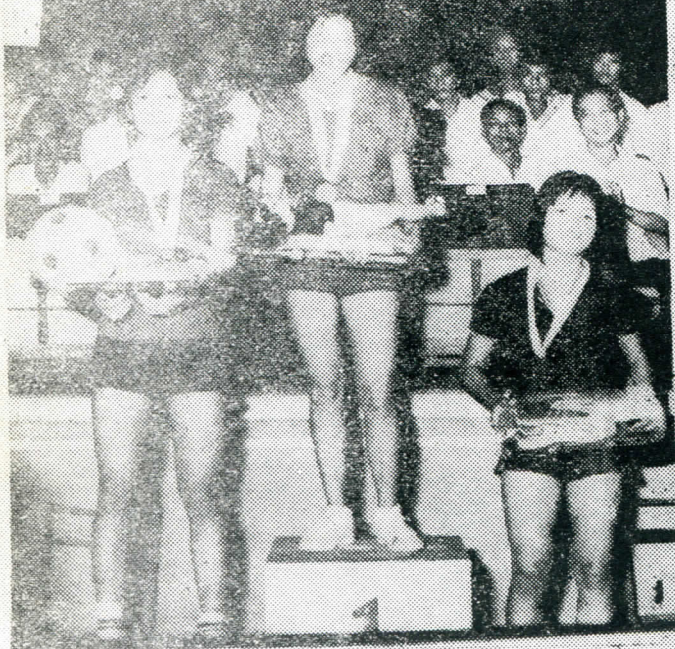
Photo: PHAN SANG

3. At the Piano-Section of the Children's Cultural Centre (Hanoi).

Photo: VNA



GIAI BONG BAN
 THIẾU NIÊN CẦU VƯỢT TRỆ TOÀN QUỐC
 1981



Vietnam
Courier

Le courrier
du Vietnam

НОВОСТИ
ВЬЕТНАМА

El Correo
de Vietnam

Báo đối ngoại

TIN VIỆT NAM

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

Tòa soạn : 46 TRẦN HƯNG ĐẠO, HÀ NỘI

DÂY NÓI : 53998

In tại Hà Nội

Chỉ số : 12462