

Vietnam courier



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● POLITICS

● ECONOMICS

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CHILDREN IN VIETNAM



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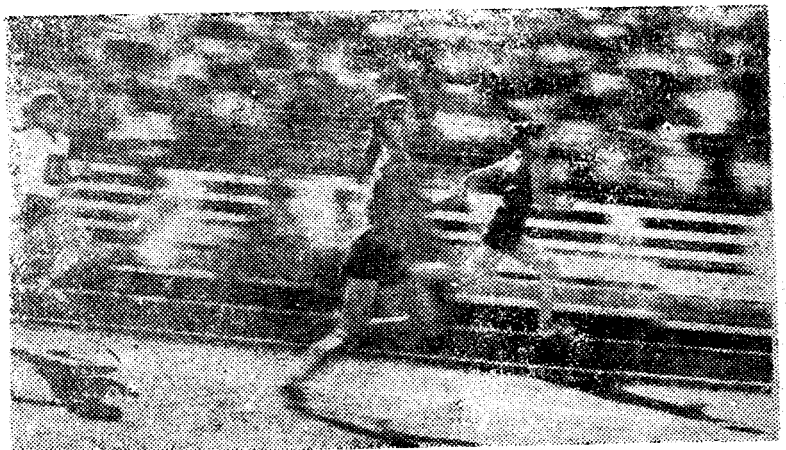
1. Butterfly dance.

2. A young circus performer from Ho Chi Minh City.

3. Tran Van Can, a well-known Vietnamese painter, talking with children in Hanoi.

4. At the Children's National Athletics Competition.

Photos: VU QUANG HUY



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Front Cover:

Clearing new land in Gia Lai - Kon Tum (Central Highlands)

Photo: TRAN TUAN

**Vietnam
COURIER**

6 — 1981

OUR MONTHLY COMMENT

THE Kampucheans have taken a big step forward in choosing and setting up their political system. After the promulgation of the draft Constitution and the local elections, general elections to the National Assembly of the People's Republic of Kampuchea were held on May 1st with the enthusiastic participation of a population which, two years before, had been expecting to suffer the same fate as millions of their compatriots at the hands of the genocidal Pol Pot regime, Beijing's henchmen.

One fundamental principle in international relations is non-interference in other countries' internal affairs, and the right of nations to self-determination. This principle is being brutally violated by China, the US and some ASEAN countries, when instead of accepting the choice the Kampuchean people expressed on May 1st, 1981 they are seeking to rally reactionary Kampuchean forces of all political shades, from the extreme left to the extreme right, in an attempt to set up a government in Beijing's and the "free world's" orbit. Beijing has agreed to supply weapons to these forces. But they make strange bed-fellows, and it is not yet clear how they will fare, if at all.

There has been much talk about the presence of Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea during the general elections. But didn't the numerous foreign observers and journalists present in Kampuchea at the time certify that Vietnamese troops in no way interfered with the elections? Western countries have never doubted the validity of general elections held in West Germany or Japan when these countries were occupied by Allied troops following World War II.

As in the two previous cases when the Vietnam People's Army entered Kampuchea to fight alongside the Kampuchean people, at their request, against the French and the US aggressors, and withdrew immediately after the French and American threats were removed, this time the Vietnam People's Army will once again withdraw after the Chinese stop threatening Kampuchea. There is a simple way out: China has only to agree to sign bilateral non-aggression treaties with the three Indochinese countries. Until now Beijing has refused to accept this proposal because it wants to keep a free hand in its expansionist, interventionist and aggressive ambitions against the three Indochinese countries. The US and ASEAN countries constantly repeat that they set great store by peace and stability in this area. Why then do they not use their influence to bear upon Beijing to take measures which would require no sacrifices from the Chinese side? Their talk of peace does not bear up to their open connivance with Beijing's policy of interference and destabilization.

The Indochinese countries do not refuse to discuss the international aspect of the so-called Kampuchean problem, a "problem" wholly created by China. The international issue at stake is how to guarantee the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kampuchea. It lies within a more general Southeast Asian context: how to ensure that the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all Southeast Asian countries be respected, and how to promote friendly relations and all-sided co-operation between them.

Southeast Asian matters must be settled by Southeast Asians. This is a legitimate demand voiced by a number of ASEAN countries. In this respect, the proposal of the three Indochinese countries concerning a regional conference on peace and security in Southeast Asia is utterly reasonable. Some may object that if the Indochinese countries consider China to be the saboteur of peace and security in Southeast Asia, why then do they stand for a conference excluding China? We hold that as a first step the two groups—the Indochinese countries and the ASEAN countries (and Burma if this country is willing to attend the conference)—should meet to discuss problems of mutual concern in the interest of peace, friendship and co-operation in Southeast Asia without foreign interference, threat or aggression. In a second stage, an enlarged international conference would be convened with the participation of other countries from outside the region, China

included, to acknowledge and guarantee a treaty for peace and stability, in the event of such a treaty having been concluded among Southeast Asian countries.

A regional conference of Southeast Asian countries and a subsequent enlarged international conference, and bilateral non-aggression treaties between China and the Indochinese countries—this is the best formula to settle problems in Southeast Asia, including the international aspect of the Kampuchean problem. This formula has won the approval of people of goodwill throughout the world. Much to our regret, some ASEAN countries still persist in demanding an international conference on Kampuchea according to an erroneous UN resolution, possibly to be convened next July. It is generally accepted that such a conference would not produce any results. And any attempt to move the venue of such a conference to UN Headquarters in the hope of getting more support would prove futile.

However, we still pin our hopes on the attitude of many ASEAN leaders, who have not rejected the dialogue between the ASEAN and Indochinese countries. This month, the Foreign Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Phoune Sipaseuth, representing the three Indochinese countries, visited Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines to hold regional consultations at the suggestion of some ASEAN countries. This was a step in the right direction, resulting in better mutual understanding.

The way to a regional conference on Southeast Asia has been charted and the first stretch has been paved. It is our wish that no one proclaiming himself as a champion of peace and stability in Southeast Asia will place obstacles along that road.

25 May 1981

THE 1981 GENERAL ELECTION

APRIL 26th, 1981. A Sunday, but not like other Sundays. In the towns, under the bright red banners strung across the sunny streets, files of young people on motorbikes, red flags unfurled from the houses, noisy processions with drums and cymbals, all contribute to the festive atmosphere. The same feeling has spread to the countryside, and even to the distant islands. At seven o'clock that morning, to the sounds of bells and sirens, a colourful crowd makes its way to the polling stations of the country's 93 constituencies. Elections to the National Assembly, to the City and Provincial Councils and to the Council of the centrally-run special zones have begun.

It is a major event, and so throughout the country. In particular, all 496 seats of the National Assembly are up for election, the first under the new Socialist Constitution adopted on 18 May, 1980. And according to this Constitution, the National Assembly is the supreme State organ, the only legislative body, and elects the Council of State, the Council of Ministers, the Chairperson of the Supreme People's Court, the Procurator-general of the Supreme People's Control Commission...

The new Assembly will thus set up the new leading organs of the State, guarantee that the Constitution is respected, pass laws reinforcing socialist legality, administrative efficiency and economic management. It will also adopt the guidelines and targets of the 1981-85 five-year plan.

This general election is all the more important given the conditions in which it has been called.

The state of euphoria following the victory of the struggle for independence and reunification has subsided, but the Vietnamese people is still waiting for the economy to take off. Indeed agricultural and industrial production are marking time. Living conditions have badly deteriorated for some strata of the population, especially workers and State employees. Objective factors have doubtless contributed to this situation: the consequences of 30 years of war, and the policy of systematic sabotage by our enemies, to name but two. But there have also been blunders in economic management, which our Party and State leaders have admitted and are presently correcting.

Measures have certainly been taken to liberalize production to provide more incentives for peasants to work harder and for industrial enterprises, municipalities and provinces to take greater initiatives. But while perspectives have been outlined, and initial results obtained, difficulties are still rife. Long and patient efforts are still required.

Exploiting this situation, our enemies are attempting to drive a wedge between the Party and State leadership and the population. The poll is thus also a test for the leadership.

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Speaking to his constituents, the peasants of Nghe Tinh province, Cu Huy Can, Vice-Minister for Culture and Information, frankly told them that he was not presenting an election manifesto as in

Western countries. The son of a peasant himself, and having studied agriculture, he invited them to talk of their work, of their lives, and chatted with them about their problems.

In Vietnam, candidatures are not put forward on an individual basis, representing various political programmes. Under the provisions of the Electoral Act of December 1980, lists of candidates are presented by the Fatherland Front.

But in this case, how can the election reflect the people's will? And why the choice of the Fatherland Front? A prop of the State enshrined in the Constitution, the Front rallies the political parties, the trade unions, the mass organisations of peasants, youth, women, representatives of ethnic minorities, religious denominations, the armed forces, progressive personalities, etc. It is organised at all levels, from the central level to the commune, including the provincial, district and other echelons. Its broad base and its methods of work, which involve internal discussions and negotiations, enable it to provide information for the voters about the candidates, their activities, their moral qualities, and their representativity.

Here is how it proceeds. After the number of seats allotted to it has been determined by the National Electoral Commission—in which the Front is represented—the Front Committee of a given province, for instance, convenes a meeting with the representatives of lower bodies to decide upon the structure of the lists of candidates for each

constituency. What proportion of workers, peasants, intellectuals, how many political cadres, democratic personalities, how many representatives of the armed forces, religious bodies, ethnic minorities, all these questions are to be decided upon. The Front Committees put forward names of candidates, with the agreement of the respective member organizations. The provincial Front Committee then draws up a provisional list for each constituency, which is then sent to the lower bodies for discussion at the grassroots (i.e. the factory or cooperative where the prospective candidate works, etc.). Names are deleted if the person is not deemed a suitable candidate.

A second meeting of the Front's Provincial Committee is convened. A second list is drawn up, which is then presented to meetings of voters of the relevant constituency. The candidates meet with the voters in similar meetings, at which the latter express their criticisms of the government's policies, the public services, the sitting deputies, and voice their opinions and demands. These debates will filter up to the forthcoming sessions of the National Assembly. All the costs involved in the "election campaign" are paid for out of Front funds.

Thus established, the lists are then put to the vote. According to the law, universal equal suffrage applies, and the voting is direct and secret. Voting age is 18. Women can vote since the Revolution, and soldiers have the same rights as other citizens.

Provided the prescriptions of the Electoral Act are applied, everything is geared to help voters perform their citizens' duty. Length of residence in the constituency, levels of instruction of voters have no bearing on voting rights. According to the law, any person not in a position to mark their own ballot paper can ask for someone's help, but must be seen to drop it themselves into the ballot box.

Such cases are extremely rare, especially in the cities, since illiteracy has been eliminated practically everywhere throughout the country. Sick, old, and disabled voters can ask for special ballot boxes to be brought to their homes for them to vote. All hospitals, maternity, clinics, rest centres and old people's homes with over 50 voters may set up their own polling stations.

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The proportion of ballots cast throughout the country was 97.96% of the registered voters. (99.33% in Hanoi and 97.69% in Ho Chi Minh City). In many quarters in the larger towns, in many communes and some districts, 100% of those entitled to vote cast their ballots. Most people voted before midday, even in areas affected by natural calamities or enemy destructions. In Cao Bang near the border with China, dozens of districts had finished voting at 8 a.m., only one hour after the polls opened. 97.78% of votes cast were valid.

According to a communiqué from the National Electoral Commission published in *Nhan Dan* on 18 May 1981, 496 deputies were elected from the 614 candidates, all with an absolute majority of votes. The Party and State leaders were all elected with large majorities.

The 496 new deputies include:

- 100 workers, 92 peasants, 9 members of handicraft cooperatives;
- 110 intellectuals: technicians, scientists, academics;
- 121 political cadres;
- 73 members of ethnic minorities;

- 15 progressive personalities and representatives of religious denominations.

There are 108 women and 90 young people between the ages of 21 and 35. One-third of the deputies were members of the previous legislature.

Alongside rank-and-file workers and peasants, Ho Chi Minh City's 35 deputies include NLF veterans: Ms Nguyen Thi Binh, Nguyen Huu Tho, Huynh Tan Phat, and personalities from what used to be the Third Force: Ms. Ngo Ba Thanh, Prof. Ly Chanh Trung, representatives of Buddhist and Christian organizations, prominent intellectuals including Profs. Le Van Triet, Le Van Thoi, Nguyen Ngoc Ha, artist Diep Minh Chau, composer Ca Le Thuan, etc.

The new National Assembly is a highly representative cross-section of the nation. The Vietnamese people have once more demonstrated their political maturity.

The results of the poll are above all a vote of confidence to the Party and State leadership. They also demonstrate the entire nation's determination to continue in the socialist path, according to the Party's line and following the new Constitution, and to strive to get the economy back on its feet on the basis of the initial results so far obtained.

Prime Minister Pham Van Dong was indeed speaking for the people when, interviewed by Vietnamese and foreign reporters after casting his vote, he declared: "In Hanoi, much remains to be done. We must tackle the tasks ahead with full conscience, our whole intelligence, and all our determination..."

QUY VY

«GOLD STAR» ORDER CONFERRED ON KAYSONE PHOMVIHANE



Photo. SPK

THE Standing Committee of the National Assembly and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam have decided to confer the "Gold Star" Order — the highest Vietnamese distinction — on Kaysone Phomvihane, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party and Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, in recognition of his great contributions to the consolidation and development of the special friendship, militant solidarity and all-round cooperation between Laos and Vietnam.

The Order was presented to Kaysone Phomvihane at a ceremony in Vientiane on May 1st 1981, by Deputy Prime Minister Vo Nguyen Giap, Political Bureau member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam and head of the Vietnamese

Party and Government delegation, on behalf of the SRV National Assembly and Government.

In his speech at the ceremony, Deputy Prime Minister Vo Nguyen Giap praised the great contributions of Kaysone Phomvihane, "a great and close friend of the Vietnamese people", who, "together with the Political Bureau and Central Committee of the Party, — the staunch leadership of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party — has creatively applied the principles of Marxism-Leninism to the practical conditions of Laos, who has constantly upheld the banner of national independence and socialism in mapping out the revolutionary path to lead the multinational people of Laos to a victory of historic significance, carry out the national democratic revolution and take the Lao People's Democratic Republic firmly on the road to

socialism, becoming a member of the mighty socialist community".

On the special Vietnamese-Lao relationship, Vo Nguyen Giap stressed: "From the days when our two countries still lived under the colonial yoke to the unforgettable days of the resistance against the two big imperialists and up to the present period when our two peoples are building and defending our countries against the common enemy, Beijing expansionism, the Lao comrades have always fought shoulder to shoulder with the Vietnamese people, forging a special relationship as rarely seen in the world, a relationship shining with proletarian internationalism between our two parties and peoples."

In his reply, after stressing the honour of receiving this noble distinction on behalf of the entire Lao people, Kaysone Phomvihane said: "During the past five years, although their country has suffered major trials arising from the aggressive and expansionist schemes of the reactionaries in the Beijing leadership and from successive natural disasters, the Vietnamese people have consistently implemented their noble internationalist obligations and have given our Lao people assistance in all fields in national defence and construction."

Stressing the need to further enhance the solidarity between the three countries on the Indochinese peninsula and between the Indochinese countries and the socialist countries, Kaysone Phomvihane said: "The harsh struggle for national liberation in both the past and the present struggle to defend and build our countries has unquestionably demonstrated the imperative need of defending and enhancing the vital militant alliance between our two nations."

"We feel immensely proud of the special solidarity between our two countries and are firmly confident that this solidarity will last for ever in the history of each of our peoples and that no reactionary force in the world can break it. Our Party, Government and people will do all they can to safeguard and strengthen the great friendship, special solidarity and all-round cooperation between Laos and Vietnam and to make it ever lasting, so as to contribute to the common cause of the three peoples of Laos, Vietnam and Kampuchea as well as to increasing the strength of the socialist community of which the Soviet Union is the bastion, in the interest of peace in this region and the rest of the world."

CHINA INTENSIFIES ARMED PROVOCATIONS AGAINST VIETNAM AND LAOS

AT 5 a.m. on 5 May Chinese troops occupied Height 400 after pounding it with mortars. The position comprises three main peaks belonging to Thanh Loa commune, Cao Loc district, Cao Bang province, 2 km inside the Vietnamese border. The Chinese then installed their artillery there to shell the adjacent communes for ten successive days. As a result, hundreds of houses were destroyed, and hundreds of buffaloes and cows and other domestic animals killed. Several civilians were either killed or wounded. Many rice-fields nearing harvest were damaged. Worse still, on 14 and 15 May, they lobbed 130-mm. artillery and 160-mm. mortar shells into the area between Thanh Loa commune and Lang Son province. Meanwhile, other Chinese infantry, tank and artillery units were deployed close to the border between Loc Binh and Binh Lap.

Vietnamese troops, in coordination with other militia and guerilla units, mounted counter-attacks, driving the Chinese back to the other side of the border. On 16 May, from 2 to 6.30 a.m., under artillery cover, our forces silenced one Chinese artillery position after another and recaptured the hilltop position. Four Chinese battalions of the 23rd Regiment, 3rd Division of the Guangxi border troops were put out of action.

This is one of the most serious Chinese armed provocations in April and May.

Chinese artillery poundings and armed incursions wrought great havoc to many districts in the six Vietnamese provinces bordering on China: Bat Sat, Muong Khuong and Xi Ma Cai districts in Hoang Lien Son province; Meo Vac, Vi Xuyen, Xin Man and Dong Van districts in Ha Tuyen province; Than Phun districts in Quang Ninh province; Cao Loc and Van Lang districts in Lang Son province...

Chinese gunboats made thousands of incursions into Vietnamese territorial waters between Quang Ninh and Dong Hoi. Hundreds of flights of Chinese fighter planes violated Vietnamese airspace, especially over Hoang Lien Son province.

On 6 and 17 May 1981, the SRV Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent notes to the Chinese Foreign Ministry "vehemently denouncing and condemning Chinese armed provocations and incursions into Vietnamese territory and demanding that the Chinese authorities immediately put an end to these acts and withdraw their troops from the occupied areas".

Along with armed provocations against Vietnam Chinese troops also made armed provocations and incursions into Lao territory. From late April to mid-May, China deployed her troops close to the Lao border and incessantly pounded Lao territory with artillery and mortar shells. The Lao border post at Bo Ten in Luong Nam Tha province was attacked several times. On 18 May, a Chinese company infiltrated 4 km inside Lao territory and attacked a unit of border-guards, causing heavy losses to the Lao unit.

On 14 and 22 May 1981, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Democratic Republic of Laos summoned the Chinese chargé d'affaires in Laos to the Ministry to hand him memoranda "energetically condemning the Chinese acts of provocations and demanding that China strictly respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Laos, and stop using military pressure in the border areas between Laos and China".

Chinese armed provocations against Vietnam and Laos are clear evidence of Beijing's expansionist designs against the Indo-chinese countries.

GENERAL ELECTIONS IN KAMPUCHEA

KAMPUCHEAN citizens — workers, peasants, intellectuals, women, Buddhist monks, and minority nationals — on May 1st elected a national assembly in the first genuine general elections in the age-old history of the country.

87.80 per cent of the registered voters went to the polls, and 99.59 per cent of the votes cast were valid. Of the 148 candidates running in 8,000 voting areas, 117 were elected, among them President Heng Samrin and Vice-President Penn Sovan, who polled 99.75 and 99.70 per cent of the votes respectively. Of the candidates elected there are 53 representatives of the People's Revolutionary Party and the National United Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea, and 64 leading officials of public department. Industry and handicrafts are represented by three deputies, agriculture and fishing by four, and the financial and trade services by seven. Six other deputies are engaged in public health, education, culture and the arts. The revolutionary armed forces have 13 representatives. Also elected were 20 intellectuals, and patriotic personalities, one religious activist, and ten members of the Youth Association for the Salvation of Kampuchea. The elections were conducted in conformity with the Electoral Act promulgated by the People's Revolutionary Council in March this year, on the principles of equality, universal suffrage, and direct, secret voting. Observers in Phnom Penh included members of the diplomatic corps, foreign delegates to a concurrent International Conference for Solidarity with the Kampuchean People, and many foreign journalists.

The Kampuchean people, with their votes, have affirmed their role as true master of their country.

AN international conference for solidarity with the Kampuchean people was held from 1 to 3 May 1981 in Phnom Penh, organized by the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization with the participation of 23 delegations, including 4 international organizations: the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, the World Peace Council, the World Federation of Trade Unions, and the Afro-Asian-Latin American People's Solidarity Organization, and delegations from 19 countries: Kampuchea, Laos, the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Ethiopia, the USA, Egypt, the Congo, the Sudan, Zambia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

In its closing session, the conference adopted a statement and an appeal calling upon the governments and peoples throughout the world to give support and assistance to the Kampuchean people in their national construction and defence.

The statement "highly appreciates the important achievements recorded in all fields of activity by the Kampuchean people under the leadership of the National United Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea headed by President Heng Samrin in the country's rebirth, in restoring the right to life for each Kampuchean and for the nation as a whole, in restoring and developing production, culture, education, public health, etc.".

The statement "welcomes the draft constitution of the People's Republic of Kampuchea as well as the participation by the entire people of Kampuchea in democratic debate around the draft".

It also "highly appreciates Vietnam's all-round and selfless support and assistance to Kampuchea and considers this support and assistance as entirely in keeping with justice, the traditional friendship and solidarity between the two peoples and the United Nations Charter". Concurrently, it "welcomes the substantial and valuable aid provided by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries as well as by many non-aligned countries and international and humanitarian organizations to help the Kampuchean people overcome famine and rebuild their country".

The statement strongly condemns the collusion between Beijing and the US imperialists and other reactionary forces against Kampuchea's reconstruction,

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KAMPUCHEA

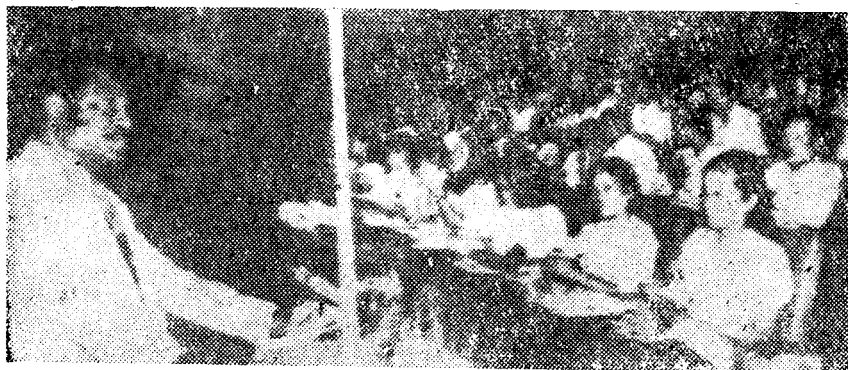


Photo: VNA

tion, thus causing tension in Indochina and Southeast Asia.

It also condemns the plans for an "international conference on Kampuchea" as a blatant interference in Kampuchea's internal affairs.

It welcomes the 4-point proposal of the People's Republic of Kampuchea aimed at removing tension along the Thai-Kampuchean border.

It also welcomes the initiatives taken by the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the three Indochinese Countries held in Ho Chi Minh City on 28 January 1981, promoting discussions between the Indochinese countries and the ASEAN countries and on the Indochinese proposal for bilateral non-aggression treaties with the People's Republic of China.

The statement reaffirms the solidarity of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples, of the world democratic organizations and progressive opinion throughout the world with the Kampuchean people in safeguarding and rebuilding their life, against all schemes of interference and sabotage of great-nation expansionism,

imperialism, and other reactionary forces.

For Kampuchea to advance along the path of peace, independence, democracy, non-alignment and prosperity, the conference calls upon "all international and national organizations, all personalities of any political and religious tendencies to support and assist the People's Revolutionary Council of Kampuchea and the Kampuchean people".

The conference also calls upon "the governments of all countries to recognize the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea as the sole genuine and legitimate representative of the Kampuchean people", and demands that "Kampuchea's seats at the United Nations and in the non-aligned movement be returned to the People's Republic of Kampuchea". It stresses: "We believe that this is an important contribution to maintaining security and stability in Southeast Asia, thus conforming to the aspirations of the people in this region and of peace-and justice-loving people the world over."

WHO IS BACKING APARTHEID?

ON 30 April 1981 the United States vetoed the draft resolution sponsored by the representatives of 50 African countries and supported by nine members of the UN Security Council demanding mandatory sanctions in many fields against the colonial and racist regime in South Africa, to force it to end its illegal occupation of Namibia. The draft resolution urges all countries to sever diplomatic and trade relations with South Africa, ban the import of raw materials and goods produced in South Africa and Namibia, ban oil supplies and stop all other transactions aimed at developing South Africa's oil industry, and take necessary measures to enforce the ban on arms sales to South Africa adopted by the United Nations in 1977.

As pointed out at the Security Council meeting by Ugandan Ambassador O. Otunnou on behalf of the 50 sponsoring countries, these measures are essential to isolate the worst repressive and exploiting racist regime still existing on the African continent and to force it to end its illegal occupation of Namibia and return to the Namibian people their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity in conformity with the 30 October 1978 resolution of the Security Council.

By vetoing the draft resolution of the group of African countries, Washington has run counter to the will of the African peoples and all the friends of justice and peace throughout the world who are demanding the early restoration to the Namibian people of their right to live in independence and freedom. Once again, the United States has exposed itself as an obstinate supporter of the Pretoria regime, helping it prolong its repression against the people of South Africa and Namibia, thus posing a constant threat to the security and territorial integrity of the other nations in southern Africa.

This attitude of Washington's has laid bare before public opinion in Africa and throughout the world the hypocrisy of Chester Crocker, special adviser to President Ronald Reagan, during his recent "official visit" to 11 African countries where he called on the governments of these countries to "cooperate with the United States and the West" in order to "bring about genuine independence to Namibia and peace and security to southern Africa"... In point of fact, the real motive of this new propaganda campaign of the United States in this strategic region of Africa is not aimed at establishing the inviolable national rights of the Namibian people. On the contrary, it is to salvage by every possible means the neo-colonial interests of Washington, the West and the Pretoria regime, their regional ally which is held in opprobrium by opinion worldwide but which has been raking in huge profits for the multinational companies.

At present, some 700 British companies, 500 American companies, 450 companies of the Federal Republic of Germany and hundreds of other Western companies are plundering the local populations of tens of billions of dollars each year in the form of profits.

The Vietnamese people stand squarely beside progressive forces in the world in supporting the people of South Africa led by the African National Congress and the Namibian people led by the South-west African People's Organization (SWAPO) who are pressing forward their struggle including the armed struggle in order to abolish apartheid and regain their independence, their freedom and their right to live.

Nhan Dan, 4 May 1981

BEIJING'S POLICY TOWARDS THE HOA PEOPLE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

THE policy towards the Hoa people (1) in Southeast Asia has been a special concern of many succeeding administrations in China. As early as the late 19th century the Qing imperial court sent a mission to many Southeast Asian countries to canvass support for the new education system in China. In 1909 a decree on Chinese nationality was promulgated whereby the principle of consanguinity was applied: anyone with some Chinese blood and upbringing was regarded as a Chinese citizen and China assumed full responsibility for such people no matter where they were born and what nationality they held. This principle was reiterated in the amended decrees issued in 1912, 1914 and 1929. In 1917 the Chinese administration began registering the overseas Hoa people and allowed for their representation in the legislative bodies. In 1918 an office of the Foreign Trade Ministry was established to help the Hoa merchants in the region. But due to its inefficiency it was abolished in 1922. Then Sun Yat-Sen set up another office to handle affairs related to the Hoa people. It soon became part of the Nanjing government, protecting the interests of the overseas Chinese, and also to attract their foreign exchange.

Following World War II the Guomindang government held a general election among the Hoa people abroad and reserved 65 seats for them in the National Assembly, 19 seats in the legislative Council and 8 seats in the Control Commission. The above-mentioned policies stimulated the overseas Chinese to send money back to the country (averaging 100 million US dollars a year), to boycott Japanese goods and take part in the anti-Japanese resistance.

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Following the success of the national democratic revolution in China (October 1949) the new rulers in Beijing virtually left unchanged the policy towards the overseas Chinese. They continued to use the latter as an effective instrument with which to carry out their expansionist policy while waiting for conditions to ripen to exert their pressure on the various governments in Southeast Asia.

In fact, after seizing power, the Beijing authorities continued to apply the principle of consanguinity in matters of nationality. Their policy of protecting the interests of overseas Chinese along with using methods of intimidation against the governments in the area was institutionalized in the 1954 Constitution, and reiterated again and again in many official statements. For instance, in late 1951 at a session of the first National People's Congress, Zhou Enlai said:

"The duty and legitimate interests of overseas Chinese have been seriously violated. This is the result of indefensible discrimination and repression as carried out by some countries. It cannot but give special concern to the Chinese people." Thus, Beijing has always tried to reassure the Hoa people in Southeast Asia that they are not "orphans in foreign lands" but will always be protected by the motherland.

In 1953 China integrated the 11.7 million overseas Chinese into its official population census. The Chinese Constitution adopted in 1954 reserved 30 seats in the National People's Congress for overseas Chinese. In July 1954 the "Office for Overseas Chinese Affairs" called a congress of representatives of Chinese residents abroad attended by 195 delegates from all parts of the world. The congress elected 30 members to the National People's Congress, 18 of whom came from Southeast Asia. An "Association of Chinese Repatriates" was founded in Beijing whose membership included Chinese repatriates and their relatives still living abroad, both categories being grouped under the common name of "Chinese home residents". From 1949 to 1957 almost half a million overseas Chinese returned to the mainland, not counting about 40,000 Chinese students coming to study in China from various Southeast Asian countries.

As well as drawing political support from the Hoa people in Southeast Asia, in the period 1949 - 1955 Beijing also did its best to win their economic assistance through their sending of foreign exchange back to the mainland. However, due to clumsy financial measures and also because Beijing openly regarded such money as "results of feudal and capitalist exploitation" and, in many cases, created difficulties to the relatives on the mainland who received the money, the total amount sent home in 1955 fell below the 1949 figure. As a result, at one point Beijing had to resort to open blackmail against the relatives of overseas Chinese living in the country, threatening to confiscate their property or even to arrest them if they could not afford to pay up. This campaign reached its peak during the Korean war when the fine amounted to as much as 200,000 US dollars.

This measure earned Beijing some immediate returns but brought disastrous long-term consequences, with indignant disaffection among the overseas Chinese. This explains why, from 1955 onwards, in order to attract foreign exchange from Chinese nationals abroad, Beijing had to make concessions by loosening its socialist economic principles.

With regard to investments by overseas Chinese, Beijing also experienced initial failures due to its too stringent regulations. For instance, the State did not

apply profit-sharing schemes to overseas investors, and overseas Chinese could only invest in joint State-private ventures limited to southern China or agriculture, forestry and stockbreeding. This explains why overseas Chinese were lukewarm in responding to Beijing's appeals for investments. In 1951 Beijing announced its plan to build a major rubber plantation and processing enterprise on Hainan Island with investments from overseas Chinese, but the appeal went unheeded. In the same year the Huanan company, predecessor of the present Overseas Chinese Investments Intercompany — was founded with an initial capital of five million US dollars divided into 100,000 shares. But the Chinese residents in Southeast Asia contributed only 10,000 shares, the rest being allotted to overseas Chinese in Hongkong and Macao.

There were many reasons for Beijing's failure to draw foreign exchange from overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia. The stringent measures applied inside China aside, it was also due to Beijing's policy, in the period 1949 — 1955, of giving priority to "encouragement of armed struggle" against imperialism and its stooge administrations in Southeast Asia through the Maoist parties in these countries. This policy caused instability in the region and increased the suspicion of the overseas Chinese towards the newly established regime.

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Following the Korean war, Beijing yearned for peace for national construction. By then the policy of "encouragement of armed struggle" in many Southeast Asian countries, especially in Malaysia, had apparently failed. Beijing found itself incapable of continuing the dual policy of protecting the rights and interests of overseas Chinese while using intimidation against the local governments.

In September 1954 Zhou Enlai announced what was later regarded as the first Chinese initiative on the question of overseas Chinese. He said: "It must be pointed out that in the past the reactionary administrations of China have never made any effort to settle the question of nationality of overseas Chinese. This has not only placed the Hoa people in a difficult position but often has been a cause of differences between China and their countries of residence. To improve this situation we are ready to solve the question of Chinese nationals, first and foremost with those Southeast Asian countries which have relations with us."

In April 1955 Beijing signed an agreement with Indonesia whereby within two years all overseas Chinese with dual nationality — Chinese and Indonesian — had to choose only one. Thus, for the first time China abandoned the principle of consanguinity in matters of nationality.

However, many governments in Southeast Asia did not respond to this opening because Beijing wanted to make the question of the nationality of overseas Chinese contingent upon the normalisation of State relations between China and these countries, an issue still contested by the United States and the other main imperialist powers at that time.

Then, two years later, at the end of 1957, Beijing renounced this policy. It declared: "We (the Chinese Government) advise overseas Chinese to adopt the nationality of their country of residence. This can only benefit them, their country of residence and friendly relations between China and the countries concerned."

Meanwhile, in mainland China the Association of Chinese Repatriates changed the orientation of its work, which it directed towards recently repatriated nationals. The overseas Chinese were now no longer regarded as a section of the National Unification Front.

Acting along these lines, Beijing on the one hand encouraged overseas Chinese to opt for the nationality of their country of residence, while organizing the repatriation of those who could not do so. The authorities launched a vocal campaign about their "determination and readiness to re-settle 500,000, one million or no matter how many millions, and all of whom will be accorded a warm welcome". This campaign was first directed towards 600,000 Chinese residents in Indonesia, but in the event only some 100,000 were repatriated. Financial and organizational snags and the difficulties encountered by the repatriates in adjusting themselves to the conditions at home caused Beijing to quickly switch its policy again by calling upon overseas Chinese to assimilate into the local society, and refrain from taking part in local politics. Liao Chenzhi, the Chairman of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, once told his colleagues: "You had best keep aloof from our nationals abroad... Don't fear that you will be blamed for not striving to protect them. Our residents abroad can look after themselves. Don't meddle in their affairs, or try to give advice."

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So, it can be seen that from 1955 to 1967, Beijing's policy toward overseas Chinese underwent a drastic change. It renounced the principle of consanguinity as well as the principle of dual nationality and encouraged overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia to integrate as far as possible within their countries of residence. But during the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" these policies were branded as "an abandon of the class struggle" and as a "philosophy of survival", "capitulationist and revisionist policy". Liao was disgraced. A big-character wall-paper in Beijing announced: "Mr. Liao has ordered a ban on mass movements... prohibited political studies within the organizations and schools of overseas Chinese for fear of antagonising the local governments"... As from 1968 no more was heard of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office.

It was during this period that Beijing began interfering more deeply in the internal affairs of Southeast Asian countries and fomented troubles there. Witness these confessions of Ly Nghiep Phu, a Chinese spy sent to Ho Chi Minh City to campaign among the Chinese residents there to resist and sabotage the transformation of private businesses following the liberation of South Vietnam in 1975: "Each time I was summoned to the Central Committee for Overseas Chinese Affairs to be assigned a new mission, they did not fail to lecture me in these

terms: "The greatness of the proletarian cultural revolution lies in the fact that it is happening not only in China but also throughout the world, especially in Southeast Asia. China is a major power, the biggest country in Asia, so it must play the dominant role in Southeast Asia. To this end, we must promote the great proletarian cultural revolution and we must rely upon the overseas Chinese as the core, the fuse and the leading force with which to win the local populations to our side and incite the people to do as we wish, to fan up the flames of the cultural revolution throughout Southeast Asia, thus enabling us to pressure the governments of these countries into following China's line." It is worth noting that the same Ly had been sent in 1967 to Kampuchea for the same purpose.

However, after 1968, as a result of the upheaval provoked by the extreme policies of the cultural revolution, China's relations with the Southeast Asian countries became very strained. Beijing changed its policy once more, back to that adopted before the cultural revolution, i.e. to encourage overseas Chinese to integrate within their countries of residence in exchange for better diplomatic relations.

But this does not mean that Beijing washed its hands of all strata of Chinese residents abroad. While surrendering all responsibility toward the working masses who form the majority among the overseas Chinese (they knew only too well that any agitation of the Chinese workers against their local governments would inevitably strain diplomatic relations between Beijing and those countries), Beijing, in fact, continued to apply a series of specific measures aimed at courting the capitalist class among the Chinese communities in Southeast Asia.

As we have said above, China has always shown great interest in the cash contributions of overseas Chinese. Families whose relatives abroad sent money home gradually became a privileged class. In 1958 privileges in general political terms were abolished. In their place, the government gave them concrete privileges in direct proportion to the amount of money they received from abroad. Who benefited most from such privileges is an easy guess.

As well as economic privileges, Beijing also gave the overseas resident bourgeoisie the majority of the 18 seats reserved for overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia in the National People's Congress. Among these deputies is Tan Kak-Kee, one of the wealthiest men in Malaysia, and once the governor of Singapore. From all this the conclusion can be drawn that Beijing's design is to use the Chinese capitalist class abroad as the spearhead of the "fifth column" and the main economic and political instrument of their hegemonism in Southeast Asia. This does not mean that Beijing will not or cannot use other sections of the Hoa people to further its long-term aims. The repatriation campaign whipped up by China in 1978 against Vietnam whereby Beijing organized the massive repatriation of 250,000 Hoa people to China and provoked economic and political instability in Vietnam is a good illustration of what Beijing has up its sleeve.

After LE VAN KHUE

(1) As in the previous article, the term "Hoa people" in this article designates all overseas Chinese living abroad. They are sometimes referred to as "Chinese residents abroad" or "overseas Chinese".

Commemorating the 1000th Anniversary of the Victory over the Song Invaders (981 - 1981)

THE FAILURE OF THE PLAN TO "MOVE FIRST SOUTH THEN NORTH"

AT the end of spring this year, all over Vietnam, particularly in Hanoi and the provinces of Ha Nam Ninh, Thanh Hoa, Hai Hung and Lang Son, meetings were held to commemorate the 1000th anniversary of the victory over the Song invaders, in the days when Vietnam was called Dai Co Viet, and its capital was in Hoa Lu (Ha Nam Ninh province), some 100 kilometres south of Hanoi.

In these places, where the main battles were fought and where were born the heroes who made victory possible, many investigations have been undertaken to clarify the details which were only briefly recorded in the annals. Thanks to recent discoveries, we know that at the end of the 10th century, the Song army in four columns entered Vietnam by land and sea. Never, up to then, had such a large aggressive force been deployed by the Chinese feudalists. In 43 A.D., the old general Ma Yuan of the Han dynasty invaded Vietnam with a column along the sea coast. In 938, Prince Huang Tsao, of the Southern Han dynasty, tried to send a flotilla down the Bach Dang river. Thus, barely twenty years after its foundation, in 980 the Song became the first Chinese dynasty to invade Vietnam from several directions by both land and sea.

Though politically weak at its beginning in 960, the Song dynasty made great efforts to build its armed forces. From approximating 400,000 men in the period 968-976, its army increased to nearly 700,000 in 995-997. According to the 187th Book of the Song annals, the purpose of this army was to "pacify and conquer the four corners of the earth".

It was recorded that this task was decided during a snowy winter night when Zhao Kuangyin, the

founder of the Song dynasty and his brother Zhao Kuangyi, called to succeed him, paid a visit to Zhao Pu, the prime minister. The strategy they decided upon at this meeting was summed up in their call to "move first South then North", conquering each in turn. The Song dynasty was resolved to pursue the expansionist policy of the Qin and Han dynasties, which ruled China for thousands of years before.

Only three years after it was founded, the Song dynasty launched their first attack against Jingnan, a Southern Kingdom. This was followed by the conquest of other Kingdoms, such as the Later Shu (965), Southern Han (971), Southern Tang (975) and Wu Yue (978) Kingdoms. The Song army approached Dai Co Viet, which soon became the next target of its strategy of conquest.

In a diplomatic note sent to Le Hoan, emperor of Dai Co Viet, in the autumn of 980, Zhao Kuangyi admitted that Dai Co Viet was a "far away country beyond the territory of Chinese expansion", but he claimed to have the "celestial" right to "develop your (Le Hoan's) dull mind so that you may thoroughly grasp the Song's sacred lesson". The Song emperor regarded Dai Co Viet as a finger of his hand, a part of his empire. "When a finger is hurt, the whole body suffers."

Vietnam's annals record that: "In winter 979, when Dinh Bo Linh, emperor of Dai Co Viet, was assassinated, a crisis occurred at the Court. At Youngzhou, now Nanning, in Guangxi province (China), governor Hou Renbao sent an urgent report to the Song Court according to which "Dai Co Viet was in confusion and on the brink of collapse" and advising the Chinese Court to "take advantage of this golden opportunity to launch an attack". (Annals of the Song, Book 254). The invasion was conducted under the command of Hou Renbao himself.

Under the threat of Chinese invasion, Le Hoan, commander of the Dai Co Viet army, was made emperor. He was then forty years old. A poor orphan child, he held great prestige among the population by his intelligence and his contribution to the country. With the sympathy and support of Duong Van Nga, the widow of emperor Dinh Bo Linh, he was able to sort out the problems arising in the Court.

After ascending the throne, Le Hoan sent a mission to China to inform the Song emperor of the situation at Hoa Lu and ask him to withdraw his army. The mission, which set off in the 10th lunar month of the year 980, is recorded in the Song annals as having arrived at the Chinese capital in the 11th month. But the Vietnamese request was turned down. The Chinese attack began in the 12th month of the same year.

According to the report to the Song emperor made by Lu Tazun, minister for the Ground Force, the "attack was to be as quick as a clap of thunder, heard only after it happens." Following this plan, the Song army invaded Dai Co Viet in four columns, entering our country over the border and by the Eastern Sea, and joining up at Dai La, where Hanoi stands today.

Dai Co Viet was threatened with the danger of complete invasion. But Le Hoan was able to skilfully rally all groups and form a unified force: from the members of the late Dinh dynasty and the Court mandarins to his opponents, and even Hong Xian, one of the Song envoys to Hoa Lu. Le Hoan's armed forces were further strengthened with the rallying of *Quan Thap Dao*, a regular unit close to Le Hoan, and the militia set up throughout the country, whose exploits are remembered to this day.

Book 1 of the History of Dai Viet, published in the 15th century, records the following statement by Le Hoan: "Whether alive or dead, whatever dangers I meet or changes I may encounter, I shall perform my duty and fulfil all my responsibilities." He deployed his forces along the border and the road to Lang Son and intercepted the enemy's naval force on the Bach Dang river. After defeating these two columns, together with general Pham Cu Luong, he attacked the main column led by Hou Renbao. Faking defeat, he lured the Chinese commander into a trap set at Binh Lo, north of Hanoi. Hou Renbao was killed and his army routed. Panic-stricken, the last Song army unit garrisoned at Tay Ket, near Binh Lo tried to escape. But it was wiped out by Le Hoan's troops after a fierce engagement.

The war for national defence waged by the Vietnamese people under the command of national hero Le Hoan ended victoriously in the spring of 981, exactly one thousand years ago.

Analysing the reasons for this victory, Tran Quoc Tuan, the general who three times defeated the Yuan army in the 13th century, said: "The country is never divided when the upper and lower levels are of one and the same mind." Unity against foreign aggression remained as a lesson for future generations of Vietnamese people through different periods in their history, up to the wars against the French and the American imperialists, and now the Beijing hegemonists.

However, for their part, the Chinese seem not to have learnt anything from the defeat of the Song army in 981 which ended in the complete failure of their expansionist strategy.

LE VAN LAN
(Institute of History)

THE HO CHI MINH VANGUARD PIONEERS ORGANIZATION IS FORTY YEARS OLD

THE Ho Chi Minh Vanguard Pioneers Organization and the Ho Chi Minh Children Organization are forty years old on 15 May 1981. From their foundation to the August Revolution, then through the two resistance wars against the French and US aggressors, and now in the struggle against the Beijing expansionists, generations of Vietnamese children and teenagers have grown up and fulfilled their duties towards the nation, setting many bright examples.

The Ho Chi Minh Vanguard Pioneers Organization and the Ho Chi Minh Children Organization now boast of 3 million "Good Nephews and Nieces of Uncle Ho" among their 5 million members. These forces together with 24 million children and teenagers throughout the country constitute a promising reserve for the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union and the Communist Party of Vietnam. Closely combining study at school with social activities, these organizations have taken part in such campaigns as helping families of war invalids and martyrs, and carrying out "mini-plans" to raise money to build a North-South train, the "Red Scarf" hotel in Hanoi, etc. At present, the Ho Chi Minh Vanguard Pioneers Organization is starting a campaign to recruit 2 million advanced members to be admitted to the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union.

In appreciation of the children's contribution and the organizations' efforts in educating and training Vietnamese children, on 13 May 1981 the SRV National Assembly decided to confer the Ho Chi Minh Order, Second Class, upon the Ho Chi Minh Vanguard Pioneers Organization.

THE BAMBOO SHOOTS OF PHU MAN

IN May 1969, Uncle Ho sent a letter congratulating the children of the "Bamboo Shoot" cooperative of Phu Man hamlet (Ham Son commune, Yen Phong district, Ha Bac province, north of Hanoi) on their study and on the help they have given to their families and to the cooperatives. Since then, Phu Man's "Bamboo Shoot" cooperative and the study-and-work movement of the children there have been widely publicized. The cooperative,

set up on the initiative of the children of Phu Man, combines study and recreation with practical work useful to society.

In Vietnam farm work is not yet fully mechanized, and still relies on draught animals. The proverb "The buffalo is the family's main asset" is still fully valid. Phu Man children maintain that tending draught animals is also a valuable contribution to agricultural work and thus they

Young "Bamboo Shoot" co-op members looking after their buffaloes.

Photo:
VU QUANG
HUY



willingly accept to take care of them.

To tend the buffaloes, they divide up into brigades and teams. After school, they drive the animals to pasture on green grasslands far from their commune. They take turns to rejuvenate old meadows. Every other week they cut grass in distant fields to "feast" their animals. Each month they organize a competition, and the child with the best buffalo is commended. In the busy season, in which the animals have to work hard, particular attention is paid to them, at the end of each work day, the buffaloes are fed, and in summer they are washed and rid of bugs. The stables are always kept clean and surrounded with bamboo blinds to keep the flies and the mosquitoes out. In winter, the animals are covered with blankets of bags or plaited straw.

The Phu Man children tend their animals with remarkable thoroughness: each one has a "health" record, and at the children's request, sick animals are given a day's rest and are sent for treatment. The slogan "The buffaloes are our friends, the American aggressors are our foes" displayed during the war has now been changed to "Our buffaloes must be the fattest", the "warmest" and the "cleanest." Every afternoon the "Bamboo Shoot" cooperative sends teams to all roads and lanes into the village to supervise the return of the animals:

"If the buffaloes are not clean, they are denied entry to the village,

If they are not well fed, they are prevented from returning to their stables".

The work of the children of Phu Man is quite simple, but thanks to it the buffaloes entrusted to their care are always strong and healthy and free from disease. Of these buffaloes, 50 are classed A1, 20 A2 and 10 B; no animal is classed in category C (for poor health).

The children of Phu Man also have a plot of land on which to grow azolla and peanuts, and high-yield rice with the Youth Union members. In spite of the time they spend in social activities they do not neglect their study, and for decades running have recorded a high proportion of successful pupils: the percentage of pupils moving on to higher forms increased from 95% in the 1968-69 school year to 98% in 1979-80.

The children are encouraged and looked after by their parents, their teachers, and by the cooperative and its mass organizations. The school teachers and Youth Union members help them get organized. Their families help them in their study. They have a club with many activities, from painting and drawing to sports and games.

Many who spent their childhood at Phu Man have now grown up, but their cooperative is always young, and grows stronger and stronger as new members join and as its fame spreads throughout the country.

VU HONG

Our entire people have a warm regard for our soldiers. This feeling is particularly conspicuous in our children's art.

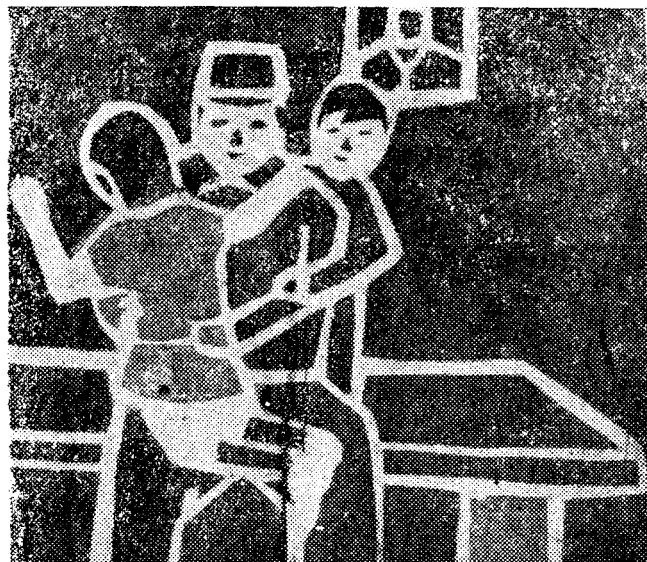
One can be sure that every child has drawn his own soldier with a pen, a bit of charcoal or brick. In such drawing competitions as "Children's contributions to the war of resistance against US aggression" or "Drawings on the border", our children have produced many fine paintings and statues representing our soldiers. Not content with standard representations of soldiers wielding their weapons, they have grasped the most essential and subtle features of their life.

Some of the paintings show soldiers in action, full of joy, whistling while picking their way (*Soldiers in Operation* by Bui Tuan Anh, 12 years old). In another picture, two children of ethnic minorities study under the guidance of a border guard on a background of blue mountains with a bay horse (*A Border Guard Teaching Children* by Bui Huy Anh, 12 years old). A soldier in the *Truong Son Range* (by 10-years-old Pham Thanh Thuy) sits in a hammock with a flower in her hand, beside a lorry laden with equipment. A heroic yet simple and poetic fight is evoked by soldiers drying their clothes beside their artillery pieces, banana trees, and a few chickens (*The Defence of Ham Rong Bridge* by Doan Hong).

One cannot help laughing at some of these drawings. Indeed, soldiers and children have a special sympathy for one another. Trung Phan (12 years old) pictures *Troop Parade* attended by children only. A statue of *A soldier Passing by* by 14-year-old Vu Xuan Cuong portrays a fighter with a guitar, surrounded by children trying to touch his musical instrument and his rucksack. A common and inspiring theme is *Children dancing and singing for disabled soldiers*: the pioneers gather leaves with which they boil water to sweat out the fighters' flu while in the background a disabled soldier is lying and listening to a child reading a book (painting by Hong Yen, 10 years old).

These simple images are quite striking not so much because of their artistic rendering, but because the imagination of the artists speaks to the viewers through their works. And therein lies the

CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS OF SOLDIERS



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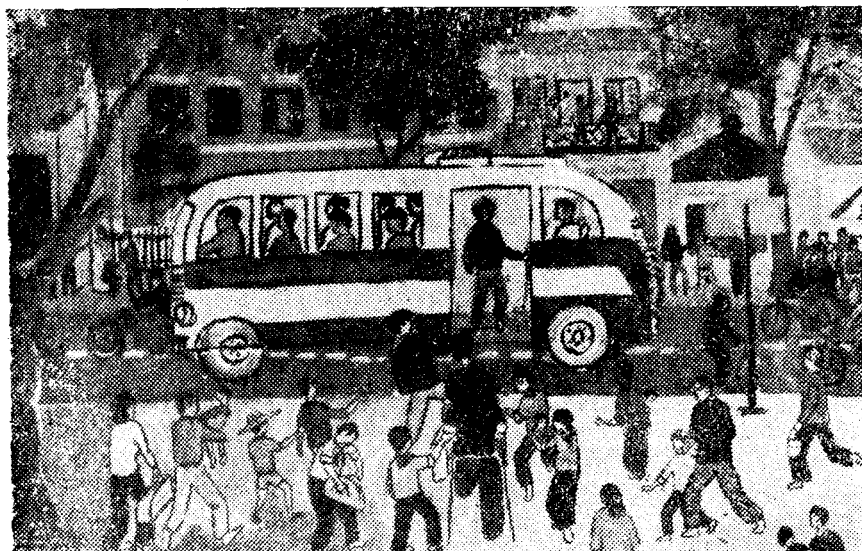
interest and the beauty of children's art. Their technique consists precisely in representing their inner feelings in a particular way. The size of volumes and figures is conditioned not by technical requirements but by the need to express their emotions. And the representation of these emotions with the aesthetic feel of the "budding artists" moves the viewers. For the children, lines, strokes, colours and volumes are nothing but means and symbols with which to convey their feelings. They are not em-

barrassed by such arid themes as *Tanks rushing into Saigon*, *The spring general offensive* or *Everybody goes to the front*. Each soldier drawn separately or among others has a particular "grace". Vu Can in *Smashing An Enemy Post* deals with a difficult subject: commandos operating in the night and the quiet atmosphere are depicted in dark strokes on a brown palette. In the painting *Soldiers Operating in Summer*, Dang Duc Tri represents space in an original way: a big cicada on a

tree. Led by their imaginations, the children often hit upon remarkable solutions and unexpected mental connexions.

Depicting soldiers and fighters is a very popular theme with children. Indeed, our children are growing up with their elders' determination to struggle for national independence, and hence with the affection the entire nation extends to our soldiers. As the latter have lived up to their task, they take pride of place in children's minds and artistic creations.

THAM DUC TU
(Painter, Hanoi Pioneers'
Cultural Centre)



1. My soldier (by Hong Lam, 10 years old).

2. Helping war invalids (by Vu Ngoc Cuong, 13 years old).

Photos: VU QUANG HUY

2

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROSPECTS OF

VIETNAM'S INDUSTRY

WITH the victory of the August Revolution in 1945 Vietnam took over a weak, inadequate industry heavily dependent upon France. During the war against the French colonialists which broke out not long afterwards this industry suffered extensive damage. In fact Vietnam only began building its own industry in 1955, the year after the

restoration of peace in the northern part of the country. This industry has undergone various stages of development and, despite great difficulties, has made considerable progress.

Development

Development since 1954 can be

divided into five periods as follows:

1. *The 1954-1960 period:* In this period the old industrial enterprises in North Vietnam were transformed and restored. By the end of 1957, after three years of structural transformations, industrial output reached the 1939 levels:

	1939	1955	1957
Gross industrial output value	100	36.7	99
— Output of major industries	100	24	95
— Output of handicrafts and small industries	100	46.3	102.3

By 1960 all capitalist industries had been transformed, and 90 per cent of the artisans had been organized in co-operatives. In the whole of North Vietnam there existed more than 1,000 State-owned and joint State-private enterprises, and almost 3,000 small industrial handicraft co-operatives. Socialist transformation had been completed in the main, and industry began to develop on a firm basis.

2. *The 1961-1965 period:* The first five-year plan (1961-1965) was adopted by the Third Congress of the then Vietnam Workers' Party (1960). The central task set by the plan was socialist industrialization. Industry entered a

period of accelerated development to lay the material and technical foundations for socialism.

In the five years of the plan industrial output almost doubled:

Development rate (100 in 1960)

1955 1961 1962 1963 1964 1965
20.7 114.4 143.4 155.5 173.5 189.4

Thanks to the assistance of the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, a number of key industries including coal-mining, electricity, mechanical engineering, metallurgy, chemical engineering, and construction materials, were

firmly established by 1965. The output ratio of heavy industry to industry as a whole was 43 per cent, as compared with 33 per cent in 1960.

Since North Vietnam was not able to fulfil its plan for 1965 because of the US war of destruction which began in the same year, the 11th plenum of the Party decided to switch from a peacetime economy to a wartime one.

3. *The 1965-1972 period:* This was a period of economic reorientation during which the working class resolutely carried out the Party's policy to produce and fight simultaneously and to protect

central industry while developing local industry. About 200 new factories were built, bringing the total in 1972 to 1,322.

Despite great difficulties caused by the US air and naval war of destruction industrial output hardly dropped in 1965-1968. One year of restoration (1969) was sufficient to raise output to the 1965 level. In 1971 production was seven per cent higher than in 1965.

After a lull the US air war resumed in 1972 with greater intensity. Almost all the factories erected since 1968 were destroyed.

4. *The 1973-1975 period:* North Vietnam again set out to restore its industry. By 1975 hundreds of damaged factories had resumed production. Production of electricity, coal, machine tools, textiles, tobacco, etc., either attained or outstripped pre-war levels.

5. *The 1976-1980 period:* The complete victory of the war against US aggression propelled Vietnam into a new stage, in which industry could develop through-

out the country, reunified at long last. The second five-year (1976-1980) plan was adopted at the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

Alongside the restoration and development of the industrial bases of the North, capitalist industry and trade in the South were transformed along socialist lines. Central and local industries formed an integrated network covering the whole country, with more than 2,500 State-owned enterprises, 3,000 cooperatives and 7,000 production collectives, which employed a total of 700,000 cadres and workers among them including 20,000 engineers and 50,000 secondary-level employees. In addition there were 1.5 million artisans.

By the end of 1980 industrial output made up more than one-third of the GNP and accounted for more than half of the country's agro-industrial output value. This was a considerable improvement, although industry was not yet in a position to meet the needs of the people. Here one should

take into consideration the repeated natural calamities, devastation by the enemy, especially the destruction caused by the reactionaries in Beijing, which added to the difficulties left by 30 years of war. One should also mention the serious shortcomings in management, resulting in low productivity and poor quality and adversely affected production as a whole.

The present situation

1. Heavy industry (Group A).

The Party's decision to give priority to a rational development of heavy industry on the basis of the development of agriculture and light industry has served as a guideline throughout Vietnam's industrial development.

Following the victory of the August Revolution Vietnam had to build its industry from scratch, the French having largely ignored heavy industry. From 1955 to 1975, however, production in Group A increased 27-fold while industrial production in general rose only 16-fold.

Year	Development rate in Group A	Ratio of Group A to gross industrial output value
1955	16.2	33.7
1960	100	33.7
1965	241.7	43.0
1966	249.7	43.0
1968	222.3	
1969	239.3	43.7
1970	248.8	41.8
1971	289.3	40.6
1975	322.1	

Today there are over 1,000 mechanical engineering enterprises with 35,000 machine tools and 120,000 State-employed workers and 140,000 collective producers. This branch can produce complete equipment for small-sized rice mills, cement and brick factories, and sugar refineries. The whole country produces every year one million tonnes of cement and from two to three billion bricks. Electricity capacity is 1,400 megawatts.

Heavy industry has effectively served agriculture. From 1976 to 1980 it supplied 80 million farm tools, about 670,000 improved hand carts, 15,000 tonnes of earth-moving equipment, 2,000 fodder grinders, 3,000 rice-husking machines, 10,000 paddy-threshing machines, 127 dredgers, 15,000 mechanical pumps,

and 7,000 small tractors of the "Bong Sen" type.

The power grid for agricultural use has extended. The supply of electricity to agriculture in northern Vietnam went up four times from 1965 to 1975. Normally, about ten per cent of national output goes to agriculture, but at critical points the rate may reach 50 per cent. Every year agriculture also receives half a million tonnes of coal, two million tonnes of fertilizer, and 50,000 tonnes of insecticide. One can say that industry is beginning to play a decisive role in building a large-scale socialist agriculture.

2. Light and local industries

Light and local industries also play an important role in the

Party's policy of socialist industrialization. Light industry now boasts of 1,150 State-owned factories and many collective and private establishments. Its products make up more than 60 per cent of industrial output as a whole. The local networks include 1,900 factories, 3,000 co-operatives and 7,000 production collectives, which account for more than 55 per cent of total industrial output value. Small industries and handicrafts alone contribute one-third of the national industrial output value and two-thirds of local industrial output value. Products of light and local industries are not only for home consumption but for export as well.

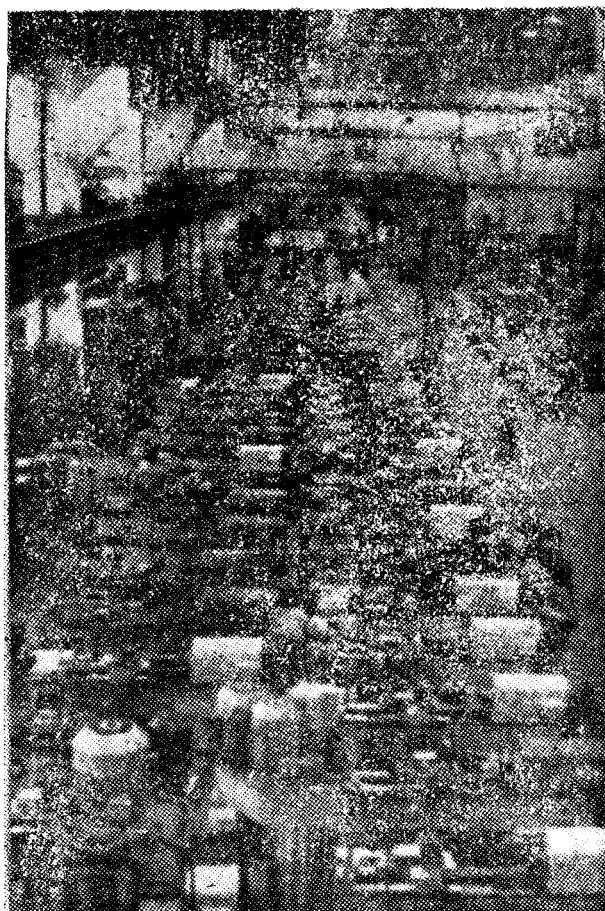
One advantage of local industry is the possibility to make full use of local manpower and resources. It also helps combine industry with agriculture, and economic construction with defence. In the future it will play an important role in the process of rural urbanization.

Besides, local industry can continue developing even in adversity: during the US war of destruction from 1965 to 1968, there was a fall in centrally-run industrial production, but local industry managed to increase its output by nine per cent, and while the planned targets for central industry in 1980 were not reached, those for local industry were almost fully achieved.

The advantage of small industries and handicrafts is greater employment, less investment, and high productivity. Every *dong* invested in fixed capital brings three or four in return. Some 70 to 90 per cent of such major commodities as fish, salt, wood, farm tools, construction materials, etc., are now produced by small industries and handicrafts.

The immediate tasks

On the strength of past achievements the Communist Party and



Lathes produced by Hanoi Machine Tools Plant No. 1

Photo: VNA

the Government have set the following aims for industrial development:

Heavy industries Their primary task is to help develop agriculture and light industry. They will gradually equip agriculture for full irrigation, chemicalization, mechanization, and electrification, while supplying light industry with more equipment, parts, and materials. Moreover they must serve transport, communications, capital construction, and other branches of the economy.

For the time being efforts must be exerted to overcome great shortages in raw materials, energy and machinery.

Priority will be given to the production of materials so that factories may operate at full capacity and construction projects be completed on schedule.

To increase electricity output, existing power stations and diesel groups must raise their capacity, and a rational distribution plan must be applied, with top priority to productive activities. Sparing use of electricity, especially in non-productive activities, must become a strictly observed rule.

In mechanical engineering, materials will be mainly directed to produce tools and other badly needed products. Manufacturing and repair must go hand in hand.

Light industries. For the time being efforts must be concentrated on those well supplied with raw materials and whose products are much needed, such as processed foods, textiles, leather goods, wood, paper, detergent, pottery, glassware, wicker work, etc., and main export items such as rubber goods, coffee, tea, natural silk, tobacco, pineapples, shrimps, textile products, hand-made goods, etc.

As far as the home market is concerned, light industries must

(Continued on page 22)

PROSPECTS FOR AGRICULTURE IN THE MEKONG DELTA

AFTER two years of investigation of the Mekong delta, and using previously established data, we have been able to make a preliminary assessment of the situation of agriculture in this important rice producing area.

Fertility of the soil

The flat Mekong delta is about two metres above sea level. In the two hundred kilometres from the Kampuchean border to the sea the level drops by only two or three metres, a gradient of one centimetre per kilometre. The delta as a whole covers 5.5 million hectares, of which 3,995,000 hectares belong to Vietnam and cover nine provinces: Long An, Tien Giang, Dong Thap, Cuu Long, Ben Tre, An Giang, Hau Giang, Kien Giang and Minh Hai. According to a recent evaluation, about 2.6 million hectares offer favourable conditions for the development of agriculture, namely 65% of the area of the delta belonging to our country. In this area, there are about one million hectares of fertile soil called "mild alluvial soil" or "cultivable sandy soil" by the pedologists. The remaining 1.6 million hectares is composed of slightly alkaline soil and exhausted grey soil. Besides, about 35% of the delta is occupied by forests, river, irrigation canals, roads, hilly and virgin land, including one million hectares of highly alkaline soil.

According to statistics, up to the end of 1979, in the Mekong delta, cropland covered an area of 2.5 million hectares. Thus the area of cultivable land, including a large proportion of mild alluvial soil, is

nearly completely exploited. Virgin lands are concentrated in areas of difficult farming condition in the provinces of Kien Giang (190,000 hectares), Long An (150,000 hectares), Minh Hai (110,000 hectares).

Opinions differ concerning the evaluation of soil quality in the Mekong delta. Though watered by the same river, this delta has a great variety of soils due to the influence of the sea. Moreover, taking into consideration simply the quality of the soil may lead to contradictions. Combined with other natural conditions, soil quality greatly varies between the dry and rainy season. In the dry season, alkaline soil covers up to 2.5 million hectares whereas in the rainy season the alkaline content drops on 1.5 million hectares, which can even produce very high yields. Favoured with excellent climatic conditions of temperature and light, plants grow rapidly even in less fertile soil, and their physiological value is many times higher than in other regions.

Further studies are necessary to assess soil quality so as to take the most appropriate measures. Nevertheless, we can already say that the soil in the Mekong delta is divided into three distinct categories:

— Fertile alluvial soil with a higher organic matter rate, and consequently a better nitrogen content, than the alluvial soil of the Red River delta, a similar proportion of K_2O , but a lower proportion of phosphorus, a fair percentage of calcium and low pH.

— Alkaline soil is less fertile; it contains a high proportion of alum and active iron, the source

of its alkalinity lies in the lower stratum. The proportion of phosphorus is under 0.03%.

— Salty soil in the coastal area; it is similar to alluvial soil but is salty; it has a high proportion of phosphorus and potassium due to the influence of the sea.

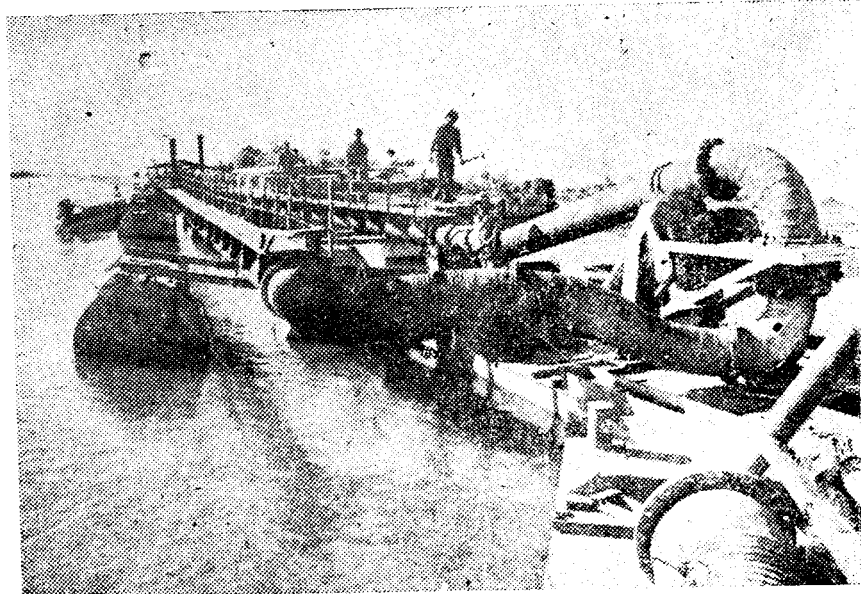
Besides there is a small area of exhausted grey soil, poor in nutritive elements, light and alkaline, suitable for growing subsidiary food crops.

Climate

The Mekong delta has a tropical monsoon climate; the weather is humid and hot and to some extent influenced by the equatorial climate. The weather is hot and remains stable all the year round. Temperatures vary from 24 to 27°C, never dropping below 24°C. The variation between the hottest and coldest months is only 3 or 4 degrees. Total annual temperature is 9,500–10,000 degrees C, the highest compared with other region in the country, and exceeding the tropical average of 7,500 degrees C. These high temperatures are very favourable for plant and animal life: rice can be grown at any time of the year.

Under the influence of the monsoons, the climate is divided into a dry season during which the winter monsoon prevails, and a wet season dominated by the summer monsoon. Over 90% of the rain falls in the rainy season. In the dry season, it very seldom rains, sometimes with dry intervals of three or four months, only a few millimetres of water being recorded after each rainfall. Rainfall also varies according to regions: in the southwest and the Ca Mau peninsula, it is over 2,000 millimetres, dropping in the central regions to 1,500 millimetres and even 1,300 millimetres in Go Cong, then it increases in the north and northeast, reaching 1,750 millimetres. There are on average 120 rainy days each year.

Rain causes changes in moisture, clouds, temperature, and evaporation. Humidity reaches its peak in August, September and October (from 84 to 89%) and is at its lowest in February and March (from 43 to 57%). In September and Oc-



Dredging a canal in the Mekong delta.

Photo: VNA

tober, it drops to 85 or even 75%, which is the best time for harvesting and drying the rice crop, but this spell is very short.

Sunny weather totals over 2,000 hours a year. The sunniest months are February and March (8–9 hours a day, and the least sunny months are August and September from 4.6 to 5.3 hours a day). According to calculations, evaporation totals 2,000 millimetres a year and varies from 1,880 millimetres (at Ca Mau) to 2,150 millimetres (in the north). The highest rates of evaporation are recorded in March and April and the lowest in September, October and December.

Through climatic changes, we can see that the variations in the humidity is of decisive importance for the development of agriculture in the Mekong delta.

Water

With a length of 4,000 kilometres, the Mekong river has a catchment basin of about 795,000 square

kilometres; its flow at Kratié (Kampuchea) is about 500 billion cubic metres a year. With the addition of water from the Tonle Sap lake and rainfall in the delta, the volume of water can reach 550 billion cubic metres. Yet the alluvium carried to the delta is only evaluated at 60–70 million tonnes a year. The analysis of the water of the Mekong river shows a high percentage of calcium, manganese, sulphates, and a low percentage of sodium, potassium, H_2CO_3 ; the pH is about 6.9. Thus this water is very suitable for irrigation and industrial use. Though abundant, it is not regularly distributed. This is a great handicap for the exploitation of the water resources. In the flood season (from July to November), the volume of water is 70–80% of the annual total. Floods in the Mekong delta do not come unexpectedly as in the Red River delta, and the water levels rise about six centimetres a day, never exceeding 30 centimetres a day. Thanks to this, floating rice can grow as

the water level rises. The distribution of water in the flood season is quite regular.

Up to now the Mekong delta has remained in its natural state. In the rainy season, from Kratié, flooding spreads to the whole delta. At first, the water floods the lower areas; as the level rises, the low lying regions are linked together to form a water line spreading to the whole delta. From about 2,500 square kilometres at first, the floods cover an area of 30,000 square kilometres at the height of the season.

Though the water rises slowly, in heavy floods, it may cause appreciable losses of human lives and property.

Unlike in the flood season, in the dry season the current is weak; as the delta is flat, the Mekong empties itself into the sea through many branches; at low tide, through these branches the sea water from the Eastern Sea and the Gulf of Thailand invades the whole network of waterways in the Mekong delta according to quite complex laws. The tides are irregular and semi-daily in the Eastern Sea and daily in the Gulf of Thailand. These two tidal regimes which differ in intensity and cycle cause complex fluctuations in the waterway network of the Mekong delta, giving rise to different (slow and fast) currents. Nevertheless, investigations have shown that the semi-daily tidal regime has a greater influence than the daily regime and this causes water to flow into the Eastern Sea although the Mekong river above Vam Nao is closer to the Gulf of Thailand than to the Eastern Sea. This is a characteristic feature which should be taken into consideration when tackling the flood problem in the Mekong delta.

The rising tide carries a big volume of sea water to the Mekong delta (480 million cubic metres via the Hau river and 300 million via the Co Chien river). Sea water submerges the delta, resulting in high salinity. The re-

gion of Ca Mau and Vam Co river above Tan An have salinity levels of 4 grammes per litre. This salinity penetrates 60 kilometres inland from the main river mouths.

Besides the tide, there are other elements contributing to this salinity such as the flow of the current from the upper reaches of the river, rainfall, sunny periods, temperature, wind velocity, evaporation, the depth of river bed... As a rule, the slower the flow, the deeper inland the salinity penetrates and vice-versa. According to calculations, when the flow of the Mekong river is 2,500 cubic metres per second at Phnom Penh, salinity drops some 7-8 kilometres from the coast.

In the dry season, the flow of the Mekong, which has not yet stabilized after the flooding season, drops in volume and increases in salinity, thus causing problems to the development of agriculture. Therefore it is most important to complement rain water by subterranean water for intensive cultivation. Opinions differ as to the evaluation of water reserves but agree that there exists an abundant sheet of water in a sedimentary layer 100 metres deep. In one area of 1,200 square kilometres of alkaline soil close to the coast, it is possible to tap fresh water reserves amounting to 36 billion cubic metres. With irrigation requirements of one centimetre of water a day, the whole area needs only 1.2 billion cubic metres, and in the opinion of some experts if the project was developed according to technical norms, the irrigation of one square kilometre of land would require the digging of only one or two wells. The problem consists of determining the exact volume of underground water and in case of large-scale exploitation whether soil depression or brackish water infiltration would occur.

According to recent investigations, at Minh Hai, many wells have been sunk to tap under-

ground water. Most of them reach water between one and three metres deep, many of them have spring water. In some regions, one well can cater for four hectares of double crop land. In coordination with the Minh Hai Scientific Commission, Can Tho University is trying to grow two rice crops and one soya crop with underground water and rain water.

The accurate determination of the underground water reserves would open up bright prospects for the cultivation of over one million hectares of alkaline land along the seacoast without having to build large-scale waterworks to draw water from the Hau river.

Biological resources

Up to now, no thorough investigations have been made to assess the potentialities, species and possibilities of exploiting these resources. First let us speak of aquatic fauna. 260 species of fish live in the Mekong delta, many of which having a high economic value such as carp, gudgeon, trout, sardines... There are eight species of fresh water shrimps including a special blue kind which weighs from 100 to 200 grammes, even 450 grammes each. Fish and shrimps are also reared in ponds, canals and rice-fields. Formerly the quantity of fish and shrimps caught amounted to 400,000 tonnes a year. But over the last ten years, it has dropped at an alarming rate, to one-tenth of the former levels, and some precious species have disappeared for good. This is due to bad management which has created an imbalance in the exploitation, rearing and protection of fish. Another cause is the pollution by chemical fertilizers, insecticides, weed killers, defoliants by US bombing and shelling during the war, by the oil released by ships and machinery. Eighty per cent of the 35 fishing methods used are indiscriminate thus destroying many species of fish to the

point of extermination. Policies must be worked out to regulate fishing and encourage fish rearing and the protection of the environment. Meanwhile it is necessary to study the biological characteristics of fish species and the acclimatization of fish strains with high economic value and long life span such as grass pike, tench, roach... in the lower reaches of the Mekong river

With regard to rice growing, the peasants in the Mekong delta have been able to select hundreds of varieties suitable for submerged fields, alkaline soil, and good quality for export. But these varieties have low yields and long-growth periods. In multiplying new strains, it is perhaps necessary to study the hybridization of high-yield floating strains to grow in highly alkaline soils submerged in the rainy season.

Yet another resource of the Mekong delta are its fruit trees. Since long, our people have known how to take advantage of the climate, sunlight and temperature, to grow fruit trees in four tiers: coconut and areca in the uppermost tier, mangoes, jack-fruits, lechees, mangosteens, durians in the second tier, bananas and sugar cane in the third tier and vegetables and medicinal plants in the lower tier.

It is worth noticing that the Mekong delta has ample possibilities for pig and duck rearing to become an industry capable of meeting both home demand and export requirements.

Much remains to be done to assess fully the possibilities of the Mekong delta. The main problem is to consider the lasting impact of this work and the measures to be taken to protect the environment and natural resources against pollution and to develop agriculture and fishing in harmony with the ecological situation of this fertile delta.

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ACHIEVEMENTS...

(Continued from page 19)

keep it well supplied, especially in textile products, footwear, household utensils, pharmaceuticals and means of transport.

For this purpose the State must bring into play all existing components of the national economy, i.e. the State, joint State-private, collective, and private sectors, and shall resort to different scales of development and combine different techniques, manual and mechanical. This will help bring into full play the country's productive potential.

In processing industries steps must be taken to ensure steady supplies of raw materials. That means close and carefully planned contacts with agriculture, fisheries and forestry. The construction of new factories must depend on the availability of materials, and will be effected only after existing factories have exhausted their capacity.

International co-operation will be conducted through processing, import of equipment and materials, export of home-made products, and through co-operation agreements in the production of consumer goods signed with members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON.)

Local industries will be developed in co-operation with centrally-run industries. Those in Group A will generally be included in the central sector for development. Only those which can develop locally, like mechanical engineering, materials production, etc., will remain in the local sector.

Light industries will be developed both at the central and local levels. The textile and paper-making industries will be developed through plans designed for central industries, while food processing and other industries will be covered by local development plans.

Local industry will develop all its three components—the State-owned industries run by provincial, municipal or district administrations, handicraft co-operatives controlled by the district authorities, and handicraft workshops under commune management. As the districts are consolidated, local industry will be developed in a rational manner.

Management will undergo changes to be able to carry out the tasks mentioned above. Industries, instead of receiving blanket State-subsidies as done so far, will have to keep their own accounts. The State is taking new pricing, salary and financial policies to acquire a greater volume of farm produce, guarantee factories' profit margins, and improve the livelihood of workers and office employees.

The relationship between production relations and forces of production will be applied more correctly in reorganizing social production. Production bases will be given more independence and room for innovation, and companies and industrial complexes will be set up to ensure the strict handling of the whole process of production.

Planning will be carried out strictly, with the participation of all the three levels of production. Factories will have greater freedom in administrative and production matters. More rational relations will be established between central and local industries.

The Vietnamese working class, thanks to effective international assistance, especially from the socialist countries, has succeeded in building a fairly comprehensive national industry as a technical and material base for socialism. This industry, still in its infancy, is facing many problems. Yet, with a determination to correct past mistakes, and with the decisive assistance of the socialist countries, it is on course to overcome the present difficulties to advance to a higher stage of development.

THANH SON

coverage capability, effect on soil erosion and water conservation... in the specific conditions of each region.

THE AGRICULTURAL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE OF EASTERN NAM BO

In the years from 1976 to 1978 brown planthoppers destroyed large rice areas in both Eastern and Western Nam Bo. In collaboration with the scientific and technical institutions concerned, the plant protection department of the Institute has worked out timely measures to detect and combat this dangerous pest. On the basis of a systematic study of the cycle, numbers and species of planthoppers, the pattern of the outbreaks, the department experimented with several kinds of pest-resistant and high-yield rice varieties. At the same time the department has determined the pest-resistance to many chemicals either imported or locally produced, especially an extract from "binh bat" seeds (*annona glabra* L.). This has helped the Institute to work out a programme for the eradication of the brown planthoppers, thus contributing to the fight against this crop pest in all the southern provinces.

IF southern Vietnam is the rice granary of the whole country, Eastern Nam Bo is the rice granary of southern Vietnam. Moreover, it is also an immense orchard, and an ideal area for growing short-term and perennial industrial crops, and for stock breeding. In fact, no other area in the country has such rich and diverse land and such a favourable climate for agriculture.

From a detailed survey of the natural resources and conditions in the region, the Agricultural Technical Institute of Eastern Nam Bo, right from its foundation set itself the task of helping to increase crop yields and develop a diversified agriculture in the region. Its main task is "to conduct basic surveys and carry out research and experimentation on various plants and animals in the light of local natural conditions."

In the five years since its foundation following the liberation of South Vietnam in 1975 the Institute has focussed its efforts on studying, classifying and testing the soil of Eastern Nam Bo which, as has now been established, essentially consists of alkaline and grey soils. In studying the distribution and chemical evolution of alkaline soils, the Institute has determined

four main types in this region and Western Nam Bo, and has suggested some technical measures aimed at using and improving each type. A number of production collectives and State farms on the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City, in Dong Nai and Tay Ninh provinces have successfully applied these measures. The Institute had drawn up a map of the distribution of alkaline soils in Eastern Nam Bo on a scale of 1/250,000.

Grey soil covers more than 40% of the total area of the region. It has physical and chemical properties suited to many kinds of short-term subsidiary food crops. A plan has been worked out to study this soil, classify and grade it in order to draw up a more detailed map of the distribution of grey soil on a national scale, and to work out practical measures for its rational exploitation. A theoretical question which deserves close attention in the study of the grey soil of Eastern Nam Bo is the phenomenon of ferraliticisation, its origin and nature, and its evolution in local ecological conditions. Also in this region of grey soil the Institute has taken some initial steps to determine which green fertilizers are the most suitable by studying their various properties such as productivity, soil

The plant protection department of the Institute has also carried out surveys of crop pests affecting maize, sorghum and soya bean in Eastern Nam Bo. This is the first time that a relatively comprehensive study has been made of the impact of main crop insects, which has enabled the Institute to work out an efficient programme for crop protection with a minimal effect on the environment.

One of the major tasks of the Institute in the recent past has been to survey, collect, preserve and compare the various kinds of dry crops. The gene bank of the Institute now has 110 species and groups of maize, more than 200 of soya bean, more than 100 of dry rice, more than 70 of sorghum,

more than 30 of cassava, and 22 of banana. Thus, within a short period the Institute has succeeded in establishing a comprehensive catalogue of dry crops.

On the basis of this well-supplied gene bank, the short-term plant section of the Institute has carried out experiments and evaluated the capabilities of a number of promising maize varieties such as early Thai maize hybrids, Intergroup 76, Intergrated Nha Ho, early maize No. 1, hybrid maize No. 2, Intergroups 2A and 2B, and a number of milky and imported maize varieties. With regard to early Thai maize, the Institute has introduced zoning in Eastern and Western Nam Bo and the Central Highlands in order to appraise the varieties' adaptability to each specific area. Advanced maize cultivation methods, especially in seed processing, growth calendar, density, fertilizers and protection measures, have been applied at the various State farms in Buon Me Thuot and by army unit 600, Bau Ca farm in Hung Loc (Dong Nai), Pham Van Coi State farm No. 1 on the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City, the State farm on Dung Island in Hau Giang province... All have produced higher yields than the traditional varieties. Early Thai maize has been grown in many localities. Within five years the Institute has crossed and supplied over 30 tonnes of original seeds to the localities, and thanks to this the area planted with early Thai maize exceeds 10,000 hectares with a potential output of from 1,000 to 2,000 tonnes more than the traditional species per crop.

There are wide prospects for further expanding the area under early Thai maize.

The number of species of soya bean (mostly imported) has grown from about 60 in 1975 to over 200 at present, belonging to different families and with different physiological and ecological properties. After many years of comparison and selection the Institute has determined the following four most promising species: DH4, Coc Chum, MTD 10, and Palmetto. Concerning soya bean cultivation

techniques, the Institute has demonstrated the great potential for development of this plant on the grey soils of Eastern Nam Bo (in addition to the basalt soils on which it is traditionally grown). Micro-quantitative and micro-organic fertilizers have been determined which increase productivity, lowering the need for azotic fertilizers and increasing the soya beans' pest resistance. Plant density should not drop below 330,000 plants and should not exceed 500,000 plants per hectare. These conclusions have been popularized and put into practice in many soya bean growing areas.

The experiments conducted on the various species of sorghum, on their growth timetable and their density, have enabled the Institute to choose long-term, long-stalk, high-yield and pest-resistant species suited to the climate of dry regions and grey soils. These experiments have also helped in the selection of another species of sorghum which has a shorter stalk but also suits grey soils, more resistant to pests and with an output double that of the best species grown in the region so far. The Institute has also produced a group of vegetables and melons for export and green beans in collaboration with Czechoslovakia.

Recently, the biophysical and biochemical department of the Institute has carried out intensive research on the drought resistance of over 150 species of high-yield hill rice in conditions of complete dependence on rain. The department has initially determined a number of promising varieties for Eastern Nam Bo and the Central Highlands. These are the IRAT 107, IRAT 104, Salunpikit, Aus-61... Worth noting are the families of OR-165-18-4, OR-165-24-12 and MWIO with short-growth periods and high yields.

With regard to stockbreeding, the Institute has been concentrating on three main areas: pastures, animal nutrition and measures to improve the breeds.

The big cattle section of the Institute has determined suitable kinds of pasture, combining Guinea grass and the «dau ma» (wild bean) on the pebbly red soil of Hung Loc (Dong Nai province). This hybrid grass has the advantage of high resistance to treading and drought, and quick reproduction in both quantity and quality in conditions of natural watering. The section has also multiplied a number of grass species of granulated and legume-based pastures with high yields and good quality in a number of localities. It has begun studying some species of legume-based pastures of temperate origin.

The small animal section has conducted research on the acclimatization of Cuban pigs. It has also studied the productivity of individual hogs and the first generation of this breed as well as various pig hybrids.

The animal feeds and nutrition section has carried out research on the standardisation and food for imported pigs as well as the sources, chemical composition and nutritive values of animal feeds in different provinces in the South.

The agricultural produce processing and preservation section has worked out a comprehensive programme for the production of yeast for rice-straw mushrooms, wood mushrooms, and has widely popularised this programme to the localities. This has encouraged the localities to develop their own programmes to process dried apples, and distill pineapple, apple and other fruit liquors. These have been produced by both handicraft and industrial methods.

BUI VAN NGOC

Binh Dinh's **COCONUT PALMS**



Gathering coconuts.

Photo: VAN BAO

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

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

mouthfuls of the delicious, sweet milk, so reminiscent of this land and its people.

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Tam Quan township lies beside a small river whose limpid water rises and falls with the tide. Whatever way we turn, we see row after row of coconut palms, over to the sea, up the mountains, down to the southern districts of Phu

My, Phu Cat, An Nhon, Tuy Phuoc... Only in the hinterland are the trees less numerous.

In Tam Quan coconut palms bear fruit after four years. How beautiful they are then! Each nut is so full and heavy that three men can drink their fill from it. The trees cluster in the sandy soil near the water, for they like water but not flooding. The fruit are picked every month and a half. A broad chopper slipped under his belt, the picker moves from tree

to tree, climbing them with a ladder, beginning with the young ones. He climbs up five or six metres above the ground, presses his chopper against a nut in the lowest bunch and shakes it a little. A gurgle reveals a ripe fruit. The man then hacks off the bunch. After that, he trims the tree-top, cuts down the withered leaves and looks for any mice. At last he slides down.

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

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

During the war of resistance against the French colonialists, the provinces in the Fifth Interzone, the Central Highlands and South-

ern Trung Bo greatly depended upon Binh Dinh's coconut oil, much of which was produced from Tam Quan coconuts. As there was no kerosene, this oil was used for lighting. Coconut oil is also a delicious substitute for fat, and a precious raw material from which to make soap. In Tam Quan, Bong Son and Phu My there are hundreds of small enterprises turning out various kinds of soaps and cosmetic oils.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

During the war of resistance against US aggression, Tam Quan was a fiercely contested area. To contain the guerillas, the Americans bulldozed tens of thousands of coconut palms, turning a once rich area into a no-man's land. But this did not stop the soldiers and people of Tam Quan and Binh Dinh from achieving resounding

feats. In Tam Quan-Bong Son area alone tens of thousands of US and South Korean aggressors fell in the coconut plantations together with hundreds of planes of various kinds.

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

Finally, the hero was tied to a young coconut palm in Tam Quan station and killed.

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

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

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



Coconut palms in Sadec province (southern Vietnam).

Photo: VNA

VAN TONG

THE DINH AND THE TRADITIONAL VIETNAMESE VILLAGE

IN every Vietnamese village in the old days a familiar feature would stand out — an imposing structure laid out at the most conspicuous, most convenient place. It was the *dinh* or communal house, where the worship of village's tutelary genie took place, communal rites were performed, and public gatherings and trials were held. It was an administrative office, a cultural centre, and a place of worship all rolled into one. It is an important subject of research into rural communal life, and its role has been interpreted in different ways.

For some it is a symbol of village life in the past, a kind of *agora* where people democratically discussed the affairs of the community. Efforts have been made to establish a connection between the *dinh*s and the "men's houses" still existing in many places in Southeast Asia, and to trace the origin of the curved-roof houses often engraved on the famous bronze drums which appeared in Vietnam in the first millenium before the Christian era. This school of thought holds that the *dinh* appeared along with the formation of the village which it gradually came to symbolize.

Others however regard the *dinh* as an expression of feudal power in the countryside, a place associated with the backward practices which had prevailed for so long within the rural communities. It was also a symbol of power strife, corruption and rivalry. At one time, social reformers under the French called for the destruction

of all these communal houses, claiming that this would be a "revolutionary measure" to do away with social evils in rural communities.

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To place the *dinh* in its proper context, the first thing to do is to date its appearance. Efforts made so far along the main rivers of northern Vietnam — the first settlement of the Viets — have not been able to probe further than the late fifteenth century. Of course one cannot assume that older communal houses had all been destroyed under Minh occupation (1407 — 1428), although it is true that great destruction was wrought on Vietnam in those twenty years. These older structures have left clear though modest vestiges, such as decorative tiles, a few stone sculptures, etc

Research carried out over the past decades has uncovered three very old communal houses. The oldest is in Tay Dang village, Ha Son Binh province, and was built at the end of the fifteenth century. Then comes Lo Hanh communal house (Ha Bac), built during the reign of Sung Khang (1566 — 1578), and finally the one at Phu Luu village in the same province, constructed towards the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century. Then, beginning with the second half of the 17th century, along with the consoli-

dation of the centralized feudal State, which adopted Confucianism as its main dogma in place of Buddhism, more such structures were set up in almost all villages, to take the place of pagodas where cultural and religious rites had been performed

The *dinh*, on the one hand, was the political extension of feudal power. It was the meeting place of village administrators to levy taxes, allot public land, conscript labour, settle disputes, impose fines and so on. The seating arrangement was a clear reflection of village hierarchy: top dignitaries were seated in the central section, lesser ones in the aisles. Even village genies were classified by Court decrees as top, secondary and lower grade and were promoted in rank according to the contributions made by the population.

On the other hand, the *dinh* reflected the true communal life, in which the elders commanded great esteem, and the people, through their representatives, could take part in decisions concerning matters of public interest, such as building bridges, irrigation canals and dykes, and settling disputes. Village festivals, celebrated in the communal houses, were occasions for public rejoicing where local traditions were reaffirmed through the worship of the village genies.

On these occasions, the *dinh* was transformed into a stage for the traditional arts: *hat cheo* (popular opera), songs and dances while in

the courtyard, young people of either sex took part in competitive feats and games, a remnant of the rite of passage in ancient times

The *dinh*, therefore, was the pride of the village and, rightly or wrongly, was always favourably compared to others by the villagers who had all contributed to its construction and who saw in it a symbol of their community.

Most of the communal houses were built facing south, which was believed to be the most auspicious direction. At first they were more like dwelling houses, only differing in size: each had five to nine contiguous, un-partitioned compartments, without a wall or only partially walled.

Towards the end of the 17th century, when religious rites became more and more elaborate and social polarization more pronounced, a kind of sanctum was added to the back of the structure to house the altar.

Later came a further addition — an ante-chamber in the form of an outhouse, where rites were performed and meetings were held. The main structure, now secluded, was opened only during ceremonies where offering were made to the genies. On either side of the forecourt there were corridors for officials to make personal preparations before the ceremonies and for laymen or the womenfolk to sit during public meetings. The grounds were occasionally surrounded by a wall with a triple gate

Researchers have also found clear signs of a struggle against feudal ideology in the decorative details: religious and secular activities. But beginning with the latter half of the 17th century sculptors developed a strong preference for everyday scenes—peasants tilling their fields, hunters chasing after tigers, villagers building houses or engaged in sports such as wrestling, shuttle-cock, boat races, cock and buffalo fights... Nude

women bathing or carrying the sun on their heads, or boys and girls courting or in the act of love were also portrayed with boldness and realism, as a challenge to feudal canons.

This reaction of the peasants against the feudal ideology of the end of the 17th century already hinted at the large uprisings to come in the next.

Yet, it should also be noted that the feudal State, although it was unable to reach the population and had to grant a certain degree of village autonomy, did manage to control the village apparatus. A *dinh*, therefore, was primarily a symbol of the central power. Nonetheless because of its place in the peaceful life of the country it was dear, and has remained so to every Vietnamese heart.

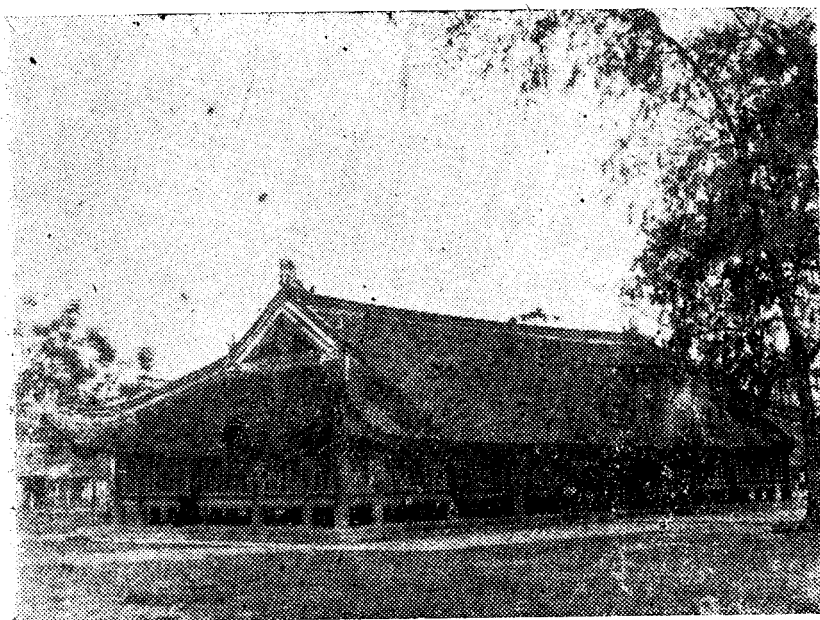
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In the countryside nowadays the *dinhs* have assumed new functions. Those which escaped enemy destruction were used, during the war and in the first years of peace in the North, as schools, administrative offices, cooperative storehouses, and even workshops.

A stop has been put to these misuses, however innocent, and the *dinhs* have been restored to their original role as public meeting places, or converted into local houses of culture or museums. Some, of great architectural value, have been made classified public monuments, like the one at Tay Dang, west of Hanoi—the oldest in the country — or at Dinh Bang to the north which ranks among the largest, or at Tho Ha, also north of Hanoi, which is famous for its beauty.

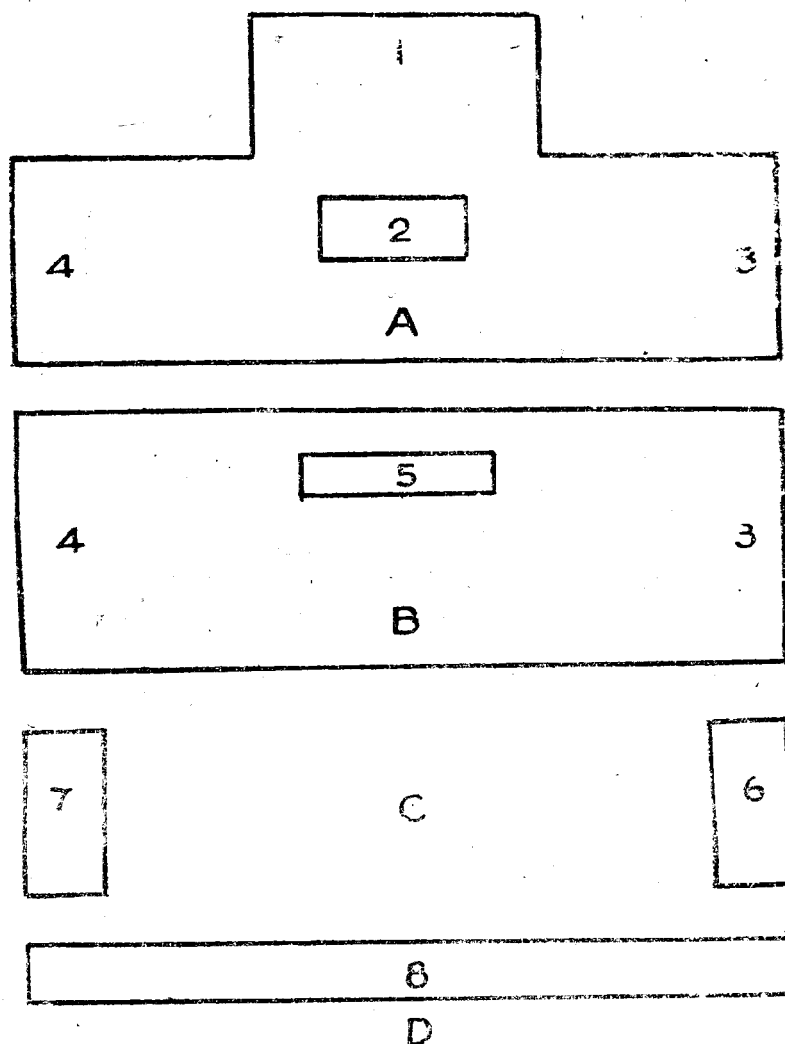
Those ancient structures, tucked away among secular trees or standing majestically on commanding hilltops, are witnesses to the many historic changes that have taken place in our countryside.

TO LAN



The communal house in Dinh Bang (Ha Bac province).

Photo: LE CUONG



- | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|------------|
| A. Back chamber | (Hậu cung) | 3. Left aisle | (Tả gian) |
| B. Ante-chamber | (Nhà tiền tế) | 4. Right aisle | (Hữu gian) |
| C. Inside court | | 5. Altar | (Hương án) |
| D. Forecourt | | 6. Left wing | (Tả vu) |
| 1. Sanctuary | (Nội điện) | 7. Right Wing | (Hữu vu) |
| 2. Throne | (Bàn thờ) | 8. Triple portico | (Tam quan) |

Just Published

VIETNAMESE STUDIES No.62 HANDICRAFTS

In Vietnam, an essentially agricultural country ravaged by thirty years of wars and repeated natural calamities, handicrafts play an important role in economic restoration and development and in improving living standard.

While not attempting to make an exhaustive study, the authors analyse this economic sector — both in the past and at present.

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CHRONOLOGY

(Continued from page 32)

a special prize at the 11th architectural competition on the occasion of the 14th Congress of the International Union of Architects to be held in Warsaw in June 1981.

— A high-ranking delegation of the Communist Party of Vietnam, led by General Vo Nguyen Giap, Political Bureau member and Deputy Prime Minister, leaves Hanoi for Vientiane to confer the Sao Vang (Yellow Star) Order, Vietnam's highest distinction, upon Kaysone Phomvihane, Prime Minister of the People's Democratic Republic of Laos.

MAY

2. Hanoi: Signing of a non-refundable aid agreement for 1981 and a trade agreement between Vietnam and Kampuchea.

3. Havana: Signing of a cooperation agreement for 1981–85 between the Vietnamese Ministry of Labour and the Cuban State Committee for Labour and Social Security.

— A delegation of the Vietnam Peace Committee, headed by Professor Pham Huy Thong, Presidium member of the Committee, pays a visit to Nicaragua at the invitation of its Nicaraguan counterpart.

— An international conference for solidarity with the Kampuchean people was held in Phnom Penh from 30 April to 3 May. It adopted a statement denouncing the genocidal crimes of the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary-Khieu Samphan clique and praising the achievements of the Kampuchean people over the past two years. The statement also vehemently condemns the Beijing authorities for their collusion with the US imperialists and other reactionary forces in undermining Kampuchea's reconstruction.

— The Hoc Mon garbage fertilizer plant built with Danish aid on the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City has begun operating.

— At the invitation of the Vietnam Committee for Solidarity and Friendship with the Peoples of Other Countries, a delegation of the Yemen–Vietnam Friendship Association pays a visit to Vietnam from 4 May to 12 May.

5. Vietnam takes part in the Plovdiv International Fair (in Bulgaria) for the first time with such traditional wares as lacquer, bamboo and rattan objects, woollen carpets, ceramics...

6. At the invitation of the Ministry of Higher and Vocational Education of Vietnam, a delegation of the University Institute of Mozambique led by its director Fernando Ganhao paid a friendship visit to Vietnam from 29 April to 6 May.

— A spokesman of the Foreign Ministry of Vietnam issues a statement strongly condemning the Chinese authorities for their continued armed provocations and their crimes against the Vietnamese people in the Vietnam-China border areas

— The Thaelmann Pioneers Organization (GDR) donates 3 million marks to the Vietnamese Pioneers collected from their "Copybooks for Vietnam" campaign.

7. A delegation of the Arab Baath Socialist Party of the Syrian Arab Republic, led by Mohamed Sareha Hermasi, member of the party's national leadership, pays a friendship visit to Vietnam at the invitation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

— The Central Committee of the CPV sends a message of greetings to the Romanian Communist Party, on the occasion of its 60th founding anniversary.

— Construction begins on the Can Tho – Soc Trang 110kv high tension line, the most important power line in the Mekong delta.

— A delegation of the Confederation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK), led by its Secretary Touyo Hemppi, pays a visit to Vietnam at the invitation of the Vietnam Federation of Trade Unions.

9. The Electoral Council of the People's Republic of Kampuchea holds a press conference to announce the results of the general elections: 117 out of the 148 candidates are elected to the Kampuchean National Assembly.

11. Phoune Sipaseuth, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the People's Democratic Republic of Laos, pays an official visit to Malaysia at the invitation of Malaysian Foreign Minister Ahmad Rithauddeen.

14. The SRV Government decides to confer the Ho Chi Minh Order, Second Class, on the Ho Chi Minh Vanguard Pioneers Organization on the occasion of its 40th founding anniversary.

— The Government of the Kingdom of Belgium decides to donate 10,000,000 Belgian francs to help flood-and storm-stricken areas in Vietnam.

— Deputy Director of Department I of the Lao Foreign Ministry, Ky Kham, delivers a note to the Chinese chargé d'affaires in Vientiane protesting against China's repeated attacks and intrusions in Luong Nam Tha province, in northwestern Laos. The note demands that China put an end to its armed provocations which infringe upon the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People's Democratic Republic of Laos.

15. The CC of the CPV sent a message of greetings to the CC of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia on the occasion of its 60th founding anniversary.

— At an international photo competition organized on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of COMECON's Coordinated Programme, 4 photos from the Vietnam News Agency are awarded prizes.

— Phoune Sipaseuth, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the PDR of Laos, pays an official visit to the Philippines from 15 to 17 May, at the invitation of the Filipino Foreign Minister Carlos P. Romulo.

CHRONOLOGY

(16 April — 15 May)

APRIL

16. On the occasion of the 35th National Day of the Syrian Arab Republic, Acting President Nguyen Huu Tho and Prime Minister Pham Van Dong send a message of congratulations to their Syrian counterparts. The message expresses Vietnam's resolute support for the just struggle of the Arab Peoples against the Israeli Zionists.

— A mass meeting is held in Hanoi to celebrate the 6th anniversary of Kampuchean National Day.

— Discovery in Ba Don (Binh Tri Thien province) of several dexterous stone tools and potteries. These findings are thought to date back to the later neolithic age, some 4,000 years ago. This shows that the people of Ba Don settled there very early and lived on rice agriculture.

17. Le Duan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, sends a message of greetings to Erich Honecker on his re-election as General Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany.

— Addressing the Non-Aligned Coordination Committee's Ministerial Conference on Namibia, Ambassador Ha Van Lau, head of the Vietnamese delegation, condemns the apartheid regime in South Africa, and protests against the US and other western countries' schemes to prolong South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia.

18. On the occasion of the week of International Solidarity with Palestinian Political Prisoners, the Vietnam Committee for Solidarity with Afro-Asian Peoples sends a message to the PLO expressing its solidarity with and total support for the Palestinian people in their struggle for basic national rights.

— *Vietnam News Agency* flatly rejects allegations by a spokesman of the Thai Army on 16 April that Vietnamese forces "used toxic gases in Oddar Meanchay province."

— A meeting to celebrate the one thousandth anniversary of Vietnam's victory over the Song invaders is held in Hanoi by the City Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, the Hanoi Municipal People's Committee and the Vietnam Institute of History.

21. An agreement on economic cooperation between the Polish Academy of Science, the Vietnam Institute of Science and the Vietnam Committee for Social Science for 1981-1985 is signed in Warsaw.

— *Vietnam News Agency* issues a statement rejecting allegations by the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Supreme Command of the Thai Army that Vietnamese troops "fired artillery into Thai territory", and asserting that the policy of the SRV is to "strictly respect the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of the Kingdom of Thailand."

22. Signing in Havana of a Vietnam-Cuba ten-year agreement on cooperation in science, education, culture, arts, health care, sports, broadcasting, news and the press.

23. A film entitled *Long Van Tu Hoi*, depicting the Vietnamese struggle against the French colonialists and the US imperialists, wins first prize at the Lille documentary film festival. It was produced by Le Lam, a Vietnamese resident in France.

— A spokesman of the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry issues a statement on the situation in Lebanon, expressing the Vietnamese people's support for the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples' right to self-defence against the aggressive acts and intentions of Israel and the US in Lebanon.

24. The Swedish Socialist Childrens' Organization donates 15,000 *kronors* to Vietnamese children. The money was collected by Swedish children in a campaign of solidarity with Vietnam's national reconstruction.

— Representatives of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea at a tripartite meeting held in Vientiane issue a press communiqué concerning:

— world support for the proposals of the conference of foreign ministers of three Indochinese countries held in Ho Chi Minh City on 28 January 1981;

— the erroneous Resolution 35/6 of the UN General Assembly;

— acceptance of the proposal for regional consultations issued by certain ASEAN countries.

25. Vietnam takes part in the Spring Interparliamentary Conference held in Manila from 21 to 25 April 1981.

— Inauguration of the 8 March crèche in Lang Son, built with assistance from the Communist Party of Sweden and capable of caring for 150 children.

26. 97.78 per cent of the total number of registered voters went to the polls for the SRV National Assembly (7th Legislature), 496 out of 614 candidates were elected to the National Assembly.

27. Opening of the Second Congress of Third World Economists. Prof. Dao Van Tap, Director of the Institute of Economics and head of the Vietnamese delegation, joins the presidium of the conference.

— Phoune Sipaseuth, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the People's Democratic Republic of Laos, pays an official and friendship visit to the Republic of Indonesia at the invitation of the Indonesian Foreign Ministry.

29. Construction of the Dau Tieng reservoir (in Tay Ninh province) with a total capacity of 1,450,000 cubic metres begins with the assistance of the International Development Agency of the World Bank, the OPEC Special Fund, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and Holland.

— The Swedish Parliament approves a budget of 365 million *kronors* of aid to Vietnam in fiscal years 1981-1982.

30. The jury of the Vietnamese Writers' Association decides to award the "1980 Literature Prize" to two works. The first is *Duong toi thanh pho* (Approach to the City), a long poem by Huu Thinh, and the second is *Rat nhieu anh lua* (Fire Lights), a collection of stories and memoirs by Hoang Phu Ngoc Tuong.

— Projects for the "Restoration of Hue City" by a group of four fourth-year students of the College of Architecture under the guidance of Vu Dai Hai win

(Continued on page 31)



1. Children from Quang Ninh camping near Ha Long Bay.

Photo: THANH LONG

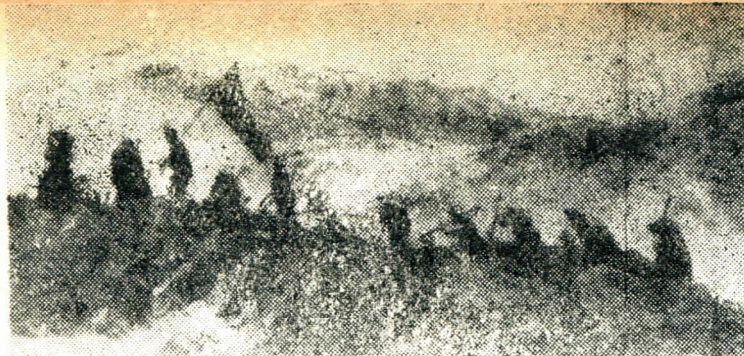


2. Taking part in social activities: cleaning streets in the town of Buon Me Thuot.

3. Meeting Czechoslovak friends at an international summer camp.

Photos: VU QUANG HUY





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2

READINESS FOR NATIONAL DEFENCE

1. Strengthening defence lines along the Vietnam-China border.

2. Border patrol.

3. The militia of Than Uyen State-farm in military training.

3



Photos: VNA

Vietnam
courier

HOBOCTA
BLETHANA

Le Courrier
du Vietnam

El Correo
de Vietnam

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