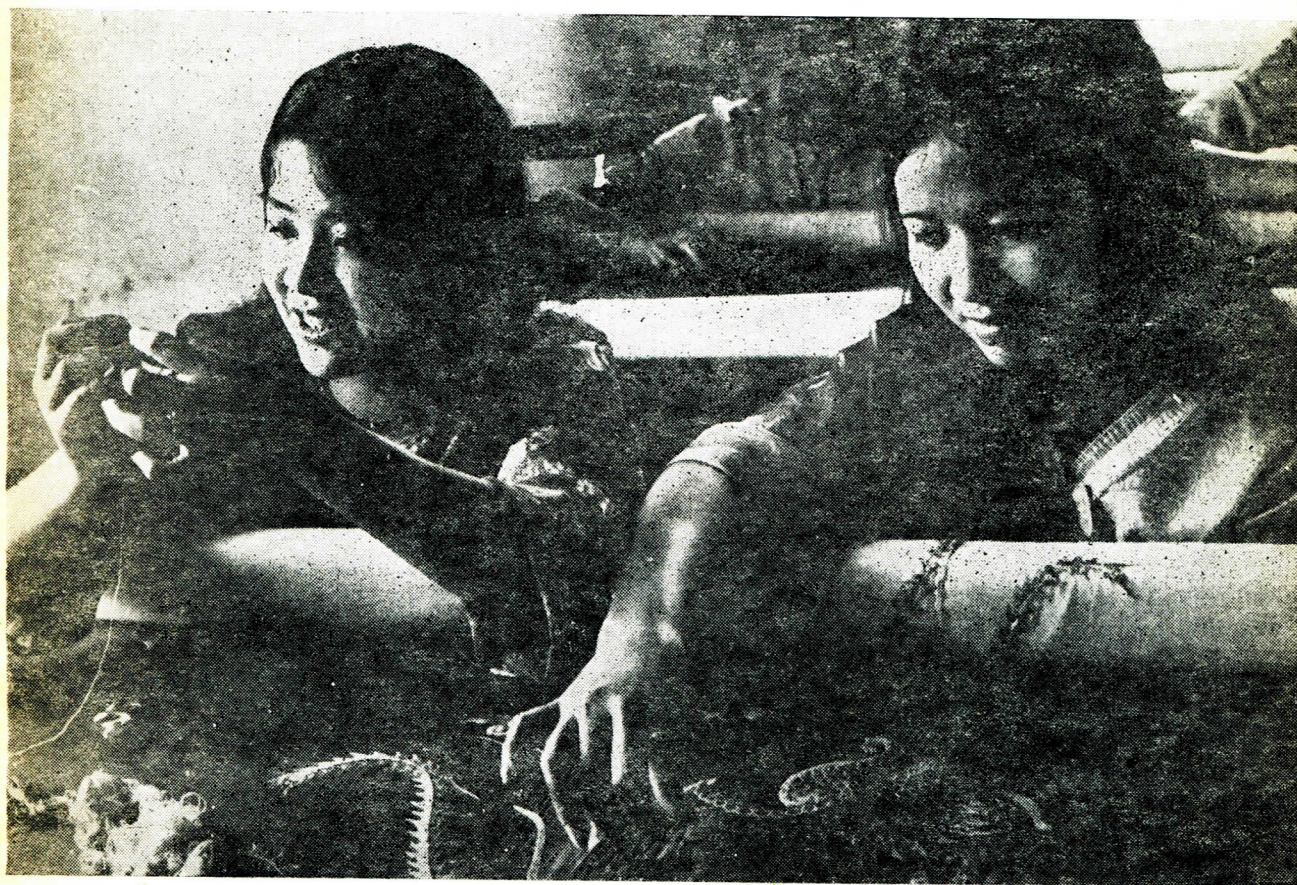


Vietnam courier



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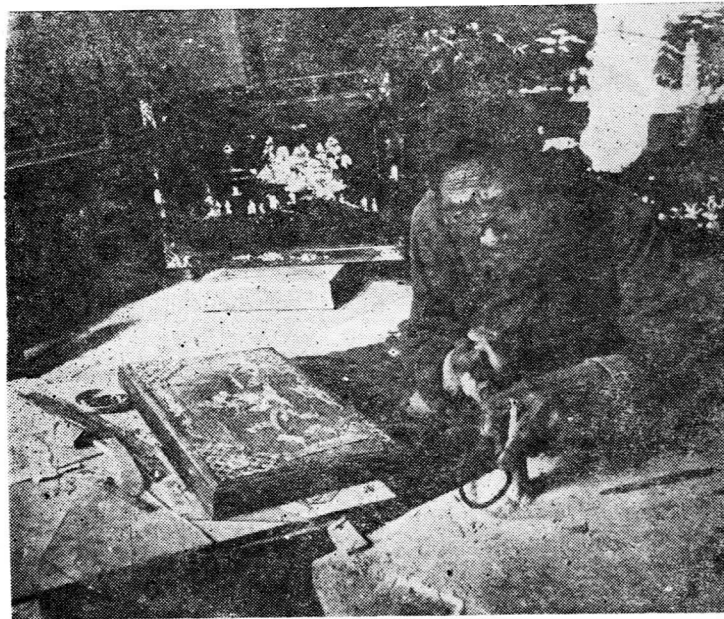
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Bamboo and rattan products.

Photo: KHUE LAP CHUONG

Handicraft and fine-arts products



A mother-of-pearl artist at work.

Photo: KHANH QUANG



Dong Nai ceramics.

Photo: VIETNAM PICTORIAL

● Our Monthly Comment	1
● For Better Enforcement of Socialist Laws	
— Examination and Settlement of People's Complaints and Denunciations	3
● On the Food Problem	6
● New Measures for Improving Economic Management	8
● Combination of Agriculture and Forestry — A New and Effective Mode of Production	11

Contents

● Southeast Asia — Past and Present	12
● Nguyen Dinh Chieu — Poet of A Choice Period (1822-1888).	15
● The Hue Educational Centre of General Technology	17
● Training of Players of Traditional Musical Instruments in Vietnam	19
● Health Care in A Red River Delta Commune	22
● Vietnam Advances	
— The Nha Ho Experimental Cotton Farm	24
● An Enterprise from Underdevelopment	25
● International Year of the Elderly	
— Lam Dien After Twenty Years of the Tree-Planting Movement	27
— An "Open-Air Health Club" in Hanoi	29
● Anthology of Vietnamese Folk Literature	31
● Chronology	32

Front cover: Nam Dinh embroiderers.

Photo: THANH KHANH

Vietnam
COURIER

7-1982

OUR MONTHLY COMMENT

For many decades Vietnam was hated by imperialists and colonialists because it dared struggle to the bitter end for self-determination. It annoyed them all the more when North and South resolutely embarked on the path to socialism after defeating Washington's seemingly invincible force and shaking the very structure of US neo-colonialism. Failing to subjugate Vietnam by force, Washington then resorted to economic blockade and political isolation. For this country not to set a "bad example" to Third World nations, the attractive image it projected during long years of exacting struggle for national independence would be wiped out by a series of smear campaigns.

When South Vietnam was in the grip of the Ho Chi Minh campaign, the world was warned of a large-scale "bloodbath" in the event of a "Viet Cong" victory. With the first measures of reunification, "normalisation" (northmalisation) — the slander that the North would "annex" the South — was put about. However, just like the allegations that North and South Vietnam were separate countries, that the North aggressed the South, and the USA had to defend the independence of the South, this slander did not hold water, "northmalisation" was soon forgotten and world opinion realized that the reunification of a country forcibly partitioned after the 1954 Geneva Agreements was natural and just. Instead of a "bloodbath", those who collaborated with the other side were, for the most part, reintegrated into the national community and joined forces in healing the wounds of war and rebuilding the country.

Another campaign was launched when a number of high-ranking officers and functionaries of the Saigon administration were gathered for re-education to take stock and choose for themselves which way they would follow. If they had been brought to trial for collaboration with the enemy they would have received heavy sentences. Capitalising on concern for

human rights, the Western propaganda machine pulled out all the stops to distort the truth about re-education. However, an Amnesty International delegation to Vietnam, after an exchange of views with Vietnamese jurists, had to recognize that Vietnam's views on human rights were by no means groundless.

In fact, those who remain in re-education camps might have been freed but for the appearance on the Indochina scene of a new character: the Chinese authorities. They are irritated because Vietnam defeated the United States, reunified the country and blocked their path of expansion in Southeast Asia. In a deal with the USA for world supremacy, they have played a major part in the campaigns to besmirch and isolate Vietnam to the utmost, to "bleed Vietnam dry" — as part of a war of sabotage against our Socialist Republic.

Vietnam is portrayed by Beijing and Washington as a country lacking in human rights and full of expansionist ambitions.

Human rights were not only linked to people under re-education but also to the "boat people". Their departure, they say, is due to the "harsh Hanoi regime". But in spite of this smokescreen the truth is gradually becoming apparent. For among those who leave many are Hoa people threatened by the "lessons" which Beijing keeps in store for Vietnam and who fear being considered pro-Vietnamese; others depart because they are not prepared for the hard life in a country after more than thirty years of war, deprived of an annual two-billion-dollar aid and now subject to an economic blockade. These are "economic refugees" whose existence is acknowledged by UNHCR. In fact, Vietnam has allowed those with legitimate reasons to leave the country and has, with UNHCR co-operation, organised their safe and orderly departure. For its part, Washington has deliberately sabotaged this programme and sought by all means, including despatching the Seventh Fleet to offshore Vietnam, to encourage people to leave and then blacken this country. The Far Eastern Economic Review of July 17 — 23, 1981 commented: "If the Seventh Fleet sailed into the Indian Ocean and let it be known that those reaching it would be resettled in California, the exodus from the subcontinent would dwarf that from Indochina."

But the greatest discredit has been brought about by saying that Vietnam nurtures expansionist ambitions towards Kampuchea. Here, besides the intention of lowering Vietnam's prestige is the evil intent of sowing division between this country and the ASEAN countries, and preventing the shaping of a Southeast Asia of peace, stability, friendship and co-operation. Many people have at last seen through this ploy, although quite a few are still taken in by it. Surely what is most important is that Vietnam put a stop

to the genocide in Kampuchea and recovered the right to life of an entire nation — who could deny this truth? As regards international politics, Vietnam's security interests in Kampuchea have begun to be recognized by many people, even in Western countries. The reality is that in Kampuchea an irreversible process is unfolding: the revolutionary power is being consolidated with every passing day for it truly represents the Kampuchean people.

These changing perceptions explain why the latest campaigns to besmirch Vietnam have attracted fewer people than expected: the slander that Vietnam is using toxic chemicals — the so-called yellow rain — in Kampuchea and Laos, and the slander that Vietnam is sending its citizens to hard labour in Siberia.

Regarding the former campaign, the findings of the UN investigators and of the PUGWASH scientists show that there is no proof to these slanders. Indeed, Washington, with Beijing's support, launched this campaign at the very time when in the United States many ex-GI's were asking their government for compensation for the terrible effects on them and their offspring caused by Agent Orange, which was used during the Vietnam war.

Concerning the latter campaign, Vietnam has refuted the vile allegation of the US and Chinese propaganda machines. An imbalance in demographic and economic planning has resulted in a surplus labour force in Vietnam which needs to be trained into qualified workers to build the country and run the plants which the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries in Eastern Europe will provide as aid. The best way is for these countries to train these workers. They agreed to Vietnam's request and treat our workers like their own. There is no question of forcing them to go — on the contrary it is seen as a marvellous opportunity.

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Vietnam's refusal to become a US neo-colony and to move into China's orbit has made Beijing and Washington angry. There may well be other campaigns to blacken our name.

But Vietnam remains faithful to the ideals for which it has struggled decade after decade: national independence, people's happiness and friendship with other nations. We are confident that our friends understand this and will continue to support us.

For its part, Vietnam Courier sets itself the task of informing its readers about the truth in Vietnam. It will do its best to fulfil this task and hopes for help and suggestions from friends far and wide.

25 June 1982

EXAMINATION AND SETTLEMENT OF PEOPLE'S COMPLAINTS AND DENUNCIATIONS

A revolutionary party in power often faces the danger of members who hold responsible posts in the State machinery or social organizations becoming warped by bureaucracy and detached from the masses and even violating their rights and interests. This inevitably affects the relationship between the Party, State and people adversely and will be exploited by the enemy for divisive purposes. President Ho Chi Minh consistently cautioned the Communist Party of Vietnam against this danger.

To ensure socialist democracy and the right of collective mastery of the working people, the successive constitutions of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and now the Socialist Republic of Vietnam have recognized the right of citizens to file complaints and denunciations against any level of the administration and services right to the top, for any act committed by State bodies, social organizations, the armed forces or by individuals from these organizations which contravenes government policies and laws and hurts socialist property or the interests

of individual citizens. The 1980 Constitution sanctions this right in Article 73 in the chapter entitled "Citizens' rights". Vietnamese citizens have been encouraged to make full use of this right. They have not only filed complaints about wrongdoings but also denounced the wrongdoers. Denunciations account for one-third and in some areas even 40 % or 50 % of the total of cases dealt with. On the whole, these are based on truth, slanders and false accusations representing only a very small fraction.

Considerable effort has been made by the responsible bodies to expedite the examination and settlement of these complaints and denunciations, but much remains to be done.

Statistics from inspectorial agencies in 17 provinces and 21 ministries and equivalent bodies, show that in the first six months of 1981, 18,000 complaints and denunciations were received of which nearly 13,000 cases, or more than 70% of the total, have been resolved, up by nearly 9% compared with the same period in 1980. However,

while in some ministries and localities the unresolved cases accounted for only 20% of the total, in some others this proportion was as high as 80%.

In quite a few cases, the complaints or denunciations went from one place to another, with no body or agency taking the responsibility for settlement. Too many complaints have been referred to the highest leaders of the Party and State, partly because the responsible bodies at lower echelons refused to accept responsibility for settlement. In early 1981, thanks to a new regulation, the Central Inspectorate sent 4,100 complaints, which had been sent directly to the highest organs of power, back to the provinces and ministries.

Quite a lot of people, despairing of their requests ever being considered by the responsible authorities, have asked for help from the press and media.

In the first six months of 1981, major newspapers, the Voice of Vietnam Radio and the television service received more than 1,200 complaints. The authors of these

letters expressed their hope that the press would exert pressure on the responsible bodies for an answer to their grievances.

This deplorable situation has its origin in the lack of concern at some levels of power for the grievances of citizens. This is manifest in the failure to appoint competent bodies to look after the matter. In the southern provinces which were liberated many years ago, there still remain 70 districts without such bodies and they are the ones with a high percentage of unsettled complaints.

More serious still, some cadres openly show their hostility toward those who denounce them. They readily accuse them of "lack of discipline", "divulging internal affairs", "causing disturbances" or even "plotting to overthrow leading officials", and so on.

It is to overcome these shortcomings and better enforce the right of collective mastery of the working people that on November 2, 1981 the Council of State adopted the "Decree on the Examination and Settlement of People's Complaints and Denunciations" which was promulgated by the President of the Council of State on December 3, 1981.

II

This important decree, drawing on the experience and practice of many years, has concrete provisions on the examination and settlement of people's complaints and denunciations.

1. First of all, *who has the right to denounce who, about what, and to whom?*

Article 1 of the decree says: "Citizens have the right to file complaints or denunciations against all acts contrary to State policies and law by any State body, economic, cultural and social organizations and units of the People's

Army (hereafter referred to simply as bodies and organizations) or by any individual belonging to these organs which are judged detrimental to the interests of the State, the collectives and the legitimate interests of the citizens."

"People may post their letters or personally come to the body concerned to hand in their complaint or denunciation. This body has the duty to accept the letter and receive the complainant." (Article 8)

"If the complainant makes a verbal protest or denunciation, the body concerned has the duty to fully record the content of the affair and the minutes shall be signed by the complainant. In case the complaint does not fall within its jurisdiction, the body shall forward it to the competent body and notify the complainant of the transfer within seven days of reception of the complaint, or direct the complainant to the competent body." (Article 9)

"Complaints and denunciations forwarded by the press and media must be examined and settled by the bodies concerned." (Article 10)

To protect the complainant the decree prohibits all disclosure or transfer of the denunciation, written or verbal, or copied, to the accused body, organization or person. With regard to a complaint, the decree also prohibits "its transfer to the accused body, organization or person if this is judged harmful to the complainant." (Article 11)

2. *Competence in examining and settling complaints and denunciations,*

This is a key question. If this is not clearly defined, complaints or denunciations take a circuitous path and end up at the highest level, who then send them back, causing an enormous waste of time. The decree distinguishes between a complaint and a denunciation.

Article 12 stipulates the following in the handling of complaints:

The person responsible for examining and settling complaints is the head or leading committee of the body or organization in which the accused works.

If the head or leading committee of this body is her/himself or itself the accused, the head or leading committee of the immediately higher level shall examine and settle the complaint.

Article 13 is about the examination and settlement of denunciations.

If the denunciation concerns a member of a body or organization the matter shall be taken up by the head or leading committee of that body or organization.

If the accused is the head or leading committee of a body or organization the matter shall be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. If no cover-up is involved, the matter shall be taken up by the head or leading committee of the immediately higher level. If a cover-up is suspected, the head or leading committee of a still higher level shall examine and solve the matter.

The decree further provides that after the competent body or organization has decided on the matter if the complainant or denunciator is not satisfied, they may refer the matter to the immediately higher level of that body or organization.

In the provinces and the three major cities directly under central authority (Hanoi, Haiphong and Ho Chi Minh City) the chairperson of the People's Committee of the province (or city) shall handle the complaints and denunciations left unresolved by the lower echelon if the complainant is not yet satisfied. In the public services, this falls under the competence of the minister.

The chairperson of the People's Committee of the province and of

any of the three major cities mentioned above, or the minister, are also the final competent authority. In case the complainant is still not satisfied, the decree stipulates: "Only in the event of an error shall the Chairman of the Council of Ministers reconsider the matter and he shall be assisted in this work by the Chairman of the Inspectorate of the Government." The latter shall inquire into the error and refer to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers for decision. The chairpersons of the inspectorial committees at the ministries and in the provinces shall also help the Chairman of the Council of Ministers and the chairpersons of the People's Committees in the handling of the complaints and denunciations.

3. Time-limits for the handling of complaints and denunciations.

To avoid delay and procrastination, the decree stipulates:

— "At the commune, city ward and grassroots level, the time for settlement of a complaint shall not exceed one month from the day of reception. At the higher level, this time-limit should not exceed three months." (Article 22)

— "With regard to the denunciations, the time-limit is three and six months respectively." (Article 23)

— "With regard to complicated cases, which require longer inquiries, the competent body may report to the higher authority for prolongation of the time-limit but it must not be longer than twice the limit set for normal cases." (Article 24)

4. Role of the mass organizations and elected bodies in the examination and settlement of complaints and denunciations.

To ensure a judicious and impartial decision, and spare the complainant from having to bring

the case to a higher authority, the decree provides that the State bodies must co-operate with the public offices and social organizations including mass organizations (youth, women and trade unions) concerned.

The decree pays special importance to the role of the deputies to the National Assembly and People's Councils in expediting the examination and settlement of complaints and denunciations. These deputies, upon receiving complaints and denunciations from their electorate, must inquire into the matter and make necessary suggestions, then forward those complaints or denunciations together with their suggestions to the State bodies concerned. Based on the time-limit set in the decree, these deputies shall follow the affair and urge the concerned bodies to expedite the cases in time and report the result to the complainants. (Article 26)

5. Penalties involved in the violation of citizens' right to complain or denounce.

To ensure strict observance of the decree, the State provides for two kinds of penalty. If the persons responsible for receiving, forwarding, examining and solving the complaints and denunciations of citizens fail to observe the stipulations of the decree, they will be dealt with according to administrative discipline.

Those who commit the following offences shall be subject to criminal law:

— Those who misuse their position and power to prevent others from filing complaints or denunciations or hinder the punishment of the accused are liable to prison terms ranging from three months to three years.

— Those who refuse to comply with the decision of the competent bodies about the complaints and

denunciations or intentionally cause harm to the complainants and denunciators will be subject to the same penalties.

— Those who make acts of retaliation against the complainants or denunciators will face heavier penalties: prison terms ranging from six months to six years.

— Those who misuse their right to complain and denounce to distort facts and slander other persons or State bodies and organizations are also liable to prison terms ranging from three months to three years.

*
* *

The promulgation of the decree on the right to complain and denounce represents another step forward in the exercise of the working people's collective mastery. But most important of all is to eliminate situations leading to complaints and denunciations. This is no easy job. The resolution of the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam has raised well-grounded hopes in this direction when it points to the need to overcome the great shortcomings in economic and social management, the need to cut down the size of the administrative machine, to overcome bureaucracy and conservatism, to restructure the managerial system and improve the capacity in running State affairs, to adopt new policies with regard to the use and promotion of cadres, and to build a contingent of able cadres of integrity.

Clearly, this requires the application of new measures on the organizational, educational, administrative and economic planes simultaneously with special attention to heightening the equity of socialist law. The socialist system is the best guarantee for the enforcement of these measures.

VAN SON

ON THE FOOD PROBLEM

Food constitutes a problem of strategic importance for the whole country faced as we are with great difficulties in this area.

To bring about initial solutions, on June 1, 1982 the Council of Ministers laid down the following important measures:

1. *Not to rely on outside help but on our own means* to solve the food problem by boosting production; concentrating most of the marketable food into State hands; rapidly regulating distribution between the various regions, ensuring a strict and economical management of distribution and consumption with due regard to the actual capacities of production and purchase.

2. It is necessary to balance production and purchase with distribution and consumption of food and foodstuffs in each district and province, to fairly cater for the needs of the local population while ensuring the yearly deliveries of each crop to the State so as to meet the needs of the armed forces, the towns and industrial regions, to help the rural regions which lack food and to gradually increase the country's reserves.

To combine food with other foodstuffs to improve the popu-

lation's diet: as regards staples, emphasis should be laid on both rice and other cereals, while vegetables and beans (particularly soya) must be increased; special attention should also be paid to their processing.

The specific economic conditions of each region must be taken into account to define the orientation and plans of production for food and work out the composition of meals (including those of the armed forces wherever conditions permit): in cases of shortage, to substitute other cereals for rice, and vegetables, fruit, etc, for food. All efforts must be made to produce foodstuffs along with integral agricultural development, particularly the building of regions specialized in industrial crops, medicinal plants and orchards, paying due regard to State plans and good lay-out.

Besides the peasants who are the main productive force, mobilize the other social strata (including the armed forces, workers, civil servants, students) wherever possible to take part in the production of food to meet part of their own needs.

Following are the concrete targets for each kind of province and town:

— The major rice-growing provinces (in the Mekong and Red River deltas) must — after meeting local needs and putting aside essential stocks — increase deliveries of food and foodstuffs to the State, and particularly in 1982 try to overfulfil the targets of the yearly plan.

— The provinces which are self-sufficient (along the coast, in Central Vietnam and the Central Highlands) must contribute to the central administration and build up their own reserves.

— The provinces with a food deficit must at the very least apply themselves to providing their own food and foodstuffs as the central administration will only look after the needs of the regular armed forces. The towns and industrial zones which receive supplies from the central administration must, on the one hand, strictly manage the distribution and consumption of food and foodstuffs, and on the other hand, draw up plans and carry out intensive farming, raise yields and multiply crops in all their cultivated areas, organize and help non-agricultural workers (especially in suburban areas) to participate in production as far as possible so as to alleviate the burden of the State.

3. *For 1982*: To thoroughly implement the policies and measures on agricultural development adopted by the 11th Plenum (Dec., 1981) of the Central Committee (elected by the Fourth Party Congress) and the 2nd session (Dec., 1981) of the Seventh National Assembly in order to surpass the planned targets, that is 16 million tons of food (including 13 million tons of paddy).

Hence it is necessary to satisfy the following main requirements in the immediate future:

— To ensure the timely and sufficient supply of fuel for tilling, irrigation, husking and transport-

tation, particularly for the regions with high yields and great capacities for crop multiplication, reclamation and enlargement of cultivated areas.

—To take timely delivery of imported chemical fertilizers, while intensifying local production of phosphate fertilizer, to overcome all the obstacles to their rapid transportation to the various localities according to the agricultural calendar.

—To ensure at all costs the import and production of pesticides for rice, subsidiary food crops, industrial crops and main foodstuffs.

—Direct the struggle against drought, typhoons, water-logging and flooding in the coming months.

4. To fulfil at all costs the targets of food collection for 1982, namely 2.8-3 million tons (in terms of paddy): 1-1.1 million tons for the North; 350,000 tons for the coastal provinces, the Centre and the Central Highlands; 1.4-1.5 million tons for the Nam Bo (southernmost) provinces.

To this end it is planned to carry out simultaneously economic, administrative and educational measures, political education combined with economic measures being the central link along with administrative measures against resistance.

To judiciously apply the policy of stabilising the quota of food deliveries during the 1981-1985 five-year plan.

Agricultural tax, incorporated in the obligatory deliveries, must be collected for 1982, as well as the arrears of the past years; those regions hit by climatic changes may enjoy a reduction according to existing regulations.

Purchases made in the framework of obligatory deliveries must be governed by bilateral contracts (yearly or on a crop basis) following

fixed prices between the various State trading services and the co-operatives, production collectives and peasant households for which these sales constitute a duty but which enjoy advantageous payment facilities for fuel, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, etc., particularly bank credit or reductions in case of natural calamities.

The services of State bodies (tractors and hydraulic pumping stations, mechanical installations for threshing and husking rice) will be paid *in kind* according to fixed rates, except for the regions with a food deficit where they will be paid for *in cash*. The bodies supplying these services to the peasants must sell their unneeded paddy to the State at fixed prices if they are supplied with fuel and spare parts, or at agreed prices in other cases.

The State trading services must devote part of their stocks of materials and staple consumer products for the purchase of extra-food in these ways:

—at prices agreed by the two sides (for the consumer products not included in bilateral contracts or not directly interchangeable);

—by bartering, according to market prices or fixed prices;

—by long-term contracts, with payment facilities for the buyer, i.e. the State—delivery of materials or other goods to the seller two or three years after paddy delivery, etc.

5. *Disciplinary sanctions*: In cases of recidivism, to strictly apply the various administrative measures against speculators and those who deliberately dodge the fulfilment of obligations vis-à-vis the State;

—for the peasant households who shirk obligatory deliveries while retaining stocks of, surplus paddy for speculation, or speculators or

users stocking paddy: to carry out purchase with compensation at local purchase prices—leaving a part for their own needs;

—to bring to Court speculators causing serious market disturbances, surplus paddy can be partially or wholly confiscated.

—functionaries and Party members must set a good example by strictly implementing the State's food policy.

To manage the food market from the base, in the hamlets, communes, to the main exchange centers of each region so as to eliminate all private trading of paddy, rice, maize, wheat flour; those who process paddy into rice for sale must have a licence, pay taxes and undergo a strict control over the amounts of rice marketed and selling outlets.

6. To centralise the management of State food distribution into the hands of the Food Ministry which ensures the control of deliveries from provinces with a surplus to those with a deficit, import and export in conjunction with the Foreign Trade Ministry.

To accelerate the purchase, processing and transportation of subsidiary food crops so as to distribute them along with rice. To motivate the government offices, enterprises and army units to partially meet their needs in food—this quota being compensated by the State in money.

7. *Other pressing and long-term problems*:

—To efficiently organize the transportation of rice and paddy from the South (mainly from the Mekong delta provinces) to the North, as well as from Haiphong port to major areas of consumption.

—Special importance is attached to the preservation and protection (against robbery) of food at all levels.

NEW MEASURES FOR IMPROVING ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT

After the Sept. 1979 Resolution of the 6th Plenum of the Party Central Committee, many new measures for improving economic management have been put forward. Some significant measures such as the system of contractual incentives, encouragement of land reclamation, the policy of restoration of the soil, etc., have been applied in agriculture. In addition to these, a lot of policies in other areas have been promulgated, taking initiatives in production, trade and the right to financial self-control in enterprises (Decision 25/CP of the Government Council); different payment according to piecemeal work, and pay after gross output, etc., applied in various branches of industry (Decision 26/CP of the Government Council); and others concerning prices, purchase and exchange of goods with peasants, and encouragement of exports, etc., applied in the services of circulation and distribution; policies on signing and making economic contracts in scientific research and application of techniques, innovation and improvement of technical applications and on streamlining production, etc., applied in branches of science and education; and other policies relating to the development of local economies. Over fifty decisions, decrees and resolutions issued by the Party Central Committee and the Government on the improvement of economic management have been promulgated, covering almost all principal domains of economy and branches of production and trade.

The systematic promulgation of these decisions and new policies in a very short time speaks volumes for the great concern of our leaders for change in economic management and their determination to undo all the red-tape of the old system of management strangled by bureaucratic centralism and the system of administrative subsidies. Latent capacities for production development, which are still abundant even in our present situation, were underrated by the old system of management, so once the work of organization and management alters, they may become an important factor in pushing production ahead.

This series of new decisions and policies is comprehensive and even goes into the activities of individual enterprises. They reflect the following main requirements:

- Increase of productivity of each individual, making full use of the existing work force for the development of production.

- Bringing into full play the initiative of every establishment, every branch and every locality to enlarge production and trade.

- Strengthening the relations of co-operation and co-ordination linked to division and specialization of labour.

- Close correlation between the requirements for economic development and the technological and scientific revolution with the aim of speeding up production and trade, and increasing labour productivity and economic efficiency.

The swift development of production is now our most basic goal because it is a stepping-stone to overcoming all difficulties and imbalances in our economy. That goal is embodied in all the new economic policies on management. In the dialectic of relations of production, improving distribution turns out to be an important issue that has a decisive influence on production. Therefore, together with the improvement of the organization of production and economic management, the system of distribution of incomes must be ameliorated to ensure harmony between the three interests: that of society, of the collective and of the individual and to closely linking each individual's income to the result of their labour.

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Meeting the requirements of reality and objective economic laws, these measures for improving organization and management have proved successful and have brought about noticeable economic results.

First of all there is the development of production. During the past year agricultural production has increased by nearly one million tons in terms of grain, mainly due to the positive influence of the system of contractual incentives. If the crops had not been destroyed by insects and brown planthoppers in the 10th-lunar month harvest and had been supplied with an adequate amount of fertilizer, the output would have been much greater.

It is clear that the new policies have given a boost to latent capacities and prospects are promising. Industrial output is higher than the planned target and has increased by 23% over 1980. This result is all the more significant given that the raw materials and equipment supplied by the State to industry only amounted to half of the 1980 quantity. Apart from the branches of industry using local raw materials, the output of heavy industry and some sections of light industry which depend greatly upon imported raw materials and equipment is also on the rise. Many enterprises and localities have had remarkable results. Ho Chi Minh City, which is regarded as the area most sensitive to the new system of management, achieved the best results: agricultural production increased by 36.7% over 1980. One-third of the enterprises of the city have managed to stave off closure. In Hanoi, industrial output increased by 5.6% over 1980. In other areas the situation was similar. Never before in the first months of the year has production achieved such good results. In January alone industrial output increased by 10% — a sure sign of the effectiveness of the new policies.

In circulation and distribution we have also achieved good results and laid the foundations for a new system. It was regrettable that on this front there were still a lot of negative manifestations — the use of back-door connections to distribute goods improperly or stealing of goods which to some extent limited the would-be results and outshone what we attained. For a State, especially a socialist one, the most important thing is that it must control the different sources of goods and distribute them of its own accord and cope with every eventuality. Never have we succeeded in holding such a large quantity of goods as we did in 1981. Taking agricultural

produce for example, the home trade's buying capacity has increased by about 50 per cent. The system of State trade and trading co-operatives has been gradually enlarged. By holding goods within its reach the State has been able to distribute them according to its plans, thus stabilizing living conditions and price increases.

Though production of goods has not yet increased noticeably and is still a far cry from meeting requirements, nevertheless, as the appearance of new factors demonstrates, slackness and decrease in production have been stopped and a new tendency has begun to emerge — production has been gradually stabilized and begins to rise. These small beginnings show how essential the new policies were for our economy and everyday life.

The new policies on organization and management of the economy have obviously stepped up the development of productive forces. In agriculture, the latent capacities of our work force, soil, machinery and equipment, etc., have been used extensively. At many establishments and in many regions, from being a duty, production labour has become the right of everyone and each co-op member keeps what they have achieved over and above their quota, so both the main source of labour and the auxiliary one have been put to use in agriculture. We can thus carry out intensive farming and multiply crops. In industry we are also trying to make full use of the latent capacity of the work force and equipment by bringing into play the initiative of the factories themselves and to carry out a broad co-ordination with other enterprises or other localities. Outstanding examples are the Thanh Cong Textile Mill, the Viso Detergent Works in Ho Chi Minh City, the Pho Yen Ball-Bearing Factory in Bac Thai province, etc.,

Many a big enterprise such as the Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel

Complex, and many other cement works have undergone momentous changes. A factor of significance is the development of production in combination with the scientific-technological revolution and the application of scientific advances. Thanks to material incentives, educational, scientific and technological establishments have associated themselves with various economic branches, regarding the serving of the economy as their area of research. Many scientific research establishments have signed contracts with productive units. Thus scientific and technological establishments can affirm themselves as direct forces of production. Some typical units among them are: the Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City Polytechnics, the Can Tho Agricultural College, etc. Simultaneously, production establishments and the workers themselves, with economic incentives, have paid special attention to the application of advanced scientific and technological achievements. The State has just promulgated a decision on reward for inventions, and productive establishments have also promoted technical improvements and streamlining of production to increase labour efficiency, reduce the net price of products and enhance economic efficiency, and to find out sources of materials and raw materials in place of imported materials. Parallel to the stepping up of the scientific and technological revolution, the building of the material and technical bases as well as the making full use of existing establishments have been regulated to avoid thinning-out investments or their improper and ineffective use.

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The changes in the field of production are very clear, concrete and affirmative. On the plane of relations of production, the impact of the new policies towards the strengthening and development of

the socialist relations of production is obvious. Labour organization has been improved, assignments correctly delegated and the responsibility of individuals is more clear-cut. A wave of care for the quality of goods and for economic effectiveness has surged through industrial establishments together with an optimistic outlook and an enthusiasm that were rarely found before. On the question of contractual incentives in agriculture, Chairman of the Council of Ministers Pham Van Dong pointed out that the drive to carry out this policy has become "a revolutionary movement of the masses in agricultural production". All those new policies concerning the organization and management of the economy are an embodiment and institutionalization of the collective mastery of the masses in the economy. The relations between labour and productive equipment has been strengthened greatly. In addition to the completion of the work of production organization, an important factor, perhaps the most significant one, is the active and willing attitude of the working people.

The new policies have not only consolidated but also stepped up new relations of production under different forms. In agriculture, the policy of contractual incentives has pushed ahead the movement of collectivization in many provinces of the Mekong Delta. The distribution of incomes has encouraged the investment of labour, equipment and capital of individuals; so it has attracted middle peasants — the main aim of collectivization. But what is more remarkable is the co-operation in production and in trade that has been expanded under many forms: enterprise with enterprise, branch with branch,

branch with locality, locality with locality and home trade with foreign trade; and among different sectors of the economy: State-run, collective and individual, with the State-run economy playing the leading role. This is a step towards effective large-scale production.

On the plane of distribution the new policies have regulated the structure of distribution of incomes between the State, the collective and the individual. Nowadays, the combination of the three interests has become more harmonious. Individuals, once encouraged properly and their life ensured in terms of necessities, will meet fewer difficulties than before. Collective funds have also swollen and at the same time the State may increase its revenues. The workers are very glad and become much more confident due to their increased income, and attach themselves to the collective and show their sense of responsibility towards society and the State more clearly than ever. Owing to a lack of proper understanding, many people think that the new policies only encourage individual gain and not society as a whole. Nearly one year after these policies were put into effect, the State budget increased by 11.2% over 1980 (fluctuation of prices excluded). In some localities, thanks to their early and sensible implementation of these new policies, production and therefore income increased greatly. Ho Chi Minh City is a case in point. In agriculture, the supply of food and foodstuffs to the State has reached an unprecedented level, while peasants have actively cleared their debts to the State and the collectives.

So, the new policies on organization and management of the economy have greatly influenced

production and life. They are considered significant and should be carried on steadily in the years to come.

However, apart from their active aspects, which are considered fundamental, these policies should be amended, perfected and guided in a timely way during their implementation. In some of these policies, there are still a few loopholes: some regulations are not strict; others lack harmony and fail to ensure reasonable relations between various branches of the economy. Furthermore, the guidance of many branches is still riddled with shortcomings, even with the loosening of management in the guidance for implementing, supervising and controlling of these policies. Owing to these shortcomings, in some localities there are many manifestations of deviation, breaches of the principle of concentrated management and over-emphasis on individual interests, thus endangering the interests of the State. If the work of guidance had been done properly and strictly, these deviations would not have happened and negative influences would have been limited.

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In so short a time, the State has issued a series of new guidelines and policies to undo the former ties of the old system of management and direct our economy to a new system of management which clearly embodies the requirements of production and trade — a great accomplishment. And yet, they all are only the outlines of a new complete system of management which will one day take shape.

NGUYEN GIA NGO

COMBINATION OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY A NEW AND EFFECTIVE MODE OF PRODUCTION

Combining agriculture with forestry is a progressive mode of production using the full potential of land, climatic and biological conditions and the work force in a given area.

This is essential for Vietnam, not only because of urgent needs in food, forestry and special products but also because of the need to protect the environment, improve soil fertility, agricultural production and other related branches of production. On the economic plane, this combination has proved highly successful in all regions of the country. This explains why the combination of agriculture and forestry has been a major policy of the Vietnamese Party and State for many years now. In carrying out this policy, many localities, State farms and forestry centres as well as many agro-forestry co-operatives have yielded promising results and gained valuable experience.

Worthy of particular notice is the result of the mass movement for tree planting conducted over the last 20 years or more in the Red River delta, Central Vietnam and the plains of the Mekong River, in response to President Ho Chi Minh's appeal. Trees planted on field boundaries and along irrigation canals not only serve as windbreaks to protect the crops but also yield a sizable amount of timber and firewood for local needs. In the past two decades, approximately two billion trees have been planted in various parts of the country yielding 5.7 million cubic metres of timber, 8.5 million steres of firewood and many other forest products. Ly Nhan district in Ha Nam Ninh province (northern Vietnam) is an example of successful combination of agriculture and forestry. The per capita share of cultivated land in the district is only 750 square metres, but the population of Ly Nhan has made each hectare yield not only rice and other food crops but also 1,035 timber, fruit and shade trees which also serve as a shield against high winds. Meanwhile, the output of both food and industrial crops has continued to grow, and this is attributable in no small measure to the planting of trees. Ly Nhan yields more than 25,000 cubic metres of timber and 12,000 steres of firewood annually — almost as much as a mountainous district with rich forest lands. On the sandy coastal lands of central Vietnam the population in many areas has devised imaginative variations on this theme. Some very interesting conclusions have been drawn by Trieu Van commune (Trieu Hai district, Binh Thi Thien province) and Binh Duong commune (Thang Binh district, Quang Nam — Da Nang province). The tree belt against winds and sand set up by the population of Trieu Van

commune has helped transform the barren sandy soil into luxuriant rice and sweet potato fields. In five years (1975-1980) the crop area was expanded from 70 hectares to 319 hectares and Trieu Van has become self-sufficient in food as well as firewood. In the same way, Binh Duong, one of the localities most heavily devastated by war, has within five years of liberation covered its sandy soil with nine million fir trees, which helped turn the waste lands into rice paddies and other crop fields. The fir trees have not only helped ease the rigours of the local climate but also supply timber and firewood in abundance, accounting for three-quarters of the total income of the local co-operative.

In the areas invaded by sea water along the coast and in the alkaline and aluminous areas in the southern plains the planting of mangroves and cajuput trees has proved very efficient in the fixation of the soil, expanding the cultivable area, reducing the alkalinity, gradually restoring the fertility of the soil and creating new occupations such as stockbreeding, raising of aquatic products and apiculture.

On the barren hills of the vast uplands, the denuded botanical carpet has caused serious erosion for many centuries. The only way to make these hills green again is to combine agricultural exploitation with afforestation. Some encouraging results have been obtained in this respect by a number of afforestation sites and forestry co-operatives. The Huong Khe logging camp in Nghe Tinh province, the Dong Trieu State farm in Quang Ninh province, the Dao Xa co-operative in Vinh Phu province, the Can Kiem co-operative in Hanoi and many other farms and logging centres have

found suitable methods to restore the verdure of the hills by combining tree planting, food crop growing, especially beans, and stockbreeding.

In the highlands, for many years now forestry-industry State farms and forestry-agriculture co-operatives in provinces such as Hoang Lien Son, Ha Tuyen, Quang Ninh, Nghe Tinh, Quang Nam — Da Nang, Nghia Binh, Song Be, Gia Lai — Kontum... have grown food crops, medicinal herbs and fruit trees on every piece of available land. The usual method is to combine catch cropping with intercropping of food and industrial plants and timber trees until a complete layer of forest trees has been formed.

In this way, the afforestation centres have produced yearly from 20,000 to 30,000 tons of food, helping to alleviate State food subsidies. This has opened up new vistas for the afforestation co-operatives, which in the past depended entirely on the State for food supply. Scientific experimentation and research in combining forestry with agriculture has also yielded initial successes. Since 1978 the Ministry of Forestry, in its capacity as the coordinator of the program, has joined forces with other related agencies to broaden the application of this mode of production and has summed up the valuable experiences of different farms and co-operatives in various parts of the country. These undertakings aim to improve the scientific and technical aspects of the program and increase the efficiency of the new mode of production combining agriculture and forestry.

PHAN XUAN DOT

Minister of Forestry

*Director of the Program for
Combining Agriculture and Forestry*

Great changes have been wrought in the world in these last decades, but nowhere have there been such important upheavals as in Southeast Asia.

Formerly, no particular name was given to this region which was considered either as part of a larger region (Far-East, Eastern Asia) or as involving many smaller ones (Indochina, Indonesia...). Formerly, there was not a very clear idea

It is worth noticing that Vietnam and her people have played, in the past and at present, an active role in the formation and development of the civilization and history of this region, and that the nascent science of Vietnam has contributed to this knowledge.

The Vietnamese live with a backcloth of history. This national feature has induced Vietnamese social scientists to pay attention to

SOUTHEAST ASIA

PAST AND PRESENT

about this part of the world which was considered to be the habitat of heterogeneous races and embryonic States and the crossroads of insignificant civilizations.

Today, things have changed. Having weathered similar trials, the peoples of this region are more or less conscious of the links binding them together, in characteristics as well as in interests. In these last years, parallel with the great political and social events, science has shed light on the "forgotten past", on the origin of life and the evolution of civilizations in this region.

the study of the folklore and the millenary material and spiritual values of the country, to understand its people and society at present and to blaze the trail for the future. This has led social scientists to realize the necessity of studying Vietnam within the background of Southeast Asia, for, despite the ups and downs of history, we feel that the destiny of Vietnam in the past and at present cannot be seen apart from that of the neighbouring countries and peoples.

The viewpoint "to go back to the origin in order to make the best use of tradition" which once non-

plussed many a researcher is now regarded by Western scholars as the great lesson of Vietnam. The French ethnologist Georges Condominas, founder of the French Centre of Research on Southeast Asia, now its director, appraises this viewpoint of ours as an eye opener for Western scientific circles who have gradually broken away from the fundamental principle of "knowing thyself" of Greek philosophy, source of Western humanist thought. Dr Jayne Werner, who has invited us to give conferences on Vietnamese archaeology and history at a number of American universities, considers that Vietnamese social sciences have made a valuable discovery and a precious contribution to science by promoting the study of Vietnam and her close relations with Southeast Asia.

Archaeology is the first scientific branch to recognize this immutable geographical reality and the remote historico-cultural links of Vietnam in her relations with Southeast Asia which go back to the late paleolithic period. Science is able to demonstrate that many countries in Southeast Asia at that time had a somewhat similar standard and a fundamentally identical mode of life. The late paleolithic implements found at Kota-Tampa (Malaysia) for instance are as like those of Mount Do in Vietnam as two peas.

At a more recent prehistoric stage, when Southeast Asia was one of the rare regions in the world, probably the first (some ten thousand years ago), in which it was discovered that people had shifted from gathering food and hunting to tilling, this region already clearly appeared as a unified entity. Though considered to be the sole culture with different variants or different cultures having the same global style, the Hoa Binh culture — most of the vestiges of

which known up to now being found in Vietnam — is the monolithic culture common to the region, having as its technical characteristic the utilization of pebbles from streams as raw material for the manufacture of tools. With these tools, other items, such as arms, articles in bamboo, rattan and wood, were made. All these manifestations of a system and level of knowledge gradually led to farming and production, thus "revolutionizing" the life in this region.

In the Metal Age, about four thousand years ago, bronze cultures blossomed all over the region. Under two principal aspects known so far — Dong Son and Sa Huynh — the close relations between the countries and peoples in this region developed at an early stage of history. Here there were three Dong Son cultural centres: besides the Dong Son epicentre extending from the Red River delta to the valleys of the Ma and Lam rivers, there existed two other centres in Yunnan and Guangxi. The discovery of the Dong Son bronze drum, a vestige representing this culture before the expansion of the Han to the south and the development of the influence of India to the Eastern islands, is a manifestation of great significance as it speaks volumes for the close relations existing between the Southeast Asian peoples, not only in the commercial but particularly in the cultural and sentimental fields.

The blooming of the Sa Huynh culture, contemporary, and at a later stage with zoomorphic earrings and also discovered in the areas of Dong Son culture or under the Dong Son form (in the north and south of Vietnam), and in the Calanay culture (Philippines) with the funeral urns and painted pottery also found in the Philippines and Thailand, is another convincing proof of the

long-standing close relations existing among the peoples of this region.

Together with archaeology, other social sciences such as ethnology, comparative linguistics, anthropology, folklore, science of beliefs... have worked together to determine the nature of Southeast Asia in the past and at present. From various angles, science has reassessed the level and significance of Southeast Asian civilization.

Gone are the days when the colonialist scholars rang the changes on the allegations of the Celestial Court mandarins and Brahmanic priests who set light store by the "naked barbarians" of ancient Southeast Asia. Gone is the time when it was suggested that the Southeast Asia of pre-Han and pre-Indian days, though coming out of its savage state, used bronze — if ever it knew it — only in a rudimentary manner to make arrowheads. Today no researcher, be he Vietnamese or foreign, dares to hold in contempt Southeast Asian civilization at the time of the Hung kings, although the themes of the American scholar W. Solheim II, on the extraordinary superiority of the inventions made in this region are not so easily admitted (e.g. giving a remoter date to the practice of rice cultivation and metallurgy in Southeast Asia; presuming the expansion of the zone of influence of Southeast Asia as far as Madagascar and the Mediterranean; discarding the idea of a unilateral influence of the Northern culture on Southeast Asia and upholding the viewpoint of influence of the meso- and neo-lithic culture of Southeast Asia on the Chinese neolithic culture and of the introduction of metallurgy from Southeast Asia to Western countries...)

Researchers continue to discuss these bold working theses but at present are doing their utmost to complete the rudimentary picture already sketched by the French scholar Coedes in the forties on the "Southeast Asian civilization" which is in essence the civilization of Southeast Asia in protohistoric times: farming of irrigated rice-fields, use of oxen and buffaloes as draught force, respect of women, animist beliefs and cult of heaven, dualism in thought... Strengthening archaeology, ethnology has emphasized that the agricultural civilization of Southeast Asia was in fact a "vegetal civilization" contributing to the development of life at that time and making it more lively. These people who knew so early how to practise horticulture, to grow gourds, taro and wet rice, to domesticate animals, to build houses on stilts with frameworks adapted to the climatic conditions of the region, to build big junks as a first step to entering the orbit of a naval civilization—these men wore loin-cloths and the women, skirts wrapped in the form of a sarong, lacquered their teeth, chewed betel, tattooed their bodies, believed in the myth of the Deluge and of the birth of Man from a calabash, worshipped the "soul of rice", used such musical instruments as bronze drums, gongs and ringing bells. It is also possible to demonstrate the "cultural" creativeness of the swing-plough agriculture in the ancient societies of Southeast Asia, and chiefly in the Viet society, leading little by little to the formation of classes and states with a national consciousness.

It is thanks to the efforts of many disciplines and of scientists from many countries, including Vietnam, that we can confirm the high level, the lively style and original character of the mode of life in Southeast Asia, which is particular compared

with other regions and common to the whole region, at least to each part of the region. Our contribution is especially noticeable in the identification of linguistic systems and anthropological types. We have focused the attention of researchers on the fact that the languages spoken on Vietnamese territory in the past and at present belong in the main to three groups with more or less blending: the Mon-Khmer (or Austro-Asian) group, the Thai group and the Malayo-Polynesian group (also called Austronesian group). In the whole of Southeast Asia, these three linguistic groups are also the main ones. In the anthropological fields, this is the habitat of two essential human types: Indonesian and Southasian. These words, not properly chosen, reflect however the real and conspicuously recognizable presence of the types of Man who can also be called Southern Mongols as they are the types intermediary between the Austroloid or Black in the Pacific on the one side and Mongoloid or Yellow on the other.

A striking achievement of Vietnamese historical science of recent times is to have grasped the paramount significance of the Dong Son culture — apex of the convergence of the ancient cultures of Southeast Asia — for the history of Vietnam.

During the process of their development spreading over many millennia, the Southeast Asian cultures have had connections with other cultures, chiefly the Chinese and Indian. In these relations, they had both "given" and "received" a lot. In fact, the Chinese culture and Indian culture have undergone a notable influence from Southeast Asian cultures, and vice-versa. In these cultural exchanges, the Southeast Asian cultures have received more or less influence from China or India

according to their proximity with these two countries: the influence of Indian culture predominates in the Southern countries, and Chinese culture in the Northern countries, including Vietnam. This state of things has fooled many a researcher. A shallow observation has led them to affirm that there are two cultures in Southeast Asia, one of which was swayed by Indian culture and the other by Chinese culture. Thanks to more serious studies, other authors who go back to the source have concluded that the cultures of Southeast Asian countries have a remote common origin, that in history, these countries possessed a common culture, that of Southeast Asia.

The peoples of each region, of each country of Southeast Asia, have felt the double influence exerted by these two big countries and civilizations — China and India — and they had to face the great-Han expansionist and hegemonistic policy of the exploiting classes ruling in China. In the last centuries, they have had to cope with new trials in order to survive: the invasion of Western capitalism. For many years running, the imperialists and colonialists have disputed with one another every inch of land in Southeast Asia and tried to turn "coloured peoples" in that region as well as in the world into lower beings to exploit them. It is not by pure accident that everywhere in Southeast Asia, the aggressors have met with a stiff resistance. We are proud to remark that our Party and people have perseveringly pursued a policy of unity and called for solidarity among our brothers and sisters in Southeast Asia.

Prof. PHAM HUY THONG

VIETNAM COURIER

NGUYEN DINH CHIEU

POET OF A CHOICE PERIOD (1822-1888)

The 160th anniversary of the birth of the Vietnamese poet Nguyen Dinh Chieu will be celebrated in July in the poet's native province of Ben Tre. On this occasion the Vietnam Commission for Social Sciences and the Institute of Literature have organized a number of seminars on the life and work of the poet. Several studies on textual criticism, philology and on his work have already been published.

Following is a short study on the poet.

A hundred and sixty years have elapsed since the birth of Nguyen Dinh Chieu, a great Vietnamese poet of the late nineteenth century. His life and work served as a lesson for Vietnamese patriots, leaving their imprint on the nation's long struggle for independence and freedom and hence he has commanded the love and respect of the whole country.

Born of a poor scholar family in Gia Dinh (now part of Ho Chi Minh City), in early childhood Nguyen Dinh Chieu had to leave his native village to live with a friend of his father's in Hue. Having obtained the baccalaureat degree at the age of 21, he was preparing to take further examinations when news of his mother's death reached him. As the Confucian moral code did not permit a bereaved man to take examinations, he returned home for mourning. On the way back, he lost the use of his eyes. However, Nguyen Dinh Chieu never lost hope for the future. He opened a school, studied medicine with his students' help, for the service of the people, and drew consolation from writing poetry.

Nguyen Dinh Chieu's masterpiece is *Luc Van Tien*, a long story written in verse. The hero in the story suffers the same plight as he: the death of his mother, blindness, repudiation by his betrothed..., but in the end, justice triumphs and the hero's sight is restored through holy remedy. *Luc Van Tien* highlights moral virtues and mercilessly condemns fraud and infidelity. Most of the positive characters in it are men of lower standing in society such as the inn-keeper, the woodsman, the fisherman, the impoverished young men of the country. This is evidence of Nguyen Dinh Chieu's outlook on society,

which differs from that of his contemporaries. We find no grandiose phraseology in *Luc Van Tien*, but the plain, candid language of the peasants who were the pioneers in clearing the land of the southern delta. This is the reason why, immediately after it appeared, Nguyen Dinh Chieu's work became widely known. *Luc Van Tien* became a familiar story-poem to ordinary people, who cited it at market places and at ferry landings, adapted it to folk music and produced it for the stage... It was, possibly, the most influential literary work in South Vietnam from the late 19th century to the early 20th century.

Meanwhile, the French colonialists started their invasion of Vietnam, which lasted for 27 years (1858-1884). The enfeebled Nguyen imperial court, rejecting every motion for reform presented by the wise scholars and the people's aspiration for resistance, went from one concession to another and eventually had to sign a pact of surrender. This produced a wave of shock in scholarly circles and for Nguyen Dinh Chieu himself. They were confronted with two alternatives: to surrender meekly to the enemy in obeying the King's order as sense of loyalty dictated or to contradict him by joining the resistance of the masses. This was not simply a momentary test of action, but an overall reassessment of the Confucian thought which Nguyen Dinh Chieu had so far cherished. It was against this historical background that another work of his, *Duong Tu - Ha Mau*, was written and published.

This story-poem speaks of two men, Duong Tu, a Buddhist, and Ha Mau, a Christian. Each follows his own way in seeking the truth of religion. After contacting famous scholars and disciples of other

religions, and visiting hell and paradise, both realize that true religion lies in one's heart and men should strive to reach perfection through their own deeds in the interests of society. Here, Nguyen Dinh Chieu did not censure the contents of various creeds, but aimed at the negative and superstitious aspects of their believers' behaviour. Concerning Confucianism, he criticized the self-proclaimed Confucian philosophers who, by their deeds, co-operated with the enemy. Nguyen Dinh Chieu's tragedy is that he could not rid himself of Confucian mentality; nevertheless, he was bound to make an overall reassessment of the society's traditional values on the basis of patriotic points of view. That is why, *Duong Tu-Ha Mau*, as a literary work, exerted a healthy influence helping to mobilize the people to renounce a negative way of life and to join in the cause of national salvation.

While some doubt lingered on in Nguyen Dinh Chieu's mind, he was absolutely decided in actual deeds. As soon as the French assaulted Gia Dinh citadel in 1859, he determined to use his pen to contribute to the common struggle. Unable to take up arms to fight the enemy because of his blindness, he joined the insurgent leaders in discussing state affairs. Truong Dinh, commander of the first big resistance war of the people in eastern Nam Bo, considered him his adviser. And Nguyen Dinh Chieu openly supported Truong Dinh's defiance of the imperial court's order to lay down arms.

Through the resistance war, Nguyen Dinh Chieu became closer to the common people. During this period, he wrote several poems lamenting the sufferings caused by the war and lauding examples of patriotism. One of his most familiar ways of expression is the memorial speech. In these speeches, he conveyed his love and respect to anonymous peasant soldiers who had willingly laid down their lives for the country.

*Leading a wretched life
Facing eternal hardship
Unfamiliar with the art of war and the use of
a pen
Leaving the ricefields and the buffaloes, men
went away from their villages
.....
Readily, they offered their great service
Willingly, they spared no efforts to help.*

(Memorial speech in honour of
Can Giuoc martyrs)

By armed invasion and pacification, the French colonialists turned Nam Bo into their first colony in Vietnam. Living in the French occupied zone, Nguyen Dinh Chieu attentively followed the developments of the resistance war which went on in northern and central Vietnam. However, the resistance efforts led by the patriotic scholars ended, one after another, in failure. Faced with a new situation in which an armed invasion by a capitalist power was to be confronted, the circle of learned men proved no longer capable of assuming their historic mission. By valour, they could save their individual honour but could not retain the social status of the whole stratum. Realizing this, Nguyen Dinh Chieu was resigned to preserving his unblemished name by an attitude of non-co-operation towards the colonial administration. Aware of his prestige among the local people, the French tried to bribe him, but without success. When Ponchon, the French provincial chief of Ben Tre, came to promise the return of his land, which had been confiscated, he flatly rejected him saying: "When the whole country is lost, how can a piece of private land remain?"

To express himself, Nguyen Dinh Chieu wrote another story-poem, *Ngu Tieu Van Dap* (Dialogue between the Fisherman and the Woodsman), a comment on the time. The main character in the story destroys his own eyes to avoid seeing the terrible scenes around him:

*To preserve one's traditional values, though
blind
Is much better than to spurn one's ancestors,
with an intact sight.
To protect one's honour from being smeared,
though blind
Is much better than to accept humiliation, with
an intact sight.*

(The Fisherman-Woodsman Dialogue)

We can say that Nguyen Dinh Chieu ushered in a period of patriotic literature in Vietnam, which helped initiate a strong anti-French movement from the South to the North. Nguyen Dinh Chieu's literary work is great for its ability to express the feelings of the masses; and people recite his poems as a way of showing their love and respect for a man whose life reflects the indomitable spirit of the Vietnamese people.

THE DUC

VIETNAM COURIER

The two-storeyed building with whitewashed walls, which used to be a Catholic seminary was, not long ago, handed over to the city as a general school. Hue is said to be an educational centre where the earliest university of Central Vietnam was founded. But, in fact, the material conditions of schools in Hue are still very limited. The thirty thousand general school students of 1975 have now doubled, and a shortage of school buildings was inevitable. Therefore, the city educational workers are grateful for the Church's offer and wish to use the building in the young people's best interests.

Just at that time, the Ministry of Education had assigned the city the task of building an educational centre for general technology. This is to be one of the twenty centres equipped by UNICEF in its aid program and is for the students' professional orientation in accordance with the present educational reform. The solid rows of houses of the former seminary are suitable for a new school-workshop. More than twenty teachers have been sent here, some of whom have worked in school-equipment manufacturing shops and are familiar with engineering techniques.

Late in 1980, the first shipments of equipment arrived from Haiphong, Da Nang and Ho Chi Minh City ports. The teachers themselves had to go and collect them, see to their transportation and assemble the equipment. Few people know that the newly-painted lathes, drilling and sawing machines installed here are the result

THE HUE EDUCATIONAL CENTRE OF GENERAL TECHNOLOGY

EDITOR'S NOTE: In Vietnam Courier No. 2 — 1982, we mentioned the professional orientation in general schools within the framework of the educational reform in Vietnam. Here is an illustration of this.

of the hard work of the teachers who were, until only yesterday, teaching mathematics, physics or chemistry in a general school. Now these teachers handle the machines and, at the same time, give technical lessons to the students. What's more, despite the complicated equipment received from different sources, they have successfully assembled the lot. And they saved a lot of money by doing the job themselves.

Nguyen Thanh Tung, the teacher in charge of the metalwork class, is showing eighth-form pupils how to make trowels. The tools in this workshop are vices, files, pincers... which cannot be easily damaged but may be mislaid often. So beside giving technical instructions, the teacher also reminds the pupils to take good care of the tools. Tung has had three years' teacher training and came here from an elementary school.

Before that he graduated from a technical secondary school and is no novice to metalwork. Combining the skills of a worker and teacher, Tung holds his classes in a lively atmosphere.

The head of the engineering class is a teacher of physics who comes from a family of car mechanics. As a boy, he often helped his father take apart and re-assemble car and motorcycle engines. Before, he had to explain to the students the theory of engine operation with drawings, but now he can show them how to repair real engines.

Standing in front of the rows of sewing machines and giving instructions to girl pupils on the art of tailoring, Vu Van Tue looks the model of a professional tailor with the tape measure hanging around his neck, his body bent, carefully handling the scissors on

the cloth... On inquiry, we learn that he was the owner of a tailor shop in 1949 but, later, gave up his job for a teaching post which he kept for over fifteen years. Now, he has returned to his old job imparting his rich experience to the young girls.

The teacher of embroidery is the young Khanh Trang, who comes from a royal family with the long family name of Huyen Ton Nu added to her own. She did a course in domestic sciences and then stayed home to do the sewing and cooking. After the liberation of Hue, Khanh Trang got a teaching post and was recently assigned here.

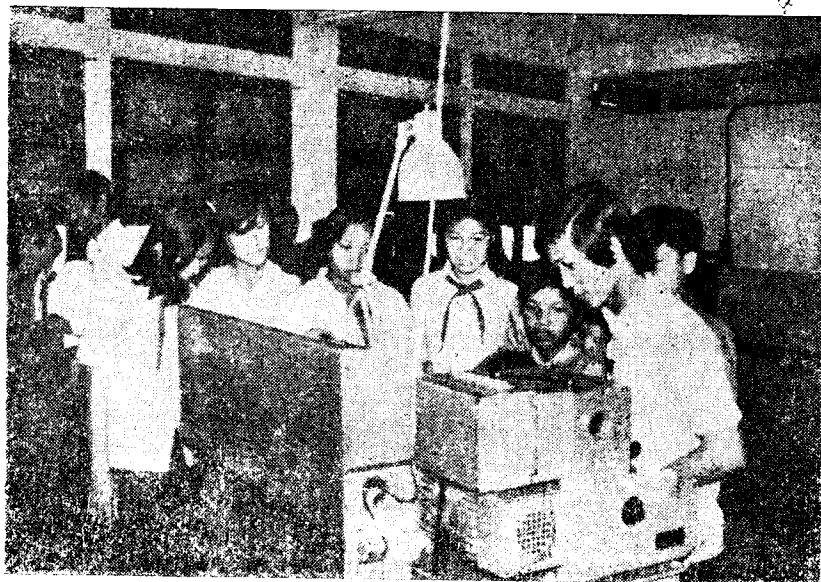
To have found a contingent of teachers who have both skill and zeal is a big success for the centre builders. Not satisfied with what they had at the beginning in the way of aids, the teachers them-

selves made more equipment to broaden the students' scope for practice. Beside the smaller lathes used for study, the centre has acquired a bigger one to turn out sizable products. For the study of diesel motors, the centre bought a damaged tractor at a cost of twelve thousand dong. Later, thanks to the students' study and practice, the tractor was repaired and is being used for transportation. With the first school-year 1981-1982, the centre has started 6 metalwork classes, 6 fitting classes, 2 electronics classes, 1 lathing class, 1 engineering class, 6 embroidery classes and 11 tailoring classes. In the centre, students will acquaint themselves with production work to consolidate their technical knowledge and to ascertain their future professional orientation. Every week, over one thousand pupils from eight general schools

will come here for technical practice and it is planned to double their number soon.

The products turned out by teachers and students here are immediately used for study in general schools. The carpentry team is teaching students to make wooden toys and puzzle sets for kindergartens and has signed contracts to supply furniture to some schools. A number of electrical instruments for experimentation in some schools are made here. Besides, the centre has received orders for some exacting work, e.g. the lathing team is making bicycle free-wheels for the city engineering plant, the tailoring and embroidery teams have delivered 3,500 products to the foreign trade service within six months. The cash obtained is used to buy more equipment for the centre. The production work enhances the students' sense of economy. They collect all odds and ends, finding use for every length of copper wire, bit of sheet iron and every damaged electric bulb. The wooden crates which contained the equipment delivered to the centre have been turned into children's toys.

Asked about the achievements of the Hue Educational Centre of General Technology, Le Phuong Thuy, head of the bureau of education, said: "It's perhaps because of the teachers' attachment to their native town. Hue has a tradition of study as well as a tradition of patriotic struggle among the students. Despite the present difficulties, such traditions are well preserved."



Learning to use a lathe.

Photo : LE GIA MINH

DAO HUNG

TRAINING OF PLAYERS OF TRADITIONAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN VIETNAM

The playing of Vietnamese traditional instruments has long been taught by the empirical method. Each player has his own "virtuosities" which the students must do their best to learn and to master. The length of study depends on the devotion of the master and the intelligence of the students. There are many methods of training which differ according to each kind of instrument and each region.

In 1956, the Vietnam School of Music was set up in Hanoi, together with the Traditional Musical Instrument Department. Four skilled old players who were thoroughly conversant with traditional music were invited to give lectures at the school. After four years of study, the first three graduates were retained at the school for teaching. Since then, the young teachers and their old masters have buckled down to preparing a unified curriculum for secondary education.



Nhị



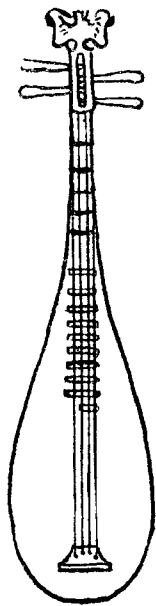
Đàn nguyệt

First, musical transcription is taught. In this respect, the traditional method used is not unified: the notes can be read in different ways according to local habits.

Although the European system of transcription fails to express accurately the airs of Vietnamese traditional music, it is the most widespread. Pending a better method, the teachers continue to use the European system in their course.

Lessons are prepared from ancient pieces of music, folk music and new pieces written for traditional instruments. The curriculum is arranged in the following order: folk music, *Cheo* music (from the North), *Hue* music (Central Viet-

1. On November 18, 1981, the Institute of Music organized the second conference on the transcription of traditional music in Hanoi. The examination of papers presented at the conference is underway.



Đàn tỳ bà



Sáo

nam), *Cải lương* music (reformed music of the South). The teachers also try to improve the volume and timbre of the musical instruments and to raise the level of performance in instrumentation and orchestration. They write new pieces of music to serve as lessons. The use of traditional instruments in concert and in accompaniment is a novelty in musical performance. Their work has received the assistance of many composers and instrumentalists of artistic ensembles and the Institute of Music.

The way of presenting these musical instruments has completely changed. Formerly, they were played for audiences in the courtyard of the communal house or at market places. Accompanying a

traditional opera, they were hidden offstage. At Court, they were played to entertain a limited number of listeners—the King and his mandarins. Now played on the stage, they are subject to a careful study: from the position of the players to the structural features and acoustic resonance of each instrument to determine its place in the orchestra. This has been experimented with at the National Music Hall.

In Vietnam, there are many kinds of musical instruments, but at present, the playing of seven kinds is taught:

Sáo: horizontal flute, so called because the artiste who plays it holds it in an horizontal position. It is made of a bamboo pipe, one end of which is hermetically closed; a hole is made near this end for the air to enter. At the other end there are six holes bored in straight line with the first one to produce musical notes.



Đàn tranh

Nhị: a stringed instrument composed of a cylindrical sound-box with snake or iguana skin stretched over one side, it has a long handle with two silk strings sounded by means of a bow made of horse-hair placed between these strings.

Đàn Nguyệt: a stringed instrument having a round sounding-board (hence its name *nguyệt*: the moon) and a long handle divided by frets to give musical sounds of various pitches.

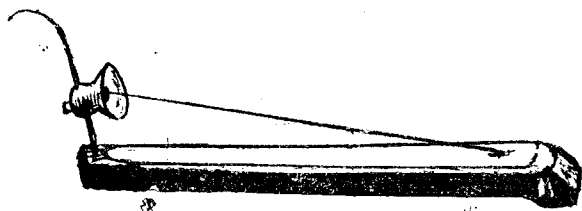
Đàn tỳ bà: similar to *nguyệt* but its sounding-board and handle have the shape of a mantis.

Đàn tranh: a 16-string zither played with plectrums.

Đàn bầu: a zither specific to the Vietnamese having one metallic string plucked with a plectrum and producing resonant sounds by manipulating a flexible stem to which the string is fastened.

Đàn tam thập lục: a 36-string dulcimer struck with two hammers.

These musical instruments used all over the country can perform folk music of all regions. After many improvements, the execution technique of these instruments has been raised and they can be used not only in concert and accompaniment but also in the solo performance of traditional and new music. The musical pieces used for teaching are tested for a long time before they are included in the regular repertoire.



Đàn bầu

Beside their main instrument, each student has to learn to play two or three other traditional instruments and the piano to raise their level of orchestration.

Formerly, traditional musical instruments were used to accompany vocalists. An instrumentalist who studies accompaniment must also learn to sing, for to sing in tune is to grasp the melody of a song and this helps the student improve his technique in performance.

A big problem for the teachers is to select the lessons to be taught in the course. The characteristic of Vietnamese traditional music is its improvisation by the executant. Formerly, the artiste played the same tune in a different way, and the same artiste executed the same piece of music differently at each performance. So how to select model pieces? The Traditional Musical Instrument Department has organized many seminars to discuss the pieces of music collected and to study new pieces written for

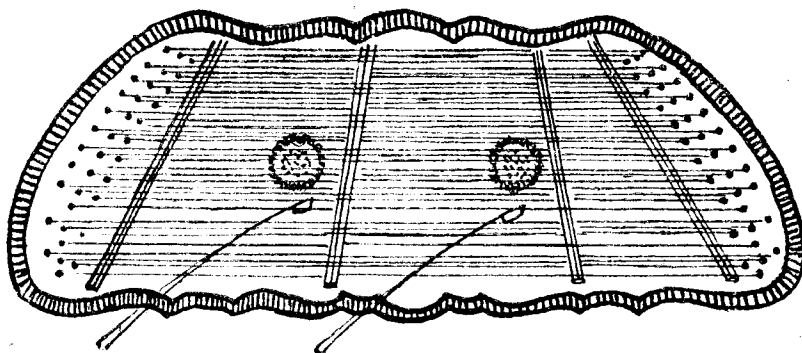
traditional instruments. With the assistance of musicians all over the country, it has formulated a comprehensive curriculum.

In an endeavour to raise this curriculum to the level of higher

ized in Vietnam, attended by four students.

In October 1981 the Vietnam School of Music became the Hanoi Conservatory just when the first graduation examination for the execution of traditional musical instruments was held.

Twenty-five years have elapsed since its beginning and the School of Music has trained many batches of instrumentalists. The Vietnamese artistes have performed on the stage of many countries. In future, other musical instruments, parti-



Đàn tam thập lục

education, early in 1977, the Vietnam School of Music sent a delegation to the Tashkent Institute of Music to investigate the training of instrumentalists of traditional music in Central Asia and at the end of the same year, the first higher education course was organ-

cularly those of the ethnic minorities, will be studied to complete the teaching programme.

XUAN KHAI

*Director, Department of
Traditional Musical Instruments,
Hanoi Conservatory*

Thach Khoi is an average commune in Tu Loc district, Hai Hung province, a main rice-growing area of the Red River Delta. This fertile region, however, is usually submerged in the rainy season. Due to poor sanitary conditions, especially in the treatment of human waste, the environment is heavily polluted and common diseases, in particular trachoma and diarrhoea, are very widespread.

For many years now the local epidemiological and sanitary service has conducted a sustained campaign to improve the environment and curb diseases in order to contribute to the development of production and the building of a new countryside. Since 1975 the campaign has been phased with a different emphasis in each period. 1975: birth control; 1976: planting of and use of medicinal herbs; 1977: building of the three main sanitation works (double septic tanks, curbed wells and bathrooms). Since 1978 the campaign has been centered on management of the health of the commune population comprising 4,800 persons. This may be considered a landmark in the nation-wide health care program.

The direction of this rather complex undertaking is entrusted to the health station with a personnel of six: three physicians, two nurses and a midwife. The station has a consulting room for both western and oriental medicine, a section for the preparation of traditional drugs, and a sick bay with 8 beds and four obstetric beds. All cases that need concentrated medical attention are brought to the station. The medical

personnel also includes eight nurses operating in eight different production brigades of the local agricultural co-operative and paid according to the workpoint system of the co-ops. These nurses are representatives of the medical station in the co-op and are in their turn assisted by members of the Red Cross which helps the medical network to reach every family.

In the surgery of Dam Hong Cam, the physician responsible for the health station, we were shown a large map covering a whole wall. The map features six hamlets with 867 families marked with conventional signs showing which families have built the three sanitation facilities, which have grown medicinal herbs and which have sufferers of communicable diseases.

Dam Hong Cam said: "We can't remember or locate all the families. So, we mark each family on the map with a small numbered square corresponding to a family health record. These records are kept in those two big cupboards in front of us. They were compiled with the assistance of the district medical authorities three years ago. During the general medical check-up the district medical service sent four medical teams, each composed of from eight to ten specialized doctors and assistants, to all communes. Each commune took from 7 to 10 days to complete registering. The result of the examinations were entered into the medical files of each family. The health station of each commune sorted out these files and classified them in the most convenient way.

HEALTH IN A RED R COMM

The sick are classified according to their ailments and those returning from the provincial or district hospitals hand their medical records to the health station so that it can provide further help if necessary.

We asked at random to see medical file number 229. It was produced in no time. It belongs to the family of a certain Nguyen Thanh Chung.

It is kept in an envelope with the number of family members and their names. A quick glance gave us the following information: Nguyen Thanh Chung is a married man with five children. The eldest daughter has just married and has gone to live with her husband's family. The other four are all at school. Each member has a separate card with entries about such things as dates of the

CARE VER DELTA UNE

medical check-ups, vaccinations and prognoses. The files of the children are marked "Health Records of Students". Apart from the usual entries they have a chart on the health condition of the students at the end of a school-year. Medical check-ups are conducted every two years for the population and once a year for students.

Our host also showed us folders where the sick are classed according to their ailments. Whenever necessary, intervention in specialized fields such as surgery or ophthalmology is recommended. There are also files about war invalids and a list of the patients already cured.

The medico-sanitary network has been extended to every production brigade which groups an

average of ten families, where its operation relies on the grassroots unit as well as the members of the Red Cross. All the nurses at the production brigades had been farmers themselves before being sent for nine or twelve months of medical training at the district medical service. Their task consists in detecting maladies and giving first aid. Each family usually has at least one member in the Red Cross who is in most cases a member of the Communist Youth Union and is eager to pioneer the establishment of a new, healthy way of life in the countryside.

We called at the home of Ms Le Thi Don, the nurse of Production Brigade 9 in Tran Noi hamlet. She has a rather large house noted for its cleanliness and order. Her daily work-schedule includes visits to old and new patients, dispensing medicine, and in the late afternoon she reports on the health situation in her brigade to the health station and receives the work program for the following day. The brigade in which she works has 52 families with a total of 350 persons. These families already have 51 double septic tanks, 35 wells and 20 bathrooms. Every family has set aside a small plot of land near the house to grow medicinal herbs for common diseases such as colds, diarrhoea and influenza. At the gate of every house the number of the medical file is tagged. Each family has a plastic "sick-card" with its number and name. When a person falls sick a relative takes the "sick card" to the medical room of the brigade. In case Ms Doa is not there they have only to drop the card into a letter-box.

This guides Ms Doa to the right address.

As well as attending to the sick and making medical examinations the nurse also campaigns for the observance of hygiene rules and family planning and for the planting and use of medicinal herbs. She is paid by the co-op as a first-class co-op member. In the case of Ms Doa, she gets 250 work-points in a year, or the equivalent of 250 kilograms of paddy.

The medical service of Thach Khoi is now able to cope with common diseases such as flu and diarrhoea. Many other communes in Tu Loc district have done almost as well. Thanks to this, in the past few years, the district hospital has seen a marked reduction of patients. The system of medical exams and drug administering at home has resulted in a sharp drop of the sick leave rate and cut the waste of time involved in visits to the district hospital or in the patients' wait at the consulting room. The timely detection of diseases and their treatment right in the communes has also been very helpful for the prevention and treatment of diseases on the district scale.

The present guidelines for health care in Vietnam lay emphasis on prevention of diseases and combining modern with traditional medicine for the sake of the people's health and work. These guidelines have proved their effectiveness at the commune level — Thach Khoi can be regarded as a typical case since it is an average commune in the Red River Delta.

VU TRONG TRI

THE NHA HO EXPERIMENTAL COTTON FARM

The southern part of Central Vietnam is very suitable for cotton growing. According to old data, at the beginning of this century, Vietnam exported annually from 20,000 to 30,000 tons of cotton fibre. In the years 1945-46, Phu Yen province (now merged with Khanh Hoa into Phu Khanh province) alone produced 2,250 tons. During the first war of resistance, in line with the policy of making each locality depend on its own resources, Phu Yen increased its cotton output to 8,500 tons in 1952, supplying the bulk of cotton for the former Fifth Interzone. Annual textile production in the province rose to 35 million metres, enough to meet the needs of the local population and army. The "sita" — a coarse material made in Phu Yen — was very popular in the resistance zone. However, from 1955 to 1975 under the impact of the textile glut from the United States, Japan and other countries, the cotton area was sharply reduced and the traditional textile industry fell rapidly into decline.

In order to restore and develop cotton growing in the southern Central Vietnam provinces, in April 1976 the Ministry of Agriculture took over the Ninh Thuan Agro-Technical Centre, now renamed Nha Ho Cotton-growing Technical Centre. This centre covers nearly 500 hectares lying in

the catchment basin of Kanh Dinh river in the northern part of Thuan Hai province. It is characterised by very dry climate, plenty of sunlight and little rain. There are only about 80-90 rainy days in a year, with a very high degree of vaporisation and the lowest degree of humidity in the country, averaging 75% and dropping to 13% in the dry season.

The Nha Ho Cotton-growing Technical Centre has the task of conducting basic surveys and research as well as experimentation on the growing of cotton and a number of rotation crops. Botanists at the centre have selected a number of cotton varieties and determined the areas best suited to cotton. They also preserve and supply cotton seeds to the surrounding seed farms.

In collaboration with the Industrial Plants Institute, the Vietnam Institute of Sciences, the Plant Protection Institute, the Pedology and Agronomy Institute and some international institutions, the centre, in the period from 1978 to 1982, conducted a series of research projects on hybridisation of cotton to meet the demands of the main cotton-growing areas of the country. It has also studied the ecology and entomology of cotton,

weeds in the region, the nutrition and physiological regimes of the cotton plant, the effect of different kinds of fertilizer, the water need, methods of intensive cultivation, the use of appropriate machines, and systems of crop rotation, etc. These studies have had encouraging results. The centre has selected 137 species of cotton divided into three groups: early, medium and late ripening. The six most promising varieties have been put under experimental growth and have met the required economic and technical norms. The THI species gives the highest yield, averaging three tons per hectare of experimental planting, with the rate of ginned cotton reaching 42% and the staple measuring 31.7 millimetres. It is also more durable and finer than the other species and is well adapted to the needs of the textile industry. THI is the best cotton variety in Vietnam at present. It is grown on thousands of hectares in Thuan Hai, Phu Khanh and Gia lai — Kontum. These areas can be grown with cotton all the year round provided there is enough water and a better fight against insects.

The biggest threat to the cotton plant is insects which in the past caused the loss of up to 50-60% of cotton output. There are many species, mostly multi-voltine, and

different kinds of insects often overlap in the same period, causing big problems for an organized fight. It often happens that many kinds of insects thrive on the same cotton field. In the past, emphasis was laid on chemical insecticides but soon this method revealed its drawbacks since the insects quickly became resistant to the chemicals. There is also the danger of the pesticide killing useful insects, such as the trichogramma (red-eye bee). At present, our cotton growers are combining various methods to destroy harmful insects. This consists in spraying insecticide when there is an epidemic while at other times biological methods are applied. The Nha Ho centre is working on various subjects in this respect: the varieties of insects affecting cotton, the effects of various kinds of chemical insecticides, the raising of trichogramma and the use of bacteriological methods to destroy insects.

The centre is also studying a number of plants that can be rotated with cotton. Efforts are being centered on the possibility of rotating a cotton crop with a crop of rice, maize or sorghum. Apart from cotton, the centre is also growing rice, maize, sugar cane, grapes, oranges as well as raising pigs and cattle.

In spite of numerous difficulties: shortages of specialized labour, poor material and technical conditions, the Nha Ho cotton-growing centre has taken encouraging steps toward becoming a large-scale cotton-growing area of the country. Already the fields have been reshaped, more irrigation and drainage canals have been dug and the technical equipment and methods are being improved year by year.

NHAT NINH

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

health reasons after the liberation of South Vietnam.

"I became a pensioner reluctantly," he confided, "and a worry preyed upon my mind. How could I be useful to society? So I hit upon the idea of participating in, or setting up, a handicraft co-



AN ENTERPRISE FROM UNDERDEVELOPMENT



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

With that the manager indicated the heaps of nets in the corners of the house and up in the garret—quite a sight! An elderly man who served in the army during both resistance wars against the French and the Americans, he retired for

operative to turn out more goods for society and also to raise my family income. This I discussed with my fellow-demobees, some of them wounded soldiers. In 1977 the General Department of Physical Culture and Sports placed an order with us for the goods we have been making ever since." The manager spread out a fine-meshed table-tennis net and a badminton net the length of his room, both hand-woven from synthetic fibre.

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

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

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

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

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

"In 1977," said the manager, "that is in the year our co-operative was established, we were seven and made 14,000 *dong* worth of goods. In 1978 we had 18 full workers and 10 assistants turning out 104,000 *dong*. In 1979 the number of full workers rose to 30 and that of assistants to over a hundred while the output value reached 217,000 *dong*. In 1980 we had 50 full workers and a greater number of assistants. I can't remember exactly without looking at the books, and the returns were 447,000 *dong*. Due to the lack of raw materials, in 1981 we employed only 33 full workers and over 200 assistants who made 374,000 *dong* worth of goods. Our nets are not only sold in Vietnam but are exported to several countries, members of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance. Recently, we received a sizable order from the Soviet Union."

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

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

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



Quality control before consignment.

Photo: NHAT QUANG

DAO QUANG BINH

LAM DIEN AFTER TWENTY YEARS OF THE TREE-PLANTING MOVEMENT

Hoang Oanh is one of 200 old people in the tree-planting team of the agricultural co-operative of Lam Dien commune, Chuong My district, Ha Son Binh province. For over twenty years, since the commune responded to Uncle Ho's call to start tree planting, he has taken the lead in this movement. He was the first to apply the simple but effective slogan: "Grandparents plant trees and grandchildren tend them." As everyone knows, it is easy to plant trees but more difficult to take care of them till they yield any economic result. It is possible that the soil is not fertile or the climate not suitable, but the main obstacle is that the trees are destroyed by animals or by children who, as they are fidgety, shake the stems of the trees when playing hide-and-seek, break off twigs to make flags, or strip them of their leaves to shelter them from the sun.

Thus young trees quickly become rickety or perish. When the trees bear fruit, the situation is even worse. For pleasure, the children pick raw fruit even if they cannot eat them. Seeing the children's behaviour, many people shake their heads, saying: "It is easy to advise grown-ups not to destroy trees, but very hard to persuade children not to do."

But Lam Dien co-operative has succeeded in solving this problem by gathering the children together in an organization and using economic incentives. It signs contracts with the collectives of children (class or pioneers' brigade) entrusting them with the task of tending trees on a certain road section or along an irrigation ditch. The children receive a reward in cash or kind corresponding to the care given to the trees, like all other co-op members; and they are free

to use it as they wish: buying books, journals, etc.

After twenty years, the profit earned by the co-operative in tree planting is enormous. In fact, in this period, this co-operative — bordering on the Day river and set up mainly for rice production as it has to feed a large population while lacking land like other regions in the Red River Delta — has been able to plant tens of thousands of different trees. At the moment, 200,000 trees are waiting to be felled. Should we add the timber already used for the building of schools, health stations, co-operative offices, houses, and making of 400 sets of desks and benches for school-children, and the profit distributed to the co-op members (amounting to half a million *dong*), the economic result would be very great.

A problem which rarely crosses the minds of the young is the making of coffins. To provide them is not only the concern of close relatives, but also testifies to the good relationship between the villagers. In the last few years, due to the great requirements for construction timber and the increase in the price of timber, it has become a thorny problem in all regions. But Lam Dien has satisfactorily settled this question.

In the tree-planting movement, the co-op members have grown a great number of kapok trees which

give a light wood suitable for coffins. Last year, fifty coffins were sold at a low price and some dozen others are kept in stock. Furthermore, two hundred of these trees await felling. This experience of Lam Dien co-operative is now widely popularized by the Chuong My district authorities for application in other regions. To speed up proceedings, the co-operative is willing to sell at a low price ten thousand kapok saplings to co-operatives which want to grow them.

Recently, Lam Dien has also begun to grow fruit trees. The gardens have now more than four thousand lychee trees together with jambosa trees, Gia Loc and Thien Phien jujube trees and sopodilla

trees. Last year, the co-operative sold hundreds of thousands of *dong* worth of lychees.

Also the prick rattans grown to protect the orchards and pigsties are a notable source of income. They are protective plants and do not encroach upon the land of other crops. The articles made from rattan and bamboo are an appreciable item for export, last year yielding 350,000 *dong*. Neither is the usual problem of firewood felt in Lam Dien.

In the meadows of the Day river, along the alleys and banks of canals and ditches, Lam Dien co-operative grows mulberry-trees to rear silk worms. Each year from 1975 to 1979, it sold two tons of cocoons to the State. In the last few

years, it has also tackled the weaving of silk to somewhat offset the shortage of cloth. Last year, 3,000 metres of silk were woven, sufficient to make 400 shirts for co-op members. The co-operative plans to expand the area under mulberry-trees endeavouring to clothe a quarter of its 6,000 inhabitants with silk.

To reward this co-operative for its tree-planting movement, the Vietnamese State has conferred three Labour Orders on the co-operative, its tree-planting team and particularly on old Hoang Oanh who, in twenty years, has won the "emulation fighter" title 19 years running.

PHAN QUANG

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AN «OPEN-AIR HEALTH CLUB» IN HANOI

Early every morning, a corner of Lenin Park, a beautiful park in southern Hanoi, is alive with activity: hundreds of old people, women and men, some with white hair and beards, eagerly practise physical exercises and sword wielding or play hand ball, badminton, etc. People around the park who are accustomed to such scenes still remember the beginnings of this "open-air club" nearly ten years ago. It was in early 1973, shortly after the American B.52 air blitz against the Vietnamese capital, that

a dozen or so old men began to gather daily at this corner of the park for physical training soon after they returned from evacuation.

Dr Vu Quang Tiep, now 76, was one of them. He recalled that the beginnings were very modest: 22 in all, most of them retired government workers, including two women. The years went by and the membership increased steadily to become a real club which was later dubbed "open-air health club of the elderly".

Its membership rose from 65 in 1974 to 125 in 1975 and is now 450 (294 men and 156 women), about 80% of them retired government workers. The oldest is 93.

The club begins every day at 5 in the morning and disperses one hour later. In winter it is half an hour later. First of all, all the members join in a common session of physical exercises which chiefly consist of breathing and callisthenics. Then they break into groups, some practise massage, others sword wielding and unarmed combat, or play hand ball and badminton. This grouping is based not only on personal liking but also on the age and health of each member. Today, the activities of the club have assumed a regular character, placed under the guidance of experienced instructors in the managing committee of the club. Dr Vu Quang Tiep, himself a member of the committee, stressed that assiduous and methodical training is the crucial factor. To this end, the club has trained more and more instructors from among those trainees who have been the most successful. In conjunction with the medical service, every six months the club organises check-ups for all its members.

The results are promptly made available to the club members so that they are aware of their health situation and can judge for themselves the effects of training. On



Sword wielding practice.

Photo: GIA THAI

the mornings of Wednesday and Sunday every week, after the usual training session, a talk is held on such topics as hygiene, preventive measures against diseases and other related matters. The speakers are in most cases doctors working at the Hanoi Traditional Medicine Institute, the Central Gerontology Institute and major hospitals in the capital city.

Neither has the club neglected the cultural life of its members. Talks and lectures on literature, poem recitals and other cultural activities are held regularly. Often the speakers are club members themselves. They may present any subject of their choice and later discuss it with the audience. More often than not, the speaker reads out or recites a poem composed by him or herself then the others give their comments. The number of these non-professional poets is increasing day by day. The authors usually express their personal feelings about the joy and peace of mind as they advance in years, their new friendships, their attachment to the club, etc.

The club is also a place for its members to inquire into the topical subjects of the situation in the country and in the world, in the political, economic and cultural fields. Occasionally, there are excursions to places of scenic beauty, construction sites and factories. If the trip is less than 30 kilometres, the participants ride their bicycles which is also considered a sport for them.

The Hanoi "open-air health club" has endured the test of time. Not once in the past ten years have its activities been interrupted. The club members only stay home on days of heavy rain and winds. Even on very cold days some of the most

zealous are present at the training ground. And on the first day of the Lunar New Year which is traditionally a day for mutual family visits, they still come to the club where they give best wishes to one another. Gradually, these old men and women have become the nuclei in their families in the matter of physical training, serving as examples for their descendants to follow.

All members of the club have their own health records. A quick glance at these records show that most of them have the common diseases of old age: 50% suffer from arthritis, 50% from hypertension, 26% from arteriosclerosis, 20% from chronic bronchitis, 15% from stomach and duodenal troubles. However, each year an average of only 8% of them are hospitalized even though they are pretty old, those in the 60-74 age bracket accounting for 60% and those from 75 to 90 years old accounting for 17%. About 85% of those interviewed said they were pleased with the results of their training. They have known of no serious development of their ailments, eat and sleep normally and generally enjoy good mental health.

The effects of the open-air club in Lenin Park have had wide repercussions. The General Department of Physical Culture and Sports has studied and summed up the club's experiences in order to work out a suitable method of physical training for the aged. The Gerontology Institute has also sent people to collaborate with the club in its scientific research. Today, Hanoi already has 32 such clubs for the aged founded in different districts and wards of the city on the pattern of the model at Lenin Park.

VU HONG

Most nations in the world assert their identity through their folk literature. This is all the more true for the nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America which lived under colonial subjugation until recently. Here, folk literature has been a weapon to defend their national traditions against foreign cultural enslavement, and research on folk literature is often simultaneous with the awakening of national awareness, as happened in Europe in the early 19th century. For Vietnam, which has gone through more than ten centuries of Chinese feudal domination and more than ten decades of French and US imperialist domination, folk literature plays an even more important role in the search for national origins as well as helping to build a new, socialist culture.

Throughout the period when scholarly Vietnamese literature was entirely composed in the Chinese language and based mainly on themes of Confucian ethics or of Buddhist inspiration, folk literature was exclusively handed down by word of mouth in the language of the masses. Thus it fulfilled its mission of safeguarding what is best in the Vietnamese people. French researcher Yves Lacoste has this to say about Vietnamese literature in general:

"Naturally, Chinese influence is great in Vietnamese culture. But if one takes into consideration the balance of force between the colossal Chinese empire and the small Vietnam, one must recognise that this influence is in effect much less than is thought, and we should rather emphasise the originality of Vietnamese culture and its sense of modernity in the development of national potential."

This is what prompted Huu Ngoc, in collaboration with Françoise

*Book
Review*

ANTHOLOGY OF VIETNAMESE
FOLK LITERATURE

Corrèze, to publish the *Anthology of Vietnamese Folk Literature*,* in Paris. Besides the preface which reviews the development of Vietnamese folk literature together with research undertaken, particularly since the 1945 August Revolution, the book is devoted to the introduction of folk works, from legends and tales, poems in demotic Chinese characters, fables, humorous stories, songs and sayings. For the first time, the different genres of Vietnamese folk literature are presented systematically with comprehensive notes for French-speaking readers. This is the result of numerous research works carried out over many centuries by scholars such as Vu Ngoc Phan, Nguyen Dong Chi, Cao Huy Dinh, and Dinh Gia Khanh who are familiar to the Vietnamese. The documents are translated from materials supplied by the Hanoi Social Sciences Publishing House.

The preface writer, Yves Lacoste, in his capacity as a geographer, also finds, besides literary and historic values, some other interesting aspects in the book, especially its suggestions on the close ties between the legends and tales and the geographical and geo-political condi-

tions of Vietnam. For instance, the tales and legends in the book have given him to think that the first rice-growing Vietnamese tribes moved down from the lower mountain and hill slopes and settled in the immersed plains of the Red River Delta. He sees in this movement the strength and capabilities of the Vietnamese farmers in the conquest of nature as well as in their confrontations with hostile forces from the outside. He writes: "Most of the numerous topographic features of the Vietnamese plains or their borderlands are ascribed to events which are both heroic and legendary. Each rock that rises amid a ricefield, each lake, each portion of river, has its history. This particular geographic sensibility, closely linked to the expression of national sentiments, appears to be a characteristic of the Vietnamese culture, whether it is of the people or of the scholars. The expression "mounts and rivers" in fact means Homeland. And he concludes: "This leads me to think that geographers should, more often than they usually do, take more interest in folk literature, in order to better understand the countries they are studying. In-

versely, I am obliged to say, in spite of my scruples, that it is not with complete disinterest that a geographer gives his opinions on these myths and tales."

The *Anthology of Vietnamese Folk Literature* is one of the books that comes under the publication co-operation plan between the Hanoi Foreign Languages Publishing House and a number of countries including the Soviet Union, Cuba, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Hungary, France, Italy, West Germany, Mexico... The *Anthology of Vietnamese Literature* and the *Anthology of Vietnamese Poetry* covering the period since the 10th century have already appeared in French. Together with the *Anthology of Ethnic Literature* to appear soon, they will give our readers a better and more comprehensive understanding of the Vietnamese nation.

TO LAN

* *Anthologie de la littérature populaire du Vietnam*, by Huu Ngoc and Françoise Corrèze, with a preface by Yves Lacoste, Edition l'Harmattan, Paris, 1982, 280 pages.

CHRONOLOGY

(May 16 — June 15)

MAY

16. The Council of Ministers gives instructions on measures to overcome the insufficient supply of medicines.

18. The World Food Program signs in Hanoi an agreement on emergency food aid for Vietnam to the value of 5 million dollars.

19. The Fifth Congress of the Vietnam Women's Union is held in Hanoi. A new executive committee with Ms Nguyen Thi Dinh as president was elected.

20. A spokesman for the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry issues a statement condemning the armed aggression of South Africa against Angola in the first 15 days of May 1982.

21. A Vietnamese economic delegation headed by Do Muoi, Political Bureau member of the Party Central Committee and Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers, attends the tenth session of the Vietnam — Hungary Commission for Economic, Scientific and Technical Co-operation.

22. Opening in Hanoi of the Photo Exhibition on Children's Movement (172 photos by 69 photographers are on display).

23. The Vietnamese Council of State confers the Gold Star Order on Janos Kadar, First Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.

24. At the 1982 International Children's Paintings Competition held recently in Tokyo, a special prize, a gold medal, 2 silver medals and 3 bronze medals were awarded to 7 paintings by Vietnamese children.

25. The Vietnamese Foreign Ministry sends a note to their Chinese counterpart protesting against China's sending troops to destroy the Thoong Khoang dam about 500 metres inside Vietnamese territory, near border marker 74 in Ngoc Khe commune, Trung Khanh district, Cao Bang province, repeatedly since January 1982.

27. An economic delegation of the Swedish Government headed by Tom Tscherning, assistant to the Swedish Foreign Minister, pays a friendship visit to Vietnam, and on behalf of the Swedish Government, signs an agreement on Sweden's non-refundable aid of 345 million kronor for the 1982-1983 fiscal year and emergency aid of 12 million kronor.

28. Signing in Ho Chi Minh City of a minute on civil air co-operation between the three Indochinese countries.

30. Opening in Ho Chi Minh City of a national festival of *cai luong* (renovated drama).

31. In Moscow, Le Duan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, on behalf of the

Party Central Committee and of the Vietnamese Council of State, confers the Ho Chi Minh Order and the distinction of Vietnamese labour hero on Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, on the occasion of his 75th birthday.

JUNE

1. The Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries and the USSR — Vietnam Friendship Society sign in Moscow a five-year plan for co-operation (1981-1985) with the Vietnam Committee for Solidarity and Friendship with Other Peoples and the Vietnam-USSR Friendship Association.

— The Vietnamese Council of Ministers issues a resolution on major orientation, tasks, policies and measures for solving the food problem on a nationwide scale.

2. In Hanoi, the History Institute organizes a seminar about Georgi Dimitrov on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his birth.

4. The Council of Ministers issues a decree on the establishment of a Vietnamese pharmaceutical co-enterprise under the Health Ministry, on the strength of the present General Pharmaceutical Company and its affiliates.

5. The Vietnamese Council of State confers the Gold Star Order on Todor Zhivkov, General Secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party and Chairman of the State Council of the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

7. A spokesman for the Vietnamese Foreign Minister issues a statement condemning Israeli aggression, with the connivance of the United States, against the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples.

8. 210,000 students of basic general education schools sit their graduation exams for the school-year 1981-1982.

— The Vietnam Lawyers' Association issues a statement protesting against the conference of a group of lawyers from Asian countries held in Bangkok (from June 4 to 10) for the so-called inquiry into human rights and the chemical war in Kampuchea and Laos.

9. President of the Council of State Truong-Chinh sends a message to President Yasser Arafat reaffirming the full support of the Vietnamese people for the struggle of the Palestinian and Arab peoples.

12. Publication of the Rules for delegates to the National Assembly adopted at the 2nd session of the Seventh National Assembly.

15. At the 2nd special session of the UN General Assembly on disarmament, Deputy Foreign Minister Vo Dong Giang, head of the Vietnamese delegation, announces the Vietnamese Government official adherence to the "Treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons".

LOCAL SMALL INDUSTRY

AND HANDICRAFTS

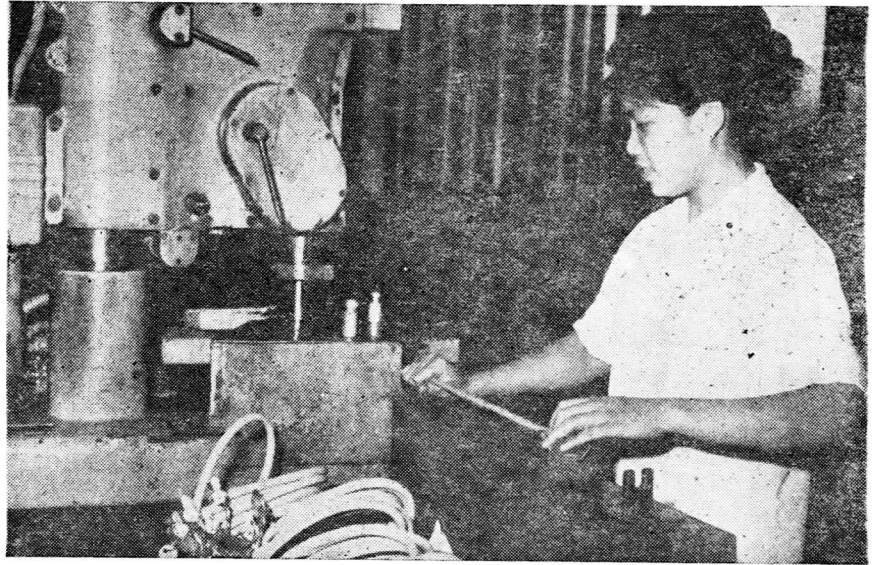


Products of the Son Tra aluminium enterprise (Da Nang province).

Photo : MINH NGUYET

Quality control of bicycle locks (Hanoi).

Photo : PHUNG QUANG CAU



A fish-sauce producing enterprise (Hai Hung province).

Photo : LAN XUAN





Spraying insecticide.

Photo : VN.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION IN VIETNAM



Tending pine saplings.

Photo : TAI NGUYEN



Old men caring for trees in Ha Nam Ninh province.

Photo : VAN LAN

Vietnam
Courier

Le courrier
du Vietnam

НОВОСТИ
ВЬЕТНАМА

El correo
de Vietnam

Báo đối ngoại

TIN VIỆT NAM

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

Tòa soạn : 46 TRẦN HƯNG ĐẠO, HÀ NỘI

Dây số : 53 998

In tại Hà Nội

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