

Vietnam courier



A MONTHLY REVIEW

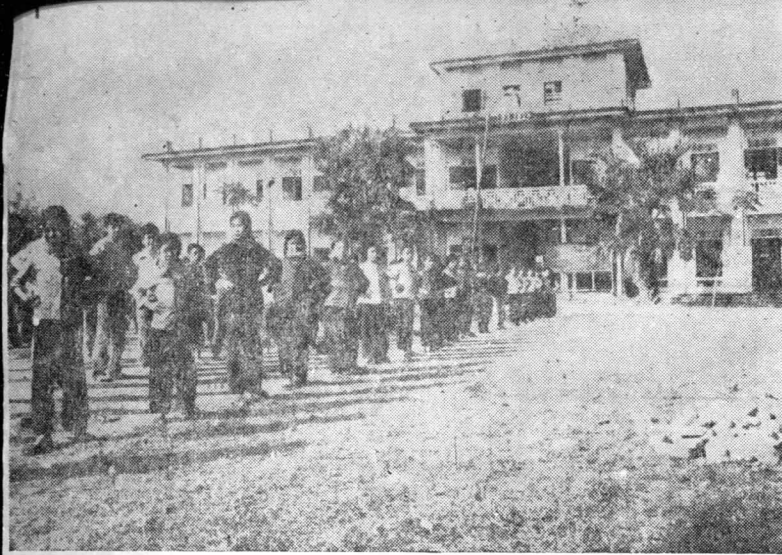
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CULTURAL LIFE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

1. School pupils doing physical exercises during a break.

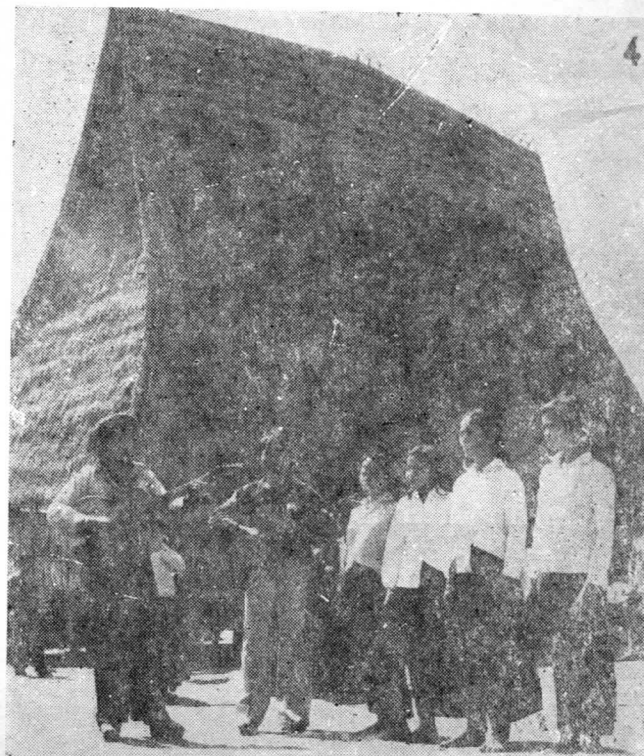


2. The 500-seat cultural house of Quynh Tam commune, Quynh Luu district, Nghe Tinh province, built in 1982.



3. The reading room for members of the Phu Loi production collective, Mo Cay district, Ben Tre province.

4. An art troupe of Dackatan commune, Dac To district, Gia Lai — Kon Tum province.



Photos : VNA

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Front cover: In a crèche in Ho Chi Minh City.

Photo: HOANG HUU

**Vietnam
courier**

6-1983

Editorial

DIALOGUE — THE ROAD TO PEACE AND STABILITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

In order to bring peace and stability to Southeast Asia — one of the few areas in the world which has remained unstable ever since the end of World War II — the Indochinese countries have time and again proposed the holding of a dialogue between the ASEAN and Indochinese groups of countries.

It is a heartening fact that the road of dialogue received the early approval of the Non-aligned Movement at the Conference of Non-aligned Foreign Ministers held in New Delhi in February 1981. This stand was re-affirmed at the 7th Non-aligned Summit Conference in New Delhi last March in a resolution which was also approved by all ASEAN members of the Non-aligned Movement.

A positive step towards a dialogue between the two ASEAN and Indochinese groups of countries was taken by the Malaysian Foreign Minister when he proposed to his Vietnamese counterpart at the New Delhi Non-aligned Summit Conference the holding of talks between the five ASEAN countries on the one hand, and Vietnam and Laos on the other. The spirit of the Malaysian proposal has been approved by Indonesia and Singapore. But China has come out strongly against, and the Bangkok Conference of the five ASEAN countries in its March 23 Statement neither accepted nor rejected the Malaysian proposal while insisting on the so-called UN Resolution on the "Kampuchea problem".

One wonders why the ASEAN countries did not take as a basis for dialogue the resolution adopted by the Non-aligned Movement and approved by both the Indochinese countries and the ASEAN countries belonging to the movement. Anyhow, the general idea of a dialogue is still there, and public opinion in ASEAN countries is increasingly demanding the holding of a dialogue to settle Southeast Asian problems.

Likewise, the idea of a dialogue is contained in a proposal recently made by Thailand: Thailand will agree to hold talks with Vietnam if the latter pulls its troops stationed in Kampuchea far from the Thai border. One remembers that Kampuchea — backed by Vietnam and Laos — has already put forward a proposal on the setting up of a safety zone along the Thai-Kampuchean border, the part on Kampu-

chean territory to be occupied only by troops of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, without any Vietnamese troops, and the part on Thai territory to be occupied only by troops of the Kingdom of Thailand, without any remnants of the Pol Pot army and troops of other reactionary Kampuchean forces. Nevertheless, the Thai proposal may be discussed, for it contains the idea of a dialogue.

The current trend in the world at present to settle global and regional problems through dialogue is an irresistible one. Even the Beijing rulers have had to change their tactics, although they still stick to their expansionist and hegemonistic objectives. They have had talks with the Soviet Union, but wanted, through the talks, to use the Soviet Union to bring pressure to bear on Vietnam with a view to attaining their ambitions in Southeast Asia. The Soviet Union has pointedly replied that the Sino-Soviet talks were aimed at settling bilateral problems and had nothing to do with a third country. Beijing also pretends to be willing to talk with Vietnam in order to normalize relations between the two countries. But they have put forward a series of pre-conditions with a view to preventing the talks from actually taking place.

For Vietnam and the other two Indochinese countries, Laos and Kampuchea, their stand on dialogue has been clearly expounded time and again: Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea are prepared to meet ASEAN countries to discuss and settle regional problems on the principle of equality, mutual respect, without one side trying to impose its opinion on the other. These meetings may be bilateral or multilateral; they may eventually reach agreement on the convening of an international conference on Southeast Asia on the principle that all regional problems should be settled by the countries in the region, without violating each other's sovereignty and without interference in each other's internal affairs, any problems that may exist between Southeast Asian countries and countries outside the region to be settled by Southeast Asian countries and the countries concerned. Participants in the international conference may include, besides the two groups of Indochinese and ASEAN countries, Burma, the Soviet Union, China, the USA, France, Britain and India. Vietnam is not opposed to the consideration at this conference of international aspects of the Kampuchean situation, as was the case with Laos at the 1961-1962 Geneva Conference. Our position is that Kampuchea's internal affairs should not be interfered with. At the same time, we fully support the statement made by the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea to the effect that it is prepared to welcome those Kampucheans now still in the ranks of the Pol Pot clique or cooperating with them but wishing to leave their ranks and stop cooperating with them; and that they will have the right to take part, in the presence of international observers, in free elections to be held under the Constitution of the People's Republic of Kampuchea.

With regard to China, Vietnam is also prepared to have contacts at any place, any time and any

level and to resume at once and without any pre-conditions, the third round of Sino-Vietnamese talks in order to restore peace and stability in the border area and to settle problems of mutual concern such as the implementation of the principles of peaceful co-existence and on this basis normalize relations between the two countries, and advance towards the settlement of border and territorial problems between the two countries.

Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea are prepared to sign with China a treaty for peaceful co-existence, and right after the conclusion of this treaty Vietnam will withdraw all its troops from Kampuchea.

Pending this, the Summit Conference of the three Indochinese countries held in Vientiane last February decided that each year, depending on the security situation in Kampuchea, part of the Vietnamese volunteer troops would be withdrawn from Kampuchea. This year, a large detachment of volunteers, the Cuu Long Unit, was withdrawn in the presence of many foreign journalists.

This unilateral action taken by Vietnam and Kampuchea proves that the situation in Kampuchea is developing in favour of the Indochinese peoples; it has also created a favourable atmosphere for dialogue.

A number of people in the Thai ruling circles whose interests are closely linked with the continuation of tension along the Thai-Kampuchean border, have acted in connivance with the Chinese and have allowed the remnants of the Pol Pot army and other Kampuchean reactionaries to take refuge there. Under cover of a refugee status these elements have often made incursions into Kampuchean territory to carry out sabotage activities. Recently, they have been severely punished by the Kampuchean revolutionary army and Vietnamese volunteer troops on Kampuchean land. Some people in Bangkok have raised a hullabaloo and fabricated the story of an "aggression of Thailand by Vietnamese troops" in an attempt to raise obstacles to a dialogue.

However, many other political circles, in ASEAN countries and even in Thailand, have come to realize that there is no other way than dialogue to ensure peace and stability in Southeast Asia. For they, too, wish to have peace and stability in order to develop their Western-oriented economy. They have also come to realize that time is on the side of the Indochinese countries, which have reached high political consensus among their people and acquired ever more experience in economic management, and have earned for themselves an international prestige which no smear campaign can undermine. Therefore dialogue is what the Indochinese countries want, not because they are in a weak position, but because they love peace and practise a foreign policy of peaceful co-existence.

10 May 1983

1. In fact, Thailand has violated the principles of international law on refugees. The report of the Working Group on current problems in the international protection of refugees and displaced

IMPLEMENTING THE POLITICAL BUREAU'S RESOLUTION ON SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL WORK OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS

In order to concretize the Party line for science and technology, the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee in April 1981 issued a very important resolution—Resolution No. 37—on policy regarding science and technology. On the basis of a thorough appraisal of scientific and technological work in the recent past, the resolution clearly defined the tasks and objectives of the policy regarding science and technology, laid down directives, principles, and main orientations, and issued concrete rules and measures to make fuller use of the potentials in this domain and improve the guidance and management of scientific and technological activities (1).

The resolution received a warm response from the leading organs at various levels and scientific and technical workers throughout the country. Under the direct leadership of the Council of Ministers and the guidance of the Scientific and Educational Board of the

Party Central Committee, all ministries, branches and localities have held meetings of Party committees and conferences of scientific and technical workers to study the resolution and discuss measures for its strict implementation.

Basing themselves on the guidelines set by the resolution, leading bodies at all levels have reviewed scientific and technological work in their respective branches during the five years from 1976 to 1980, worked out their yearly and five-year plans (1981—85) and discussed the implementation of the key scientific and technological plans of the State and those of their respective ministries or branches in the light of the new policy. Some localities have drawn up their own programs for scientific and technological work in order to develop their strong points and meet the urgent needs of their localities in coordination with the central government's plans.

Looking back over the past two years of implementing Resolution

No. 37 of the Party Political Bureau, we are glad to note that the resolution really marked a new stage of very promising development of scientific and technological work in our country.

In 1981 and 1982, in spite of a host of difficulties in social and economic life, the scanty investments in scientific work, and the acute shortage of materials and technical equipment as well as numerous hardship in daily life, scientific and technological work in our country continued to develop and brought about many practical results. Many scientific and technological achievements were applied to production and played a crucial role in the major successes in agriculture and the initial successes in industrial production in 1982.

In agriculture, along with the introduction of the contract system applied to individual farmers in the cooperatives, and other material-incentive policies, many new rice strains with higher yields, better

persons in Asia, drawn up by jurists from 7 Asian countries, including Thailand, in San Remo, Italy, in January 1981, under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said:

"60. The Working Group stressed that the rights and duties of refugees embodied in international instruments should be respected; and that refugees should comply with the laws and regulations of the country granting asylum or refuge as well as with measures taken for the maintenance of public order. A refugee should not engage in subversive activities endangering the national security of the country of asylum or refuge, or subversive activities against another State or activities inconsistent with the principles and purposes of the United Nations.

"61. The Working Group considered that the State of asylum or refuge should prohibit refugees residing in its territory from attacking the Government of another State, engaging in subversive activities or fomenting, in whatever way, the use of force or violence against the Government of another State and creating tension between States, in particular through the press or by radio, and should take such measures as were necessary to suppress such activities and protect those refugees who had been or might be induced under compulsion to engage in military or political activities.

"62. The Working Group believed that as far as possible the country of asylum or refuge should settle refugees at a reasonable distance from the frontier of their country of nationality or former habitual residence."

adaptation to aluminous and saline soil, and greater resistance to drought and to brown hoppers, have been sown over wide areas in the provinces of the Red River delta, the Mekong River delta and some provinces in Central Vietnam. A four-level system of seeds distribution covering hundreds of thousands of hectares in several provinces has resulted in a 15% increase in rice output and considerable economization of seeds. Likewise, a growing number of new maize strains has been planted on ever wider areas. In particular, the VM1 maize species planted on tens of thousands of hectares in a number of provinces has yielded an average of 1.8 tonnes per hectare compared with 1.5 tonnes in the past. The To Hieu farm, in particular, has reaped 3—3.5 tonnes per hectare on nearly 1,000 hectares. A complete system of prevention and eradication of pests, ranging from the choice of crops for each kind of soil, the observance of a strict time-table for cultivation, the cleaning of fields, and the timely detection of pests to the rational use of appropriate measures to combat them has significantly contributed to reducing losses. The raising of cross-bred pigs is gaining momentum. In the delta provinces cross-bred pigs account for 60—70% of the total number of pigs (the national average is 35%), up 7% from 1981. The ever more widespread raising of quick-breeding cattle and pig strains, the use of artificial insemination, compound animal feeds, growth stimulants, new vaccines and intestinal worm-killers have contributed to an increase of 2.9% in the number of pigs, 2.5% in the number of buffaloes and 9.4% in that of oxen and cows compared with 1981.

Scientific and technological achievements have also been widely applied in aquaculture such as the method of artificial fecundation, the cross-breeding of carps, and the raising of *Nilotich* fish. As a result, the fish rearing areas have been expanded not only in the delta provinces but also in some upland and mountain areas. Technical ad-

vances in the catching, conservation and processing of shrimps and lobsters have increased both the quantity and quality of shrimp exports, which were 30% over target and 53% more than in 1981.

In forestry, many technical advances have been successfully applied in afforestation, the exploitation of pine resin, the processing of shellac, the exploitation and processing of timber, etc. In particular, the combination of agriculture with forestry has brought about practical results in the operation of afforestation and logging centres. Some combination patterns have been worked out for different environments, opening new prospects for the development of agriculture and forestry in the coming years.

In industry, the application of scientific and technical advances has also helped meet part of our very urgent needs in energy, raw materials, equipment and spare parts.

In the domain of energy the improved technique of coal cutting used in 15% of the galleries in coal pits has helped increase coal production by 40,000—50,000 tonnes a year. The successful prevention of slag accumulation in boilers at the Uong Bi thermo-power plant has raised the electricity output of this plant from 610 million kwh in previous peak years to 669 million kwh in 1982. Peat in the northern provinces and high-calorie peat in the South have been used in proportions of 50% and 100% respectively to replace coal-dust as cooking fuel and fuel for brick and tile kilns. The engineering industry has manufactured small turbines of the 1,000 kw-and-less category to develop small hydro-electric stations in the central, upland and mountainous areas. Some models of biogas and wind-powered generators have been designed which promise wide application in rural areas.

With regard to materials, many hard alloys have been produced for the manufacture of cutting tools, moulds, CrNi high resistance wire for heaters in electric appliances

and furnaces, in addition to different kinds of oxides, rare soils, magnetic materials, insulating paints and paints for canned-food tins, extracts from medicinal plants and aromatic essences used in the pharmaceutical and food industries and many chemicals of high purity for laboratory use.

In the domain of building materials, a conveyor system capable of producing 3 million unbaked bricks a year has been put into operation. Also in the building industry, researchers have used dolomite as a binding agent, produced fire bricks, and lignin additive for concrete from waste water of paper mills. Many production units including cooperatives in some provinces have broadened the use of wire netting-reinforced cement to include the building of river barges, pontoon bridges and small coastal freighters of the 50 and 100-tonne types as well as fishing boats. This material involves simple manufacturing processes and low costs and helps to economize a large amount of iron and steel.

In the production of machines and parts, scientific and technological research last year focussed on the production of replacement parts for the repair industries in order to raise the rate of utilization of equipment. The technique for restoring and producing high-pressure injectors for diesel engines, the application of precision manufacturing methods, the working of metal powder, plastic-shaping methods, the manufacture of non-metal materials... have increased our capacity for making repairs, thus positively contributing to raising the coefficient of utilization of machines and equipment in the various branches of the light and mining industries and the communications, transport and postal services.

Along with the more intensive application of scientific and technical advances to agricultural and industrial production, more attention has been paid to basic surveying and prospection and scientific research. The wide use of aerial photography and satellite photo-

graphy and the processing of data by computers have visibly increased the efficiency and quality of survey and prospection work. Substantial results have also been obtained in the domain of physics, chemistry, mechanics, mathematics, cybernetics, biology, medicine, electronics and computer technology. Some of these successes have been applied to production such as the manufacture of semi-conductors, diodes and photo diodes, micro-processors, etc., and some have been initially applied to the management of production and to automation technology. Some achievements in genetics and the study of biological processes have been applied to agricultural and industrial production as well as medicine.

In the domain of technological management, a number of factories have made laudable efforts to ensure good observance of production norms and of regulations on standards and quality control, thereby ensuring the good quality of such major products as machine-tools, pumps, diesel motors, electric motors and export items like desk fans, ceiling fans, tinned foods and frozen sea foods.

It can be said that in the past two years, especially in 1982, scientific and technological activities in Vietnam have taken a real turn in the right direction. They have been more closely associated with production and have better served it.

At the same time, the guidance and management of science and technology have shown fundamental progress. These changes and improvements are the direct results of improved scientific and technological management and economic management, which have laid emphasis on giving more initiative to the production bases and ensuring the harmonious combination of the three interests (of the State, the collective and the individual worker).

With a view to improving the guidance and management of science and technology as set out in Resolution No. 37 of the Party Political Bureau, the Council of Ministers has promulgated rules on the planning of scientific and technological work aimed at making

the plan the main instrument for management. It has also decreed rules for managing research programs at the State level and clearly defined the powers and responsibilities of the persons in charge of these programs as well as of the ministers concerned. Government Decision 31/CP deals with innovations and inventions and their remuneration, while Decision 175/CP lays down the principles for the signing of economic contracts between research institutes, colleges, and universities on one side and production establishments on the other, aimed at bringing into full play the role of science and technology in production. The Government has also issued instructions on boosting scientific and technological work at local level. These decisions and instructions have had the effect of vigorously promoting scientific and technological activities, developing the innovative and creative spirit of the institutes and colleges, and heightening the sense of responsibility of the provinces and cities in the guidance and management of scientific and technological work. Many scientific and technical workers have gone to production bases in order to cooperate with them in solving outstanding scientific and technical problems.

In 1982 the value of economic contracts signed between institutes and colleges and production establishments was estimated at hundreds of millions of dong. These contracts cover a wide range of problems, from research and application of technical advances, to providing technical services and manufacturing and supplying products in limited quantities but very necessary to production, and including joint ventures. These are very important new factors in scientific and technological activities in 1981 and 1982 which partially reflect the fundamental guiding principles contained in the Resolution of the 5th Party Congress and Resolution No. 37 of the Party Political Bureau, namely that science must be closely associated with production and must continually increase its economic efficiency while dependency on State subsidies in scientific and technological activities must be checked.

Obviously, science and technology in Vietnam are developing in the right direction. However, difficulties and shortcomings in this domain remain numerous. At present, we have been able to tap only a small portion of our scientific and technological potentials and the guidance and management of science and technology have only made an initial step forward. It is necessary to instil the spirit and contents of the Resolution of the 5th Party Congress and Resolution No. 37 of the Politburo more deeply into scientific and technological activities and the guidance and management of these activities. It is necessary to quickly perfect the mechanisms of economic management with appropriate investment and incentive policies in order to create favourable conditions for a large-scale application of scientific and technical advances to production, promote scientific research and make fuller use of technology, thereby creating the premises for even more vigorous strides forward in the future.

It is necessary to make better use of the existing scientific and technological personnel, to broaden and raise the standards of the mass movement for technical innovations, to improve the management of technology, the gist of which is standardization and quality control, this being aimed at preventing sloppy work, the cause of low product quality and waste of manpower and raw materials. It is necessary to begin long-term studies and work out a strategy in the domain of science in order to make suggestions for the elaboration of scientific and technological plans and the five-year economic plan of 1986—1990. It is also necessary to promote international cooperation and increase its effectiveness while consolidating the organization of our bodies of scientific and technological research and management at all levels.

HOANG DINH PHU
Vice Chairman,
State Commission for
Science and Technology

(1). See *Vietnam Courier* No. 8, 1991.

HOW TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT IN STATE-RUN INDUSTRY

In Vietnam, there was a 10.9% average increase of the total industrial output in 1981 and 1982, whereas in the 1976—1980 period it was only 0.6%. And while there was a 15.2% increase in locally-run industries and a 19.7% increase in handicrafts, there was only a 3.2% increase in centrally-run industries. However, the gross value of industrial output in 1981—1982 hardly reached the peak of 1978, and only 30 to 50% of industrial capacity was made use of.

Most State-run industry consists of centrally-run industries. In the provinces, besides the State sector, a considerable number of branches are run by cooperatives and individuals.

Therefore, despite the progress it has made, State-run industry must go a long way before it can make a decisive contribution to fulfilling the norms set for 1985 in the documents of the 5th Party National Congress: 470,000—500,000 tonnes of sea fish; 380—400 million metres of cotton and silk textiles; 350,000—400,000 tonnes of sugar and treacle; 1 billion packets of cigarettes; 90,000—100,000 tonnes of paper; 5.5—6 billion kwh of electric power; 8—9 million tonnes of coal; 2 million tonnes of cement; 350,000—400,000 tonnes of phosphate fertilizer.

Many difficulties lie ahead. They are due to the low level and the unbalanced development of the economy, which is in the main a small-production economy and is suffering the consequences of a long drawn-out war and of neo-colonialism. All this results in instability in production, shortages of food, energy, materials and spare parts.

But there are also subjective causes which lead to some delay in overcoming the imbalance of the economy and sometimes aggravate it. When foreign aid was sharply reduced, and when the export-import branch failed to meet the import demands, we did not reorganize the economy in time. The sources of energy, goods and materials, capital and foreign currency, which had been reduced, were not concentrated on the most

important projects but spread thinly on an egalitarian basis, causing inefficiency, a dependent mentality and passivity in many economic bases. But the main cause of those deficiencies was the managerial mechanism, the subsidy-based system and red tape, which restricted the activities of enterprises while slackening the sense of responsibility in production and transactions. The norms imposed by higher echelons, the rude interference of administrative-economic management offices in production and transactions, held back the development of the economy. For in those conditions enterprises could not bring into full play their dynamic role and initiative. The subsidy-based system and the policies ensuing from it lowered their sense of responsibility for their own profit or loss. As a result, no one made full use of nor economized on labour, land, properties and funds. The efficiency of the investment and use of funds in the national economy, which was already low, was decreasing. Labour productivity in a number of State-run enterprises was no higher than that in other sectors of the economy e.g. cooperatives, private enterprises, although they are better equipped with modern technology.

A number of policies and stipulations concerning the management of enterprises, issued in the wake of the 6th Plenum of the Party Central Committee and the 5th Party National Congress, have brought about many changes. However, some have not been fully implemented, or in some cases, have not been implemented at all. More policies and stipulations regarding the management of industrial enterprises should be amended, especially those on pricing, salary, supervision of labour, goods and materials, finances, etc.

I — REORGANIZING PRODUCTION

In the years ahead, in the economic field we must centre on the main targets: grain and food-

stuff, basic necessities, items for export, energy and transport. We must concentrate all means and materials handled by the State, which have been reduced for one reason or another, such as energy, goods and materials, funds, foreign currency, on the above-mentioned branches of the economy in order of precedence. Depending on the role they play in the fulfilment of those targets, enterprises will receive from the State their share of those means and materials. Those enterprises which put out the same kind of products, and ensure higher productivity, better quality and greater efficiency will take priority for supplies of goods and materials over the others.

In case the State fails to supply or can supply only part of the materials necessary for the production of certain items, the enterprises concerned must and have the right to get them by legal means from other sources in order to make full use of their productive capacity.

If they fail to get the materials necessary for the fulfilment of their tasks, or if they fail to achieve the targets set in the plans, they may entirely or partially stop producing those items and produce other items in order to make rational use of the equipment and ensure employment for cadres and workers. In case they fail to find means to continue production, or in case they suffer repeated loss, they must close down.

Another kind of work in reorganizing production is the **integration in production at grassroots economic bases**:

— To gather all enterprises closely related in the technological process in order to bring about specialized division of labour in various sectors of production. This is called vertical integration. It has been applied to existing plants and factories belonging to the fields of metallurgy, machine building (sewing machines, bicycles, electronic devices), sugar, alcohol, paper, textiles, dyeing, etc., and also to branches of industry under construction or which have just

been built such as oil refinery, petrochemistry, tractor construction, ship building, etc.

— To gather enterprises for processing agricultural products and farms producing them, in order to link the sources of raw materials to processing sections. This kind of integrated enterprise is also a form of vertical integration in production. It plays an important role in the development of such branches as tea, sugar, canned fruit, marine products for export, silkworm breeding and rubber and has achieved some good results.

— Enterprises producing the same kind of products integrate with one another to organize common sections serving production, such as bases producing spare parts or wrapping materials and in charge of repairs, those doing research work on the application of new technology, transport units for special use, etc. This is called horizontal integration. This form is used to integrate coal mines, power plants, weaving factories, alcohol factories, breweries, assembly units, transport bases, etc.

Many "integrated complexes" have been set up on the basis of both vertical and horizontal integration. But before founding an "integrated complex" we must put forward a preliminary economic-technological plan and a preliminary plan regarding organization and personnel, to make sure that the new form of organization achieves good results right from the beginning.

This form of integration should be applied to other sections of the economy, that is between State-run enterprises and cooperatives for example. In this integration State-run enterprises play the key role, on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and good implementation of the contracts between the parties concerned. This kind of integration is diversified. It may have the form of a group putting out the same products, e.g. weaving; it may be a contract under which a number of co-operative enterprises undertake to carry out a section of a project in a technological process, e.g. wrapping materials.

II — RENEWING THE MECHANISM OF MANAGEMENT

Reorganizing production must go together with renewing the managerial mechanism. The former

creates conditions for the latter's development and vice versa. The main requirement of the renewal of the managerial mechanism is to link the responsibility, rights and benefits of the enterprise with the result of production-transaction, to ensure that the enterprise enjoys the right to mastery and holds itself solely responsible for its activities, and at the same time to increase the efficiency of the State plans and policies as well as the system of management.

Decision No. 25-CP of the Government and its amendments aim at meeting such requirements.

1. Renewing the Planning System

Before, the State used to hand to enterprises a very detailed and minute system of norms regarded as decrees. This usually limited the dynamic role of the production bases. Today, planning proceeds from the lower to the higher echelons. On the basis of the general orientation of the State plan, the higher bodies hand preliminary figures to enterprises, that is a list of items to be produced and the material conditions which the State can supply. On the basis of the regulations promulgated by the State, the enterprises think out measures to get more goods and materials, either through exchanges with other enterprises (to make use of the materials in stock), or by purchasing more materials from other sectors of the economy at prices agreed upon by the two parties, and in conformity with the State's system of price control, or by borrowing foreign currency to import them from foreign countries, if need be. But in the latter case, they must make sure that they can recover the foreign currency by exporting their products in order to pay their debt (both capital and interest) in foreign currency. Enterprises try by every means to exploit their productive potentialities, study the market and develop cooperative relations with other enterprises. Dependent on those factors they will work out their own production-technical-financial plans. If the norms are higher than the preliminary norms given by the higher echelons, that is the output is higher than the one achieved with the goods and materials supplied by the State, then once the plan is fulfilled, these enterprises will get higher profits than usual. These enterprises will defend their plans with an eye to quality indices, labour productivity, drain

on goods and materials, cost prices, etc.

The decreed plans, which have been worked out and officially delivered by the higher bodies to the enterprise, will consist of the following main targets:

— The output of the main products and the output value of the goods produced (with the grade — i.e. quality — of the products and export items, if any);

— Profits and sums of money that will go to the budget;

— Salary fund (corresponding to the output);

— Investment fund and equipment, goods and materials supplied by the State.

If the higher body wants a plan with norms higher than those worked out by the enterprise, they must ensure that the latter can fulfil the plan.

Besides the products set in the State's decreed plan, enterprises can make use of waste materials and the remaining productive capacity for sideline work, subcontracting work and servicing. The higher bodies do not set targets for sideline products, but they must be aware of what is going on in enterprises in order to prevent activities detrimental to the economy. While the higher bodies encourage enterprises to develop sideline products in the right direction, they must make sure that the enterprises and workers get the maximum benefit in fulfilling the plan set by the State, and not in producing sideline products.

2. In the financial field, perfect the system of cost accounting and ensure the right to financial autonomy.

The main requirement of the system of cost accounting is that enterprises cannot receive subsidies — as in the subsidy-based system — but must be responsible for their profits and losses. However, in the course of fulfilling this guiding principle, enterprises must also: complement and complete the economic-technical quotas, first of all quotas on goods and materials, for labour is closely connected with the quality of the products. What is more important is that enterprises should seek a rational solution to the relationships in the pricing system and the improvement of the wage system. Only on that basis can we do production cost accounting and correctly and fully appraise the cost price.

At present, as the economic situation is still unstable, the cost-

accounting system can be applied only in such enterprises as can appraise cost price and for such products as have relatively rational cost prices (and hence wholesale prices).

Enterprises may enjoy the right to financial autonomy, that is they can seek funds to ensure production, to make investments for technical re-equipment and for increasing production. The State only makes investments when it wants to transform the enterprise into a larger one, beyond the ability of the enterprise itself.

Profitable enterprises can have three kinds of funds: for developing production, welfare and rewards. The State decides on the minimum rate allocated to the funds for developing production and the maximum rate allocated to the reward funds. On the basis of those rates, the enterprise is given free rein in the allocation of the three funds, it can be discussed and decided on by the collective of cadres and workers of the enterprise.

3. Enterprises are given more initiative in supervising labour.

From now on the State will no longer set norms for the number of staff members and workers in an enterprise, it only fixes the salary budget corresponding to the output plan. This budget is based on the wage quota fixed for a product unit or a piece of work. This means closely connecting the amount of labour and labour productivity. On that basis enterprises are allowed to take the initiative in increasing or reducing their staff, and in distributing labour in the chain of production and the managerial body. Within the framework of labour laws enterprises may take on cadres and workers and dismiss them; inversely, cadres and workers have the right to ask to be transferred to another enterprise or office. At present, amendments are being made to these regulations in order to prevent abuses from either side.

On the basis of stipulations set by the State, enterprises have the right to arrange or change the production organization and the managerial body. The higher echelon decides on the nomination of the director and appoints the deputy-director on the recommendation of the enterprises. The director has the right to appoint other cadres.

On the basis of the system of wages and the norms set in the wage plan enterprises may make

use of various forms of payment and bonuses to the best advantage of production and the life of cadres and workers (contract-based wages, piece-work based wages...). Enterprises have also the right to mete out rewards to units or individuals outside the enterprises which made actual contributions to the result of production and transaction of the enterprises.

4. To expand the relationship between the enterprise and the market.

This is carried out through transaction contract signing between enterprises and other economic organizations.

The products of State-run enterprises, made of raw materials from whatever sources, belong to the funds of commodities of the State and should be delivered to consumption organizations controlled by the State. However, if these organizations refuse to consume them, the enterprises concerned may organize consumption themselves, but abiding by the regulations on prices and taxes stipulated by the State.

Under the present circumstances, the State allows enterprises to use a certain amount of products in exchange for goods and materials necessary for production, provided that this will not impede the fulfilment of the plan for the distribution of products of the State. Enterprises are not allowed to keep back products to distribute them among their staff, as was the case with many enterprises after Decision No. 25-CP was issued. If the enterprises want to use a certain amount of products as rewards for workers and cadres (which is usually the case with light industry and food industry), they must buy them at the industrial wholesale price, and with the permission of the higher body.

State-run enterprises are allowed to extend relations with other sections of the economy and with the free market, if need be, but they have to abide by the policies of the State and contribute their part to controlling the market and socialist transformation. It is forbidden to rig the market. Those enterprises which produce items for export or take part in producing them take precedence over the others in getting supplies of goods and materials. The State will allocate a certain amount of foreign currency for the purchase of goods and materials that have to be imported, especially those

for special use, out of the foreign currency the enterprises have gained through the export of their products. The State will give them a go-ahead to import goods and materials to their best advantage. Those enterprises which export their products may borrow the foreign currency necessary to import more goods and materials. They will have a bigger share of profits acquired from exports than that of enterprises whose products are of the same kind but are consumed on the home market. Those enterprises which fulfil their export plans well may use some of the foreign currency acquired by them, mainly to develop production. Those enterprises which produce items for export or process materials for foreign countries or those which have a relatively large amount of imported goods and materials and special use equipment, may have direct contact with foreign customers, under the guidance and supervision of foreign trade organs.

III — REORGANIZING THE MANAGERIAL APPARATUS OF ENTERPRISES

As a result of the reorganization of enterprises and renewal of the managerial mechanism, we must re-arrange the technological chain, the production apparatus and the managerial apparatus accordingly.

In order to reorganize the managerial apparatus we must carry out fully the system of one-person leadership, and at the same time bring into play the right to collective mastery of the staff and workers.

The 5th Party National Congress has passed amendments to the Party Constitution concerning the responsibility of Party branches and Party Committees as leading bodies of the Party. These new stipulations give more expression to the role of the leading cadre, and define the relationship between the management of the director of the enterprise and the leadership of the Party Committee.

Within the limits of public law and the State's general line, in order to ensure the fulfilment of the plan, the director of the enterprise has the right to decide on matters related to production and business, and on economic-technical problems of the enterprise, and is held responsible for those decisions. As regards the personnel system, specific stipulations are being studied in order

to ensure harmonious co-ordination between the principle of collective leadership and the system of one-person leadership.

The responsibility, limits of authority and interests of the director and of each worker in the enterprise are linked with the results of production and transactions. As for the director, after a certain period of time, if the output is low or if there is a loss in business the director must resign. Inversely, he will be duly rewarded.

Workers, staff members and the trade-union of the enterprise have the duty and right to take part in a practical and effective way in the management of the enterprise, especially in the mapping out and fulfilment of plans, in the allocation and use of the enterprise's funds, in the implementation of the labour policy and in promoting the socialist labour emulation drive.

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The new stipulations regarding the management of enterprises have helped boost production to some extent. But they still present many defects. First, as they are at their embryonic stage, they have been abused by a number of people who have taken advantage of these defects, for example, some stipulations in Decision No. 25-CP. Moreover, they do not cover such matters of importance as pricing, wages, etc. Besides, there are other factors arising from the objective reality, such as a serious shortage of energy, raw materials, etc., which make it more difficult to stabilize the economy and to solve the problems of pricing and wages. Is all this a vicious circle, an impasse? Far from it! To extricate ourselves from this predicament, we must in the first place couple the work of improving the management of enterprises with practising economy, strengthen socialist order in all fields, and resolutely carry out the struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist road in the first stage of the transition period, by every means: economic measures, administrative decrees, ideological education.

As we gain more and more experience through practice, stipulations regarding the management of the economy become more and more realistic. Meanwhile, as from 1983 a number of relatively large-scale projects (the construction of

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A NEW COAL MINE AT MONG DUONG

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

The French-run Coal Company of Tonkin (Charbonnages du Tonkin) amassed huge profits in the Quang Ninh coal area from the end of the last century until 1955, when French troops withdrew from the area under the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam. French capitalists had exploited nearly all the surface seams on mountain slopes and had started to dig pits to extract coal from underground seams. Since 1965, under the new regime, the Mong Duong mine management has been exploring coal production through deep mining. But the equipment left by the French was very rudimentary. It was not because French technology was lagging behind, but simply because the French owners preferred to rely on dirt cheap Vietnamese labour and lives. This not surprisingly led to a major mining disaster in which 72 miners were killed in a flooded gallery. The miserable life of the miners under the French was described by one of them as follows: "We were forced to get down into the pits to work for the boss. Dead, we would remain there; alive we had

to send up coal to the surface before we were allowed to come out of the shaft."

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

"It took us 10 years' preparation," said Engineer Doan Van Kien "before we could produce the first wagonloads of coal in late 1982. We do not allow ourselves to be attracted by immediate interests, but always bear in mind the long-term interests of the State and the miners. The Mong Duong coal mine will be exploited in a rational way and it is expected that it will produce 900,000 tonnes of clean coal per year for about 40 years. The miners will work in most favourable conditions. The Soviet Union has helped us in this large-scale project by supplying us with equipment and technique. But we will do our utmost to combine manual labour and mechanized means. For example, to dig pits we will make use of hoes and picks besides the boring machines we get from our Soviet friends. For the Mong Duong mine is only one of the many projects built with Soviet

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

SHRIMPS — a product of world renown

Among our marine products, shrimps are a special item much appreciated by both Vietnamese and foreign customers. In many markets like Hong Kong, Japan, Eastern Europe... our shrimps are well known for their tasty flavour and particular quality.

We have many kinds of shrimps, prawns and lobsters... Depending on the region, they are processed in many ways. They can be frozen, salted, boiled, fried, roasted... In Minh Hai, Kien Giang, Vung Tau... people dry them, shell them and keep them as food reserves. Shelled dried shrimps can be roasted or soused in fish sauce into which one can squeeze a few drops of lemon juice or sprinkle some pepper. Shrimps multiply fairly rapidly in either salt, brackish or fresh water. The sea abounds in large prawns; brackish waters also give big catches of shrimps. In the rivers of Ben Tre, Cuu Long, Kien Giang... shrimps may weigh up to 200—300 grammes apiece; in Ha Tien they also weigh several

hundred grammes. Fresh-water shrimps are not so big but have a pleasant flavour of their own. With more than 3,000 kilometres of coast and tens of thousands of kilometres of rivers and canals we can rear and catch large quantities of shrimps. The southern provinces in particular offer extremely favourable conditions for the development and reproduction of shrimps due to their temperature of between 25—30°C throughout the year. Along the coasts of Quang Ninh, Hai Phong, Minh Hai, Kien Giang, Vung Tau... there are many areas teeming with shrimps. In the fishing season boats with seines and drag-nets gather as in a festival. A seine may bag up to 12—15 tonnes of shrimps a year, sometimes as much as 2 tonnes per catch. In these areas shrimps live in dense shoals and drift with the tide into estuaries and canals where they thrive.

Besides catching shrimps with seines, people also use drag-nets,

each bagging up to 2-3 tonnes a year. Besides, people may hem in areas flooded by the tide by building earth-banks with flood-gates which they open at high tide to let shrimps in and bar with nets when the tide ebbs. They may catch up to 50—80 kg of shrimps per night per hectare in the fishing season.

To have a large and steady supply of shrimps, a drive for rearing them is being developed, especially in the southernmost provinces. The common way is to rear them in submerged rice-fields, in mangrove forests; or in hemmed-in marshy areas along the coast. This way of making the most of favourable natural conditions and of the plankton living in those places saves much investment and may yield up to 500—600 kg of shrimps per hectare in Minh Hai. According to many food specialists the demand for shrimps is on the increase. At present, world consumption of frozen shrimps has reached one million tonnes a year and the price of one kilogramme is nearly six dollars.

Shrimp production for export and home consumption is a line of aquatic products to be boosted in our country.

HOANG HA

aid, and we wish to make the most rational use of it".

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

Kien took us on a tour of the mine. Two systems of windlasses operating at the main and auxiliary shafts take equipment, tools and people down and coal up. Next to the main shaft gate is a 100m-long structure protecting a system of conveyors extending from a hill top to the coal-separation plant. The crude coal extracted is loaded onto the conveyors and transported to the coal-separation plant. After cleaning the coal is loaded into waiting waggons. It is then carried by railway to Cua Ong

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

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

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

We went westward along the main tunnel, which was wide and well ventilated. A new track for mine cars had just been built, branching off in two directions. Twenty-four kilometres of gallery have been dug along the eastern and western coal seams, the deepest section 250m below sea level. Construction work is still going on,

together with the laying of the track and the power mains. In many places the walls, roofs and floors of the underground galleries are reinforced with concrete.

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

"The youth constitutes the main force in our company," Doan Van Kien went on. "They have been playing the role of a shock force in the socialist emulation drive, especially in the one launched last year to mark the 60th anniversary of the founding of the USSR. Through the combined efforts of all of us and thanks to the wholehearted assistance of the Soviet

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CLOTHING FOR A MOUNTAIN DISTRICT

Quan Hoa is a mountain district of Thanh Hoa province. It has a population of 61,000 belonging to seven ethnic groups, with different styles of dress. Since 1978 — 1979, the supply of clothing for its population, given the economic difficulties facing the entire country, has met with hurdles, all the more so as communications with the delta are inadequate.

In response to an appeal of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Women's Union, the district women's organisation has set about restoring cloth weaving, a local traditional handicraft which had fallen into neglect. Following a conference held in March 1980, a movement has speedily spread to all 23 communes of the district, exhorting women to grow cotton and mulberry, and to weave cloth and silk. Cotton and mulberry have been grown in areas specially set aside, old hand-loom repaired, and weaving courses opened for young girls. Meanwhile, communal women's organisations have convened meetings for exchanges of experience.

The results are quite heartening. Every family in the district now has enough blankets, pillow cases, mosquito-nets, mattresses, clothes and scarfs, decorated with more than 160 traditional motifs.

In 1981, each member of the district women's union wove 23 metres of cloth on an average, as many as 81 metres in Son Dong commune. In seven communes, all the women can weave and embroider, and be self-sufficient in clothing. In other communes the population can satisfy 70 per cent of their needs in clothing. In 1982, women in the district sold silk yarn to the State in exchange for consumer goods. This year they plan to weave 30 metres each on an average and also spin silk yarn for export.

Since April 25, 1983, unusual animation has prevailed in the commercial quarters of Hanoi. In markets and shops, cadres are seen arguing with and sometimes rebuking traders and shop-keepers. Newspapers and television programmes are full of reports on the campaign for the application of the decree modifying some modalities in the assessment and collection of duties and taxes in commerce, handicrafts and small industry. The public has been following with keen interest and excitement the development of the campaign. People discuss it in families, factories and public offices. While unanimous in recognizing the need and legitimacy of the campaign, opinion varies on the ways it has been conducted and in forecasting the near and far future.

vigorously: restoration, repair and building of dwelling houses, personal services, etc. The production of these articles and the supply of these services had been until then, generally speaking, assumed by the State sector which, however, had failed to meet the multifarious needs of the population. Hence a shortage of consumer goods and services which could not be justified objectively.

The look of the towns has been transformed by this "release". Numerous strata of the population have managed to find jobs and get more or less regular incomes. On the whole, the enforcement of this policy has been beneficial. A free market has been operating lawfully along the organized and planned market of the socialist State. The big problem — which will remain

A NEW STEP IN REORGANIZING THE FREE MARKET

Since the "release" of economic activities made possible by the promulgation of the 6th resolution of the Party Central Committee, during the past three years, a multitude of small trade, handicraft and small-industry enterprises have mushroomed throughout the country, especially in the major cities like Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, Haiphong and Da Nang. This blossoming of small private enterprises has helped ensure the production of a whole gamut of consumer goods for daily use and for export: bicycle parts, indispensable to large numbers of Vietnamese, crockery, furniture, garments... The service industries have also developed

with us throughout the period of transition — is to see to it that the free market is eventually subordinated to the socialist market within an overall development plan of the economy and society. But the "release" has been a double-edged weapon. While the small traders might help to circulate merchandise and stimulate production, and the craftsmen and small entrepreneurs to increase production, the allurements of profits has also pushed them to engage in illicit activities. Once the possibilities are available to them, these small entrepreneurs tend to become not "capitalists," but traffickers who try to get rich quickly at the

expense of the majority of the population. These traffickers operate in several ways: theft of public property, speculation in foreign currencies, manufacture of counterfeit merchandise, tax evasion... In the heat of the "release" decreed at the end of 1979, accompanied by severe criticism of bureaucratic management, some relaxation has been observed in numerous sectors of the State-owned economy. The loosening of some injudicious regulations, which was necessary, has, however, led to excesses. Traffickers have taken advantage of this measure to divert to their benefit a number of economic operations of the State sector. This has resulted in a state of economic and financial disorder which, in the long run, could nullify all our efforts of construction.

That is because the State apparatus, particularly on the financial side, was rather ill-prepared to assume the new tasks in the face of the free market. First of all, the tax-collecting machinery.

In North Vietnam before 1975, small private commerce and handicrafts played no significant role in the national economy and duties and taxes in this sector provided only a negligible source of State revenue. This is no longer the case today. The State ensures to many strata of the population different services which are often costly (schooling, health, communications...). But these strata whose incomes are much higher than those of government workers, pay almost nothing to the State because the tax-collecting apparatus is not prepared to tackle the new situation. There have been cases of both fiscal fraud and tax evasion. A multitude of enterprises have been created with neither licence nor regular book-keeping, and paying no tax. Some pretend to deal in such and such a line but this is only a screen for illicit trafficking of goods stolen from the State or of foreign currencies. Precious relics pilfered from

museums or historic monuments have been sold to foreigners at high prices. A new social stratum has come into existence — called by some "a neo-bourgeoisie" — which drains a sizable part of the national resources — cash in particular — to live in luxury. These *nouveaux riches* pay high for luxury goods imported from the West and send prices skyrocketing. Trafficking, speculation and smuggling of foreign commodities aggravate inflation. It is time to put things in order.

The campaign launched on April 25 presents two aspects:

- a fiscal reorganization including the publication of new tax scales, the obligation for all small entrepreneurs to make accurate declarations of their activities and turnovers. These declarations are checked by specialized services of the finance and trade ministries. On this basis the amounts they will pay for licences and taxes will be assessed.

- fiscal or administrative and even judicial sanction against traffickers and speculators whose illicit businesses may be discovered in the course of tax assessment and collection.

A new rule: obligation for traders with relatively important turnovers to open bank accounts. This is the first time that these traders who are wont to run their businesses without book-keeping and without bank accounts are made to comply with such formalities. So far they would strike big deals by means of cash — bags of it — and even bullion.

While the enforcement of the new fiscal measures represents a new stage in the improvement of State economic management, the sanctions taken against the traffickers are part of the class struggle, the struggle between the two roads, the capitalist and the socialist. The enforcement of new administrative and financial measures is part of far-reaching reforms now under

way in all domains and aimed at providing the socialist State with a new structure and new regulations in face of a new situation. The administrative and judicial sanctions against the traffickers aim on the contrary to eliminate this "neo-bourgeoisie" so that the millions of craftsmen, small industrialists and traders will return to the orbit of the State sector. The State authorizes them to give full play to their activities and allow them to make reasonable profits but they must obey its directives and instructions.

One may see how complex the problem is. Specialized fiscal services acting alone could not carry through the operation. A hasty and large-scale mobilization of the masses for these delicate questions of prices and taxes to be imposed on people with large incomes would create useless and fruitless disorder. That is why, the campaign has been prepared very carefully. Cadres and students of trade schools and economic colleges and a number of members of administrative services and factory inspection committees have been called upon to give a hand to the cadres of the tax-collecting and State trade services and the banks. This has made it possible within a relatively short period of time to check the declarations of tens of thousands of traders and craftsmen and to help them understand the new policy on taxes and keep regular accounts. Hundreds of traders and small entrepreneurs have learnt to open and keep bank accounts. Within three weeks, the campaign has won encouraging results, laying a firm basis for future activities. In the other towns and cities the campaign has just begun. In particular, a close struggle is expected in Ho Chi Minh City where hundreds of thousands of traders and small entrepreneurs are still operating and where the traffic in foreign currencies and smuggling of foreign goods are being undertaken on a large scale. Also to be expected are the multiform reactions on the part

of this neo-bourgeoisie composed of traffickers who have formed a real counter-revolutionary front by teaming up with the networks of saboteurs kept by Washington and Beijing, together with the underworld from which both traffickers and agents of Washington and Beijing recruit their men. It must be added that they have succeeded in corrupting a number of cadres of the State and that enemies from outside would not hesitate to counter-attack both on the economic and the propaganda fronts.

The fiscal campaign launched in Hanoi on April 25 is thus only the beginning. It is part of the multi-form struggle which the Vietnamese people and the revolutionary State will have to wage throughout the period of transition so that socialism could be installed definitively and an entirely restructured and stabilized society established. On this road, ups and downs, pitfalls and obstacles will be many. But nothing could steer our people away from the historic path they have opted for.

N.V.

A NEW COAL...

(Continued from page 10)

experts, the Mong Duong mine was commissioned on schedule."

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

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

DAO QUANG THEP and
LE VIET CHUNG

CAN THO University

In the early seventies, with the aim of consolidating the Nguyen Van Thieu administration then reeling under the attack of the South Vietnamese people, US imperialism wanted to further exploit the Mekong delta so as to strengthen the socio-economic basis of neo-colonialism. To this end, they made huge investments in Can Tho town claiming that they would build a "Western Capital" and set up a new centre for the Mekong delta... The establishment of Can Tho University was part of the project. But all these schemes were shattered with the liberation of South Vietnam.

The revolutionary power immediately realized the important position of the Mekong delta in the all-round development of the country. This is our southernmost delta, constituted by the alluvia of the Mekong, one of the ten biggest rivers in the world. With an area of 4 million hectares covering 9 provinces (!) with 12 million people, the Mekong delta is one of the biggest granaries of Vietnam. However, after 30 years of war the cultivated area covers only about 2.5 million hectares. There is still a lot of aluminous soil in low-lying areas and saline soil along the coast which can be put under the plough only after much work. Although the soil is rich, the yields are still mediocre, 2 tonnes per hectare in most cases. Moreover, the rate of land use is under 1.2, devoted mostly to rice-growing. For years so rich a delta depended on Saigon city for supplies in every field, particularly in industry.

Within a few years the new administration has brought about many changes. The building of irrigation works albeit on a small scale has helped multiply rice crops in a vast area. The farmers have

acquainted themselves with poly-culture, growing vegetables, maize, kaoliang, soya, pea-nuts. After land re-adjustment, agricultural co-operativization is being carried out step by step. Medical and cultural work has been boosted. Each commune has a medical station. Illiteracy has been liquidated in a short time and the population is pressing for the opening of more schools from the elementary level upward.

Therefore, the training of cadres has become an urgent need. Can Tho University has been chosen as the main centre to train cadres for the 9 provinces of the delta. Up to liberation in 1975 it only had 3 departments: pedagogy, sciences, and agriculture, with an annual enrolment of 4,000—5,000. Not only was its material equipment poor but its teaching staff was also insufficient, most of them being visiting lecturers from Saigon. The school had almost no high-level specialists. Before the university could be integrated into the national educational system, it had to be thoroughly overhauled.

The higher-education establishments in the North have become specialized over the past 20 years with universities splitting into specialized colleges. However, Can Tho University has not followed this orientation. Given the scantiness of its material equipment and staff the university has so far maintained its original organization. To fulfil its task as a cultural-economic-technical centre of the Mekong delta, it has consolidated its departments and added new ones so as to meet the requirements of cadre training in all fields. At present, it has 13 departments, among them four departments to train third-level general-education teachers in natural sciences, social sciences and foreign languages and

one department of medicine (set up in 1980). The department of agriculture has been divided into 7 separate departments to train engineers for farming, stockbreeding and veterinary science, agricultural hydraulics, agricultural engineering, processing of agricultural products, agricultural economy, and raising of marine products.

However, the point is not only to open more departments, but also to link teaching and scientific research to practical matters facing the country, particularly the Mekong delta. At the beginning not a few professors of the old school still considered the university a purely intellectual centre with only a scientific mission, divorced from society. For them to do research and teaching in the service of farmers was not only impractical but also degrading. But life has shown them that the experience gained by Northern universities is not without interest for Can Tho.

In 1977 brown planthoppers appeared over vast areas of the Mekong delta. This was a difficult problem to face for the farmers there who no longer had US-supplied specific insecticides at their disposal. Such rudimentary measures as cleaning the fields, spraying kerosene, raising ducks to destroy the insects were to no avail. Famine was looming, with harmful effects for the whole country. In face of this situation the University Board of Directors decided to have all professors and students go to the countryside to help check this curse. With the help of the Hau Giang provincial administration, thousands of professors and students spent several months in 5 districts doing practical work, lending a hand in field work and conducting research to save the crops. At last they discovered that the IR 36 rice variety could resist the brown planthoppers. They managed to get enough seedlings and persuade the farmers to apply the new technique. The damage was finally checked.

At first it was not smooth sailing. The farmers were prejudiced against the "college youngsters" who wore city clothes and were not familiar with work in the fields. A group of professors and students, on arriving in a commune of Thot Not district early in 1978, met such a cold reception that some members wanted to leave. But others persisted. Young engineer Pham Hong

Cuc came to the director in tears and entreated him to let her and her friends stay in spite of the rebuff. At last, the farmers became co-operative and thanks to their common efforts the hoppers were destroyed and the work done by the "college youngsters" duly appreciated. Said Professor Vo Tong Xuan, a scientist trained in the Philippines who had stayed on after the liberation of South Vietnam: "It was only after the country was reunified that I began to understand this simple truth: teaching and learning must be combined with productive labour, and the school linked to society."

In the North, to acquaint the collective farmers with science and technique, agronomists have only to use the channel of the co-operatives. But in the Mekong delta where individual production still predominates, the university's scientific cadres have to seek other ways. From their sojourn in the countryside they learnt that they must rely on middle farmers enlightened by the revolution as the core through which to disseminate science and technique. With the land, material means and production experience they have, these farmers have the conditions required to apply the new technique. Once they are won over, others will follow suit. At present Can Tho University has won the cooperation of nearly 100 farmer households which provide it with help to multiply the new rice varieties for supply to all the provinces of the delta and which actively participate in the ongoing process of collectivization. By providing guidance for scientific research at the grassroots, the university has pinpointed many technical problems which need to be solved for the farmers. Hence the students' graduation papers are firmly rooted in realities, from which topics have been picked by their professors. Once graduated the students already have some knowledge of the realities in the localities where they will work.

Before liberation most of the students in South Vietnam were born and raised in the towns. They did not want to part with the comfortable life there and knew very little of the rural society. Newly graduated doctors would refuse to work in the countryside, secondary-school teachers to teach

in district schools. To put an end to this state of things Can Tho University has begun enrolling students on the basis of their region of origin so that they will work in their own locality after graduation. Each province sends students to the university, including those registering for correspondence courses. Sometime during their studies they will be sent back to their province to do practical work or write their graduation theses. Hence the provinces support the university and contribute grants to meet expenses incurred in building dormitories or conducting scientific research on problems faced by the provinces. Many industrial enterprises, State farms and stockbreeding farms have invited professors and students to come and carry out experimentation. Now Can Tho University, albeit smaller than many other universities, boasts quite a few buildings contributed by the provinces. Although newly founded on new land Can Tho University has set itself an orientation in harmony with the present situation. It has geared its teaching to practical matters so as to train cadres willing to work in the countryside to transform it. Many leading cadres of the provinces in the Mekong delta recognize that most of its graduates are competent and diligent. However, the university does not content itself with reaching these immediate goals. It also attends to basic sciences as befits a scientific-technical centre worthy of the name. Its experiences are not so universal as to be applied everywhere. Nevertheless the essential point is that under the present difficult circumstances when the enemy is wishing for Vietnam's collapse the professors and students of Can Tho University have shown such faith in the future of the country. And by their practical deeds this faith is being ceaselessly strengthened and will make itself felt in many other fields.

MAI THANH THANG

1. After the 1970 administrative re-adjustment, the Mekong delta covers the provinces of Long An, Dong Thap, An Giang, Tien Giang, Ben Tre, Cuu Long, Hau Giang, Kien Giang and Minh Hai. Can Tho is the provincial capital of Hau Giang.

LIFE IN A DELTA DISTRICT

(Travel Notes)

After the inevitable tea ceremony at the office of the People's Committee, Thuong, the secretary of the local Party Committee, accompanied us on a tour of his commune. Hai Trieu lies on the coast, in Ha Nam Ninh province, some 200 kilometres south of Hanoi. Followed by a crowd of children returning from school, satchels under arms, and fingers stained with ink, our small group walked along the village lanes. Unlike other communes in the delta, there is plenty of space here (264 square metres per inhabitant in the whole of Hai Hau district) and the houses stand scattered about, apparently haphazardly, together with their small gardens. Little houses that look fit for children by European standards, but what progress compared with the cramped quarters in Hanoi. We dropped in on three or four families without warning. Flower beds, fresh paint, stucco lattice-work and even the aesthetic care taken to inscribe in relief the date of building (often after 1980), testified to the progress in people's living conditions, even the comfort they have newly created for themselves: 873 households (out of a total of 1,113) with 5,118 members now live in brick houses, Thuong told me. Each family owns an average of 1.5 bicycles and one radio set. The whole commune boasts 73 mopeds, 3 collective T.V. sets (for 500 viewers) and 2 private ones. This wealth is shown in the furniture of these traditional three-bayed houses one finds in the Vietnamese countryside; I saw quite a few mother-of-pearl-inlaid beds in front of the altar of ancestors in the central bay. In the second house we visited, besides this altar there was another one dedicated to the Virgin Mary: in

fact the population of Hai Trieu commune is 76% Catholic (42% for the whole district, which has 147 churches served by 7 priests).

As soon as our group sat down, I withdrew into a corner. I was only too conscious of the "disturbing and deforming effect" of the presence of a *tây* (westerner) in the Vietnamese countryside. Congratulating myself on the fact that I understand Vietnamese, I attentively listened to the conversation, which soon turned to the subject of the income of the master of the house — income being the leading topic of conversation at present in Vietnam. After nearly three decades of a war economy based on subsidies which kept prices constant, the reunification of the country in 1975 and the end of the artificial injections of foreign aid made it necessary to reorganize the price system which had become hypersensitive to fluctuations on foreign markets and in the still chaotic national economy. The consequence was an inflation particularly detrimental to the public servants — cadres and workers — in urban centres who live only on their salaries. To the questions put by my Hanoi friends, our hosts replied with pride in their eyes and in the tone of their voices. I sensed a mixture of envy and surprise in the comments of my friends who only an hour before had loudly complained about the jolts from the bumpy and muddy dirt road which had led us here. Obviously, the countryside was now taking revenge on the town. The commune lives essentially on salt making (two cooperatives producing annually about 11,000 tonnes of salt, up to 15,000 tonnes in some years, Hai Hau supplies 40% of

the salt used in North Vietnam) and fishing (also two cooperatives producing 1,000 tonnes a year) netting a yearly income of 20 million *dong*. Salt and fish are exchanged for State-supplied rice. Thuong explained that more income comes from the plot of land farmed by each family. He said: "Take my case for example. My plot of 1.3 *sao*¹ of land yields a revenue of 20,000 *dong* a year, and yet I am not among the most clever. All told, I have 600 *dong* to feed each member of my family per month. You don't believe me?"

To show that he was a peasant with a level head, he made a quick reckoning: "Of the 3,000 cabbages I harvest annually, in two crops, on my 1.3 *sao* of land, I sell 2,000 at 3 *dong* apiece, which yields me 6,000 *dong*. But this is not all. I raise five crops yearly, yes five crops: two of cabbages in five months, then one of green beans, one of sweet potatoes to feed my pigs with, and finally one of millet."

As a kind of afterthought, he said: "One must work for society, but also for one's family, if you want to solve the problem of life." Doubtlessly, to elaborate on his preliminary reflections which I had taken at the outset to be a mechanical repeat of the slogan: "We strive to harmonize the three interests; those of the State come first, then those of the collective and the worker, beginning with the family." A rather vague formulation which I felt obliged in the circumstances, to interpret as an implicit criticism of the mentality prevailing not so long ago. In the cooperatives I had visited some years previously, the responsible cadres refrained from talking of their personal incomes — a tabooed

if not suspicious subject — and only spoke in general terms of the boost given to collective production, without explaining that this was only a relative increase which often did not even compensate for the demographic growth. According to the data I had noted during my visit to the local museum of Da Ton commune (Hai Hung province), from 1965 to 1980 the total rice output of this commune rose from 1,752 to 2,411 tonnes, while the per capita food ration dropped from 210 to 171 kilograms, due to the increase of the population from 5,874 to 8,057 during the same period.

It seems that the days of simple slogans calling for the building of a powerful and prosperous country are now gone. Instead, the necessity has been felt of finding a way which would help bring about, now and not in some undefined future, an effective improvement of the people's life, of course along with the forward march of the whole nation. Is there a better way to arouse the enthusiasm of all?

What struck me even more than the visible well-being of the families we visited, was the relaxed way in which the inhabitants "admitted" their incomes. Nothing was hushed up. One man proudly told me the price of a recently bought Sharp cassette recorder: 20,000 dong (the average monthly salary of a civil servant does not exceed 200 dong). His neighbour who had joined our group told of the high prices he had paid for electric batteries which were needed because of the frequent power failures. Every purchase a man makes is soon known to all. And nobody cares. Nobody thinks it's nosy to ask. Why should one hide the comforts one has earned through honest labour?

This is in fact a "healthier" mentality and climate than in town where people, forced to resort to "sidelines" to make a living, usually keep mum about their revenues. This is not because these "sidelines" are reprehensible or are part of what official texts call "negative phenomena" but because people feel a kind of uneasiness — an eventually respectable feeling — about engaging in marginal occupations traditionally looked down

upon, such as small trade. Undoubtedly it is sheer narrow-mindedness to judge the regime on the difficulties it has encountered and the serious shortcomings it has shown in the administration of cities like Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) and even Hanoi, as has done many a foreign observer filled with Europeanocentric and urbanocentric prejudices. The Vietnamese policy of reducing the discrepancy between town and countryside has in practice resulted in a step backward of the towns. But we must see this as a legacy of former foreign presence. If these cities do not have the appearance of shop windows as shown for instance by Bangkok, neither do they show the seamy side: the slums and prostitution stemming from the rural exodus. This does not mean that the Vietnamese authorities have not seen the necessity to go on with their plans for town-planning as testified by the resolutions adopted by the Party Political Bureau on Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City at conferences on these two major cities held early in January 1983 and in September 1982. "Perhaps one should think now of 'ruralizing' the town?" quipped a district cadre, reversing the slogan "Urbanize the countryside". Earlier, after talking of the signs of well-being visible in the countryside, for instance, the aesthetic requirements — ornamentation of houses, planting of flowers, or the need for coffee without which "Tet would not be a real festival" —, he had told us of the reverse of the coin, namely, the difficulties involved in, if not the impossibility of, quenching this thirst for comforts in the present situation of Vietnam's economy.

This was also confirmed by Thuong when he, too, spoke quite frankly of the shortcomings in his locality. The first, which we could confirm after our trip to Hai Hau, was the state of bad repair of the interdistrict roads, which were not metalled (by the way, it had taken us 6 hours on the national road to cover the 200 kilometres linking Hanoi to Hai Hau district). It seems more convenient to travel by motor launches or barges hauled from a tow-path along the canals crisscrossing the region, as shown by the number of peasants going by boat to the market of the

bustling townlet of Con. There also remains much to be done to "liberate the heads": this region is known for its people's habit of carrying goods on their heads (*dôi đầu*) instead of using shoulder carrying poles as done everywhere else in Vietnam.

The second shortcoming is the lack of family planning. "On this score, we lag behind other districts in the province," admitted Thuong, who has set a rather bad example, with four children of his own. "While the population growth rate for the whole of Ha Nam Ninh province is 2.1%, it is 3.6% in my commune."

Thuong was not carried away by the initial success of his commune has achieved. He said: "All right, our motto is to get rich, but it is also to protect ourselves from the whims of nature. We have enough to eat at present, but we must think of the morrow."

Later, wherever we went in the district, the responsible cadres, after pointing out their achievements, also talked to us of the propensity of the local people to take it easy and to banquet on the occasion of festivals and weddings. Obviously, the Party's warnings against waste and the appeals it has launched in favour of thrift and the building of reserves against emergencies, have not been sufficiently heeded.

For my part, I would like to point out another deficiency for which, however, the local cadres were not the only ones to be held responsible, namely, the shortage of goods made both in the district itself and in the country at large to meet the needs of the people, as testified by the purchases I have mentioned of Japanese radio sets by some families.

Another problem: in an article published in *Nhan Dan*, December 28, 1982, Vo Van Kiet, in charge of planning work, said: "I have visited many markets at Quy Hop (a locality in Nghe Tinh province in Central Vietnam). What kinds of goods are sold there? Manioc and vegetables. The peasants do not find the commodities they want to buy. It seems that those who have harvested their manioc are bringing it to market to sell to those who have not yet done so. Then in their turn they'll have to buy it later

on when their own stock of manioc is exhausted. This is mere barter, which cannot impel production. Agricultural products are also sold to public servants and soldiers, that is, to people of the non-agricultural sector who do not directly produce any material wealth. Apart from cash, they bring to the market nothing else to be exchanged for farm products. The markets at Quy Hop thus constitute only a closed circuit. At Nghia Dan district, the Party Committee members told me that if they had enough consumer goods to sell they would get for the treasury 100 million *dong* annually from the savings of the population."

At Hai Trieu, the only activity testifying to an effort of the population to break the long-standing vicious circle of autarky, is the annual catch of 20 tonnes of shrimps for export.

In any event, the well-being we observed in the district has resulted in a surprisingly active cultural life. The 39 communes and the district capital have between them two motion-picture theatres (and one open-air theatre at the district town) and four mobile film-projection teams and cinema attendance was 6.8 times per head of the population in 1981, not to mention 3.5 art-show attendances — theatre and song and dance — (5.8 times in 1982). Each commune has a radio relay station and a public address system (with loudspeakers in most houses), a club, a cultural house and an art troupe, with from 5 to 14 cadres put in charge of cultural activities, though not divorced from production.

Hai Phu commune² is a case in point. It totals 1,546 households (6,784 members, of them 3,500 of working age, above 16) and has a 450-seat auditorium equipped with Japanese Shinkya projector, where 8 film-shows (two films each time) and one performance of *cheo* opera or spoken theatre are given monthly. Housed in outbuildings are a modest library of 1,400 books and a radio relay station (broadcasting in the morning and evening local programs interspersed with those of the "Voice of Vietnam" from Hanoi). In another building, the 14 members of the commune's artistic team (including 7 in charge of mass agitation and information)

engage in their various activities, such as the printing of posters. During my visit I was informed that a decision of the Ministry of Agriculture had stipulated that the expenditure for cultural activities should not exceed 15% of the total revenue of the service or collective concerned.

However, Tran Van Huynh, Vice-President of the People's Committee, in charge of cultural affairs, told me: "We had to ask for permission not to observe this rule." The financial burden was shared by the cooperative, which took charge of the radio station and the art ensemble (150,000 *dong* annually), and the commune, which bore the expenses involved in the activities of the agitation-propaganda team of the cultural house and the film shows (100,000 *dong*). As the yearly receipts derived from film-shows were only 48,000 *dong* in 1982, a part of the deficit (60%) was covered by re-charging batteries owned by villagers, who paid a fee (one *dong* per volt-ampere). What is remarkable about this effort is that the financial problem is solved by the grassroots without any State help, thanks to the zeal of part-time personnel trained in the region. A native of this village and a soldier demobbed in 1971 after seven years in the army, Huynh is typical of the generation of the anti-US war of resistance. He works with Tran Xuan Hon, President of the communal People's Committee and formerly a guerilla in the war of resistance to the French. While having the right to tend plots of land of their own like the other co-op members, the 14 cultural workers of the commune receive the same subsidies as the members of the co-op managing board. Two-week or one-month courses have been opened by the district to train them in their respective jobs (librarianship, drawing, music) and longer courses (9 months) by the province for the persons to be put in charge of film projection. Conditions are thus set to inspire these cultural activities with local themes and enable them to strike deep chords. For instance the sketch "Who Is Responsible?" written by Huynh, and performed for us at Hai Phu. The skit criticizes in "gentle fashion" the resurgence of individualistic and selfish tenden-

cies observed during the implementation of directive No. 100 of the Party Central Committee on the contract system (which, incidentally, has yielded very positive results: We were told that before 1981, the per capita paddy ration was 11.5 kilograms at most; in 1981 it went up to 13 kilograms in the contract plus 5 kilograms beyond the contract. In 1982, it increased to 17 plus 8 kilograms). Acted by the villagers themselves, the satire had a realist character and plenty of local colour: a mother asks her daughter to pressure her future son-in-law, in charge of a depot of fertilizers, into serving her in priority; palms are greased to get one's plot ploughed in priority, ploughing being still done by a team of the cooperative. Huynh told me as we watched the performance: "To fight these negative phenomena, it is better to use artistic and cultural means, for if the cadres deal with them at meetings, people would complain of too much politics." The success of the skit could be judged by the hearty laughter from the audience. Two kids sitting behind me laughingly gave the cue to the actors on several occasions. Huynh whispered into my ear: "I based this play, without telling anybody of course, on stories I had heard about Production Brigade 6. But when the first performance was given before the whole cooperative, it was Brigade 12 which recognizes its failings in it. We borrowed this form of agitation — propaganda (through artistic activities) from Nam Ninh district as early as 1968. Last year, Dien Ban district (Quang Nam — Da Nang province, in Central Vietnam) invited us there to give performances. They have also learnt from our experience. This month cultural cadres from Thu Duc in the suburbs of Ho Chi Minh City, have spent several days with us to study our methods".

Every year, each commune in Hai Hau district organizes its own itinerant exhibition in a particularly original way. It consists of a roll of canvas on which are drawn coloured pictures about one metre each side. The roll is cranked by a handle, causing the pictures to appear in succession in a frame which looks like a T.V. screen. A commentator, who is often a

member of the theatrical troupe, recites with mimicry an explanatory text in the traditional style of poem declamation. The text skilfully relates the Party's social-economic directives to the situation in the region. At such an exhibition, I would hear for instance the names of peasants who were given help after a typhoon. The fine traditions of their village were also extolled. It is certain that these exhibitions help the peasants to see beyond their families and take an interest in the activities of the commune and district.

"Y Dang, long dân" (When the will of the Party meets the aspiration of the masses), this was the theme of the exhibition I saw at Hai Trieu. A fundamental idea which, yesterday as well as today, accounts for the strength of the nation, and the deep root the Vietnamese Party has struck in Vietnamese society. In this region where poverty was rampant for centuries—36,586 people in Hai Hau district starved to death in 1945, 780 of them (out of a population of 3,800) in Hai Trieu village alone—the dream for a happier life begins to come true: the responsible cadres told me that some of the people who had gone South in 1954 (80,000 out of 180,000 in the district, 890 out of 4,082 in Hai Trieu—figures which give an idea of the social-political upheaval then taking place in the region and foreshadowing the departure of boat people after 1975) have, since liberation, returned for visits to their native villages and have shown great surprise at the progress made.

At present, in Hai Hau district, the inhabitants speak openly of *lâm giàu* (getting rich). In this coastal region of the Red River delta, socialism begins to be synonymous with prosperity.

JEAN PIERRE DEBRIS

1. In North Vietnam, a sao equals 360 square metres.

2. A particularity of Hai Phu is that it has a second-level general education school teaching French as a foreign language. Hai Hau district boasts two other schools with Russian and English as part of the curriculum.

Vietnam Advances

BOATS OF CULTURE

Visitors to the Mekong River delta never fail to take an interest in a modest but convenient means of transport: the river vessel. There are boats of all kinds and all sizes: speed-boats, motor-boats, sampans, sailing-boats, etc. Over this immense water area, boats sail up and down over large rivers or along a maze of canals. Sometimes they sail in lines, loaded with rice, coconuts or pineapples. You can also see tens of boats carrying people in a wedding procession. A truly lively scene. In this low-lying area crisscrossed with rivers and canals it is only natural that people should move about in boats.

The local cultural services have taken the initiative of using boats to serve the people's cultural life, hence the coming into existence of the "boats of culture."

In Tam Binh district (Cuu Long province), thanks to this initiative mobile information and film-projection teams have brought the light of culture to the population in the remotest places. Eight of the nine communes of the district are located far from highways and people have to move about mainly on water ways: the Mang Thit river and tens of canals, large or small. This means lots of trouble for those who wish to see a film at the district capital. To meet the aspirations of the local people, the district cultural service sends boats to organize film-shows right in each commune. The district's seven-member mobile information team is equipped with a boat to go to 12 places in 9 communes where it usually carries out its activities: river landings, market places or village greens. At a large river landing, the team would come very early in the morning, before the arrival of the local people for the market day. It quickly lands and chooses a place on high ground to make the necessary preparations. Its programs always attract many people, up to four or five hundred. The programs start with news

about the emulation movement in production in the district, and stories of "good people and good deeds" which are interspersed with folk songs, conjurer's tricks and recitations. There are also strip cartoons for the propagation of the line and policies of the Party and the State. The team's programs always fit in with the local political tasks: cooperativization, military conscription, exhortation for food delivery to the State. In this way the team moves from one place to another, reaching almost every market place in the district and enlivening the people's cultural life. The team not only works on its own, but also cooperates with other teams or groups of various communes, and so can organize very diversified and lively programs much appreciated by the masses. Up to now, there are 6 communal information teams and 82 groups from the hamlets in the whole district. They are well organized and operate quite regularly.

As far as cinema is concerned, the district has two mobile film-projection teams. They also travel on boats to give film-shows to every commune in the district. Starting with 7 points, the district now has 35 points where films are shown. As a result, the people in the district can see two films a month on average. People living in the remotest corners have to cover at most three kilometres to reach one of these points. Thus the "boats of culture" have really contributed to the improvement of the cultural life of the people, since the district so far has not had the chance of a visit by a central art ensemble, and the provincial art ensemble has come only six times. In the first 9 months of 1982, attendance figures totalled 350,000 for film-shows and artistic performances, i.e. four per head per month.

For the time being, Tam Binh uses boats only to transport mobile information and film-projection teams. It is contemplating giving books to these teams for distribution. If good results are achieved the district will have book-counter boats, library boats, photographer's boats, etc., and perhaps even boats performing all these tasks in order to better serve the population.

VIET LONG

QUANG NAM - DA NANG PROVINCE AND ITS CHAM ART MONUMENTS

The area stretching along the coast of Central Vietnam from south of the Ngang Pass to Thuan Hai province used to be the territory of an ancient Indianized State, the Kingdom of Champa, which once knew a brilliant civilization. As a result of many years of research the *École Française d'Extrême Orient* managed to restore part of the history of this kingdom. But some dates are still not clear and definite.

The Kingdom of Champa was established in the second century AD on the basis of the Austro-Asian civilization and was subject to the influence of Indian civilization. As early as the beginning of the 7th century its centre was transferred from the nearby region of present-day Hue to south of the Hai Van Pass, where its capital was set up in Quang Nam under the name of Amaravati. In the 8th century its centre was once again moved further south to Nha Trang (formerly Kauthara) and Phan Rang (Panduranga). However, early in the 10th century it was moved back to the north. At the beginning of the 11th century, the capital of Champa had to be transferred to Binh Dinh (Vijaya). This time it remained there until the first half of the 19th century, which witnessed the total collapse of the Kingdom of Champa.

Thus present-day Quang Nam - Da Nang was for many centuries the political and religious centre of the Cham nationality. Here archaeologists have discovered many major centres: the Royal capital Tra Kieu (Simhapura); Dong Duong (Indrapura) and the My Son Holy Land.

The Cham Museum in Da Nang city is one of the few museums where many Cham art relics are displayed. But the most attractive relics are those displayed in the open air, that is the many Cham monuments with their celebrated pointed towers, scattered in the province. These towers, either isolated or in groups, were used in the past as places of worship or monasteries. We can find here the fusion of many faiths, from the worship of lingam to the worship of the Hindu god Siva, and Buddhism which was imported from India in the 4th century.

These tower areas, erected according to the Indian conception of the universe, consist of a large tower in the middle surrounded by many smaller towers forming a square. Those towers have not attained the greatness of the Angkor Temple in Kampúchea but they give a feeling of elevation when we come close to those harmonious forms full of vitality. The main building material was baked

clay. Stone was also used in some cases, especially for parts subject to much compression like pillars or arches. Up to the present time the building technique of the Cham towers remains an enigma. We do not know how the builders managed to join the bricks firmly together, as there is no adhesive substance between them. Many hypotheses have been advanced, but there has been as yet no proof to support them. Alone on top of the hills those brown brick towers stand out against the blue sky at sunset. And it is very moving to think of the marvellous talent of a people who at one time were the authors of such a brilliant civilization.

Among the Cham architecture monuments in Quang Nam, the most noteworthy are the My Son religious monuments, 78km north-west of Da Nang. Scattered in a valley about 2km in diameter, the monuments consist of 71 edifices which were built in various styles between the 4th and 12th centuries. In the late '30s of this century the *École Française d'Extrême Orient* took the first steps in preserving about 30 of those historical monuments (1). However, the two wars of aggression waged by the French and the Americans from 1946 to 1975 rendered the scientists' efforts futile. In late 1969 the US Air Force placed the My Son area in

the free-fire zone. Time and again B. 52 strategic bombers made carpet bombing attacks against this area. Thap Chua, the highest tower (21m) and a masterpiece of Cham architecture, was completely destroyed. Nothing remained of many others but heaps of broken bricks (2). Until after the liberation of South Vietnam My Son remained a field of mines, full of gun shells and time bombs. The Dong Duong and Tra Kieu monuments suffered the same fate. In 1978, the Quang Nam—Da Nang Cultural Service, under the guidance of archaeologists, conducted a series of surveys of the Cham art relics and worked out a plan for the restoration and preservation of those monuments. Six soldiers were killed and several others wounded when they were clearing the mines in the My Son area. At present, in My Son there remain 15 towers with a great number of *rondes-bosses*, tympan and structural parts with ornaments between groups of towers. With this My Son is still looked upon as a monument area of prime importance of Cham architecture.

A contingent of Polish experts, headed by archaeologist Kazimierz Kwiakowski, was sent to Vietnam within the framework of the program of cultural cooperation between the Vietnamese and Polish governments. Together with the Enterprise for the Restoration and Preservation of Monuments affiliated to the Ministry of Culture of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, they conducted surveys of Cham monuments in Central Vietnam. In My Son many photographs were taken of the towers by

photogrammetry. These photographs are of greater value than the drawings done in the past. They have laid a good foundation for the restoration of those monuments. As the experts' immediate task is to protect those monuments against further damage, urgent measures of preservation are to be taken in the course of the 1981—1985 period. Then, depending on the actual conditions of each monument, partial or total restoration work will be started.

In the meantime cadres in charge of the preservation of monuments aroused the population of the province to take part in the work of protecting the remaining monuments and finding relics and artefacts belonging to Cham culture. As a result of this, though the method of studying and surveying still leaves much to be desired, we continue to discover a number of relics and artefacts of Cham culture, which are now on display at the Cham Museum in Da Nang.

Early in 1982, while building large-scale water conservancy works at Phu Ninh, Tam Ky district, canal diggers discovered a number of Cham art relics. They were found at a place which used to be the foundations of two large temples for the worship of the Genie of Agriculture. The temples had been built by the local population and destroyed during the last war. Archaeologists started to excavate an area of 100 square metres, at a depth of 1.5m. They found a large tower area whose brick foundations cover 500 square metres. That is the An My monument, only 1.5km as the crow flies, from the Chien Dan tower area, which had been surveyed by

J. Boisselier before. Among other things, there were two tympan and a set of 188cm high lingam and yoni, all intact. Besides, there were many heavily damaged *rondes-bosses*. But most noteworthy are two fragments of a stele with legible scripts. The discovery of these stelae will help enrich the too scanty source of documentation available until now on the history of Champa.

In 1980, cultural workers in Que Son district found a tympan worshipped by the people of Que Phuoc. It had been found in a place 50km from Tra Kieu, on the bank of the upper reaches of Thu Bon river. It is a rectangular carving, 88cm high, made of soft sandstone, representing Vishnu. As regards iconography, in Cham art the standing position of Vishnu in the carving is unique. The position of the arms is also original: the right arm is held before the chest, the hand in mudra, with the five fingers spread open pointing upwards, and the back of the hand facing the chest; the left arm placed horizontally before the belly, the little finger curled up, the other fingers spread and the palm of the hand directed downwards.

However, what is most attractive is the bronze statue of Avalokitesvara found at the Dong Duong monument area (Dong Duong was formerly the ancient royal capital Indrapura) in August 1978. The statue was carefully hidden 1m under the ground, 50m from the dome of the main shrine of the Lakemidra-Lokesvara monastery. The statue, 115cm high, is stripped to the waist with two full and firm breasts, the two arms out-

stretched, the right hand holding a five-petal flower, the left hand holding a mollusc shell. Both objects are broken. The forehead was incrustated with an *urna* in precious stones which had been lost, leaving a lozenge hole. Through preliminary study experts on Cham art opine that the statue has the style of the Mahayana branch of Buddhism (witness the *urna* on the forehead, the effigy of Amitabha on the Jata hat, etc.) combined with Sivaism (witness the mollusc shell and the five-petal flower). The statue is probably that of Lakemidra-Lokesvara after whom the nearby monastery is called. One is inclined to think that under certain circumstances the guardians of the monastery had had to take the statue out of the monastery and bury it before they ran away. Thus the date of the melting of the statue corresponds to approximately the same as that of the building of the monastery: the year 875. In the past, before undertaking the excavation of Dong Duong in 1902, H. Parmentier had found a number of fragments of

a bronze statue of smaller size. On the basis of what is described by Parmentier in his survey, we can classify this statue as one of the Buddhist bronze statues of the Amaravati area between the end of the 8th century and the beginning of the 9th century when the capital of the Kingdom of Champa had been transferred to the south.

Although the new findings on Cham articles of art in Quang Nam — Da Nang province are still sporadic, they open up new prospects for the development of archaeology in this land rich in historical monuments. In the future, with the building of the My Son site into a museum displaying Cham objects of art, we shall not be forced to look at *rondes-bosses* and tympana detached from their background as is the case with the present Cham Museum. Before long we shall have the opportunity of beholding statues of deities, dancing girls, fabulous animals, ornaments, etc., right on the walls, arches and altars of Cham monuments. As a result of the efforts of the branches in

charge of the preservation of monuments, the art of ancient Champa will be revived, thus creating favourable conditions for those who want to understand the various civilizations which existed on Vietnamese soil.

TRAN KY PHUONG

Curator of the Cham
Museum in Da Nang

1. The monuments here have been surveyed and named by H. Parmentier in *B.E.F.E.O.*, Volume I, 1909.

2. At that time Mr Nguyen Xuan Dong, then curator of the Cham Museum in Da Nang, kept Mr P. Sterna, curator of the Guimet Museum in Paris and a celebrated authority on Cham art, informed of the above-mentioned vandalistic acts committed by the US Expeditionary Corps. Mr P. Sterna then protested to the White House against these acts in a letter which attracted the attention of world public opinion.

VOICE OF VIETNAM'S BROADCASTS IN ENGLISH

TIME (GMT)	TIME (HANOI)	METRE BANDS			FREQUENCIES (KHz)		
10.00 — 10.30	17.00 — 17.30		25	31	12,035		10,080
11.00 — 11.30	18.00 — 18.30	25	31	97	12,035	10,080	1010
13.30 — 14.00	20.30 — 21.00	19	25	31	15,010	11,840	10,040
16.00 — 16.30	23.00 — 23.30	19	25	31	15,010	12,020	10,040
18.00 — 18.30	01.00 — 01.30	19	25	31	15,010	12,020	10,040
19.00 — 19.30	02.00 — 02.30	19	25	31	15,010	12,020	10,040
20.30 — 21.00	03.30 — 04.00	19	25	31	15,010	12,020	10,040
23.30 — 00.00	06.00 — 07.00		25	31		12,035	10,080

THE BRONZE DRUM— an ancient Vietnamese musical instrument

Every year on the tenth of the third lunar month, that is in early April, the Vietnamese throng to the Temple of the Hung Kings to see its beautiful landscape and celebrate the anniversary of their forebears. When speaking of the Hung Kings, of the period of nation-building with its magnificent bronze civilization, we cannot but recall the symbolic vestige of this civilization, the bronze drum. About forty years ago it was regarded as an enigmatic object, a case study for archaeologists or artists, but today with the research works of a great many Western and Eastern authors—including Vietnamese ones—it has become familiar to all those who are interested in the evolution of human society. The origin of bronze drums, their forms, chronological order, categories, artistic, technical and social values, etc.—all these problems are being thrashed out. In this article I shall only deal with the musical characteristics of Thanh Son bronze drum. My findings, however, may be applied to other drums.

Some people still wonder whether the bronze drum is a musical instrument. If so how was it used? When and where?

Liu Zhuon's *Ling biao lu yi*, issued late in the Tang dynasty (end of the 9th century—beginning of the 10th century), said: "Musical instruments of the *Man Di* (a pejorative used by Chinese feudalists, meaning Barbarous) include bronze drums. They give a clear sound like tortoise shells..."

In his *Guihai yuxing zhi* Pa-Shing Tai (end of the 12th century) also affirmed that Southern peoples used bronze drums: "Two men carry the drum while beating it and the sound is like that of a leather drum."

Chen Jiangzhong, a Yuan envoy who came to Vietnam in 1293, had this to say in his *Annan jishi* (in Shi Jiaozhou Shiji).

"Spears and scimitars cut you to the heart
While the sound of bronze drums
turns your hair grey."

Old Vietnamese books and stelae also mentioned bronze drums at length, giving details on how and when they were used. Here are some instances:

Viet su thong giam cuong muc (General History of Vietnam, 19th century) says:

"On the fifteenth day of the lunar month the King (Le Nhan Tong) and his mandarins went to Lam Kinh to visit the royal tombs. There offerings were presented, bronze drums beaten and ceremonial music played." Thus bronze drums had a special place in the feudal Court rites. As to their use and the characteristics of their sound, here is an excerpt from a wooden stele erected by Nguyen Quang Ban (son of national hero Nguyen Hue) in Thanh Hoa province in 1802 (collected by Tran Van Giap and Nguyen Duy Hinh and reproduced in *Khao co hoc*, Nos. 5-6 Hanoi, 1970): "The sound of a bronze drum is louder than that of an ordinary drum, shorter than that of a bell, and mellowier than that of a musical stone..."

Since 1883, after the display of a bronze drum at an exhibition in Austria, European museums vied with one another to collect this original vestige and researchers immediately took interest in it.

V. Goloubew in *L'âge du bronze au Tonkin et dans le Nord Annam* (Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême Orient, Hanoi, 1930) wrote that he had seen Muong people in Hoa Binh province use bronze drums at the funerals of mandarins: "The drum was put beside the coffin. Now and then the sorcerer beat it with a curved stick whose end was wrapped in cloth."

O. Jansé also affirmed that Muong people in Thanh Hoa province still used bronze drums during ceremonies about 40 years ago: "The bronze drum was hung on a high support. Dancing around it, the sorcerer beat it with a stick from time to time." (*Recherches archéologiques en Indochine*, Bruges, 1958).

In particular, C. de Gironcourt in *Recherches de géographie musicale en Indochine*, Bulletin de la Société des Etudes indochinoises, Vol. XVIII, Hanoi, 1942, showed a photo taken during a Muong wedding in Man Duc commune (present-day Ha Son Binh province): a sorcerer beat the knob of a drum with a T-square club whose end was wrapped in cloth, while another beat the rim of the drum with two bundles of long sticks. The bronze drum was put on a mat, its open side resting on bricks.

Vietnamese authors who studied the bronze drum took a great interest in its musical aspect. In *Lich su che do cong san nguyen thuy o Viet Nam* (History of primitive communism in Vietnam Hanoi, 1961) Ha Van Tan and Tran Quoc Vuong recorded Cao Xuan Hao's findings about Ngoc Lu drum as follows: "A beat on rims 1 to 3 gives a B flat, on rims 4 and 5 gives an E or F, on rim 7 also gives a B flat, and on rim 9 outward gives an E." The bronze drum might be used in these ways in solo performance indoors or on a boat (to set the rhythm), or in group performance as a rudimentary Lac-Viet orchestra. In *The use of old bronze drums* (*Khao co hoc*, No. 14, 1974) Diep Dinh Hoa affirmed that: "To create different tones, not only the face and the body of the drum are used but also the different parts of the face with their different thicknesses."

These excerpts show that a bronze drum is really a musical instrument, but research on this matter is still at its beginning. Many problems are as yet incompletely solved: Does it give different notes? Can it render a melody? What about its tones, cadence and rhythm? Is there a relation between a bronze drum and other musical instruments?

The solution of these problems will contribute material to the research on bronze drums in Vietnam. A group has been set up to study a bronze drum discovered in Thanh Son district, Vinh Phu province, belonging to category II

PROGRESS IN CHILD CARE

In Vietnam, child care receives special attention from the administration at all levels.

Before national reunification in 1975, there were, in 1970, in the Northern provinces 28,132 creches with 54,142 creche attendants taking care of 350,000 children. Thus, the children admitted to creches accounted for only 18.49 per cent of the total number of children of creche age. The creche-building movement at that time was only in its initial step and was far from freeing women for work and giving them effective help in bringing up their children.

In 1971, the Central Commission for Mother and Child Welfare under the Government Council was set up to turn State-run creches and those run by government offices, agricultural cooperatives and city wards into a unified system taking care of children from two months to thirty-six months old.

Over one decade has passed. Child-care work, an important part of the national education system, has seen constant growth. By the end of 1982, in the whole country 1,133,103 children were looked after in 44,196 creches staffed by 151,781 attendants. Thus, the creche system was able to take care of 23.8 per cent of the children of creche age.

The creche network has been rearranged. Priority is given to enlarging it in the cities and towns, large industrial centres, key rice-growing areas, new economic zones and in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities.

(Heger). The group includes Trinh Lai for music, Le Tuong for history, and Hoang Quy for the folk point of view. After a time collecting material, visiting Thanh Son area and such remote places as Phu Yen (Son La province), Man Duc (Ha Son Binh province), Ngoc Lu (Ha Nam Ninh province), measuring sounds on a sonograph and exchanging ideas with specialists from related branches, the group has obtained initial results. Thanh Son is a highland district of Vinh Phu province. It was part of Van Lang in the Hung Kings period. The population belongs mostly to the Muong nationality. Here about 40 bronze drums have been discovered and many communes (19 out of 39 still preserve the custom of honouring and beating bronze drums. Many legends in connection with the fight against Northern invaders still remain in people's memory. Thanh Son bronze drums include many categories from early to late ones, most of them belonging to category II (Heger) and some dating from the Nguyen dynasty (19th century) adorned with two dragons behind streaks of cirrus clouds.

As regards music, Thanh Son bronze drum has been recognized as a real musical instrument rather than an instrument of cult, because a collection has been made of the ways to beat the drum, the compositions and rules about drum-beating during festivals, prayers for rain, festivities in the communes. More important still, there remain many artists who know how to use bronze drums, beating them with one or two clubs, individually or in a group with big and small drums. When used the drum is generally hung over a hole serving as a sound-box. In a house on stilts, it is hung from the roof, with a bronze pot under it. Rarely is it laid on the ground or on bricks. The use of bronze drums at Thanh Son also differs from other places. Here they are used only during festivities and not during funerals as with the Muong people at Man Duc (Ha Son Binh province) and the Lo Lo in the Northeast, nor to announce a death as with the Hmong in the Northwest. That is why the cadence and rhythm of bronze drum beating at Thanh Son performed by the artists is animated but not too rapid. The basic cadence is four measures C. The tempo from Moderato to Allegretto crochete is 100—125, the notes spread from crochete to semiquaver. The solo performance with one artist, one drum and two sticks is not as

common as the performance with one drum, 3, 5 or 7 artists according to the commune. Anyhow one has to discriminate between big and small drums and to unify the cadence and the intensity of beating on the drum. Thus the long sticks beat stronger, and the drum resounds louder in comparison with a leather drum. The sound seems to have different pitches, now high, now low. *In fact, beaten anywhere (in its centre, on its rims, body, open side) a bronze drum gives an identical note.* This has been recorded by the sonograph. It gives a resounding but not loud note with a short tremor and a deep timbre because the bronze drum vibrates from all parts of its body and not from its face only as the leather drum.

During festivals, the bronze drum is put beside other folk percussion instruments like troughs to pound rice, gong, leather drum as well as syrinx and pipe. People can play the instruments they like or take turns to play them. Drum-players are generally women but when praying for rain or making a sacrifice the performers are selected girls. According to custom they must be "dust-clean" that is without sad events in their families. The compositions and rules for playing a bronze drum have similar origins with other folk musical instruments. Thus for the rules, each kind of instrument has big and small types. As for the compositions, in playing pipes beating with the big type is called *tung*, beating with the small type is called *khung* and clapping both types together is called *ep*. The player has to follow this order:

*Khung tung chung tung ep
Khung ep chung ep ep.*

The same goes for the bronze drum. Cadence 1 in playing pipes is called piece 1 in playing bronze drum. Beating on the knob for the big type, on the rim for the small type (following the above mentioned order).

Legend has it that bronze drums are sacred things regarded as the soul of the land, the voice of the nation. At the opening of a forest festival, bronze drums resound and the villagers fan out in jubilant mood to go hunting, gathering bamboo shoots, working in the fields or collecting firewood. This may explain why the cadence and rhythm of bronze-drum beating is but a basic cadence, a simple and uniform rhythm, and that a bronze drum cannot render a musical melody.

After TRINH LAI

In general, creches are financed by State and local budgets, sometimes with contributions from local people. A number of creches in cities and towns have received assistance from international and foreign organizations. In the Beijing war of aggression against our northern border provinces in early 1979, 1,286 creches were destroyed by Chinese troops but were quickly rebuilt.

By now, 55.6 per cent of creches in the whole country are providing meals to children under their care. Great efforts are being made to give the children a proper diet. In addition, they are given periodical medical check-ups and vaccinations.

Special attention is being paid to the training of creche attendants. Today, 57.5 per cent of them are graduates of general-education schools. A number of cadres of this branch have acquired college or post-graduate education. Two secondary schools to train creche attendants under the Central Commission for Mother and Child Welfare have been opened together with 33 elementary schools in various provinces and cities. An increasing number of leading and managerial cadres have also attended theoretical and professional refresher courses and classes on organization and management.

However, certain local leaders still give little attention to child-care work. Over 40 per cent of the creches do not yet provide adequate meals to the children and work in some creches is not quite satisfactory.

The orientation laid down in the third five-year plan (1981—1985) for child care is to continue building this branch into an educational branch with a solid scientific and theoretical basis, to enlarge the creche network, to improve its quality and to combine the efforts of the State, society and the family in this endeavour.

The Giang Vo experimental school

THE SCHOOL: an integral part of children's life

Every year, come the summer holidays the pupils at the Giang Vo experimental primary school ask to have classes as usual. This means that they do not want to stop work. It also means that they would continue to spend ten hours each day at school, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Unlike the other basic general-education schools in the country which hold classes in shifts, either in the morning or in the afternoon, this school operates all day. The only inconvenience is that the pupils have to bring their lunch along since the school still cannot take care of that.

One may ask: does it mean that society and their families cannot yet provide them with an interesting summer vacation? Or is it because life with their families does not attract them? All that is true: Vietnam is only emerging from decades of war and is groping its way to socialism while having to cope with a war of sabotage conducted by Beijing and international reaction. But in spite of everything, there are many amusements readily available to a child: playing football, badminton or hopscotch on a street pavement, or hide-and-seek in a park, or a war game on a stretch of dyke along the Red River, to cite only some. A host of less wholesome amusements may also attract the youngsters, such as gathering at a street corner, loitering, gambling, and smoking, or forming themselves into rowdy street gangs.

So, the attachment of the pupils to their school must have another, more positive origin.

Obviously, it is not because of any comforts they may enjoy there. In spite of its attractive name, the school is still lacking in equipment; it has even no school-house of its own as yet. Its classes are held at the Giang Vo basic general education school which consists of a row of one-storeyed houses looking rather like store-houses. In front is a bare brick yard without a single shade tree. Things were even worse at its foundation five years ago. Then, thirty or more pupils were crowded into a room of about 14 square metres, taking their lessons, playing, and even having their lunch and siesta there. In recent years, the situation has gradually improved thanks to the voluntary work of the parents. Perhaps the only facility that distinguishes the school is its busing system. Because the pupils live scattered in the city (not only in the ward where the school stands, the normal situation with an ordinary primary school) they have to be transported to and from the school by bus. In the early morning they would assemble at special points in each ward of the city where they would be picked up, and after class hours, would be taken to the same points, from which they would walk home.

One day, as they were waiting for the bus by the roadside (there is no driveway leading into the school itself) after class hours, the sky darkened and a thunderstorm rolled over. The pupils delegated one of their number to go to a nearby house and ask the people

there for permission to take shelter. With the owner's consent they came into the house quietly and in good order. They made no noise and created no disturbance while waiting for the bus. When the bus came at last, they politely thanked the house-owner and took their leave.

In an interview with one of those children, a seven-year-old first-grader, I was surprised at his good command of the Vietnamese language and the correct grammar and accurate vocabulary of his speech. I also noticed the absence of vulgarisms often on the lips of children of his age. The mother of another child told me that her son never used obscenities, not because he didn't know how to swear, but because he is accustomed to finer and more effective ways of communication. A staffer at the Vietnam Television Centre remarked: "We often conduct interviews with children of different social backgrounds. Most of them fall into two extremes. They are either too shy or too unruly. But the children at the Giang Vo experimental school are quite different. They are self-confident without being pretentious."

* *

As indicated by its name, the Giang Vo school is a basic general-education school and at the same time an experimental centre. The school curriculum comprises all subjects taught at a basic general-education school but these are taught by using methods of an experimental character. The school has set for itself the following three goals:

First, to experiment with a method of education for normal children who have reached school age (six years old) aimed at developing their abilities in all fields.

Second, to experiment with a program and method of education which would prepare the children to live and develop their abilities in the modern world.

Third, to inculcate a way of life that conforms to socialist ethics, namely to form future young men and women with a socialist consciousness, a sense of organization and discipline and the qualities of a mature and humane person.

The subjects taught include the Vietnamese language, literature, history, geography, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, foreign languages (Russian in this case), painting, music, dancing... The method of teaching may be summarized in this formula "the teacher organizes, the pupil acts" according to a process that can be represented by the symbol: $A \longrightarrow a$. A being the contents of the study program, i.e. the most refined and up-to-date knowledge that can be imparted to children of this age; the arrow representing the activities involved in teaching and learning aimed at helping the children to acquire a in a steady and systematic manner; and a being the projection of A on the personality of each pupil, the sum total of what each pupil has to acquire directly in the process of teaching and learning. So, there is no dividing line between the contents and method of education. The teachers, while preparing each lesson also think of the whole system of lessons, which is in fact the teaching program for each subject.

The close combination of teaching Vietnamese as the mother tongue and Russian as a foreign language is also a feature of the school. Pedagogues at the school base the teaching of a language on concepts of linguistics and phonetics in order to impart to the child a "linguistic attitude" toward

any language. In this way, the children are able to see the similarities and differences between the two languages they are taught, which belong to two completely different linguistic systems. In addition to class hours, the children also learn to sing songs and act plays in Vietnamese and Russian. The goal is to enable them, after going through a nine-year program, to have a good command of the mother tongue and to be able to effectively use Russian as a second medium of communication.

Literature, though indissolubly bound to the language, is made a separate subject. The children are given direct contact with the most representative literary works of the nation and of the world in a carefully studied order. These works are explained and commented upon, and in the place of general essays on conventional themes, they write short pieces of literature in prose and even poetry, for those who are gifted. The most successful writings will be read aloud at the literature class.

In the mathematics class, the children are not taught any specific system of numbers but all the systems mankind has evolved and which are still in use. The goal is to impart to the children a "mathematical attitude" toward these systems. In the learning of the multiplication table for instance, they do not learn it by heart in order to use it mechanically. Instead, they will learn it over a long period and the moment they finish it they are also able to algebrize all multiplication and division operations. Take the case of an average pupil finishing the first grade, usually less than 7 years old she or he can solve a problem of the following type: take any number in the tens (of the decimal system), find a number preceding it and separated from it by a unit, and then a number following it and separated from it by a unit, then three successive

numbers preceding and following it, also separated from each other by a unit. Explain how you find these numbers.

To instil a new way of life into the children is a special concern of the school. There are no ready-made lessons on morals. Morality is conceived of as follows: the school is the place to organize life, or more exactly, a happy life for the pupils. A happy life should not be confused with a plentiful one, for the school, like the rest of the country, is still very poor. The children are given guidance on how to build a happy life for themselves in the existing conditions through whole-hearted devotion to work, play, and to the new human relationships to be consciously forged by themselves. The teachers help the pupils determine the extent to which they could "fully" do all the above. They will themselves evaluate their progress in study in an atmosphere of friendly emulation and under the benevolent and discreet eyes of a guide who respects their initiative. The pupils, by this self-evaluation, will class themselves in one of three categories: A, B and C, which mean good, average and weak. No rating is done by numeral marks because the school does not want to stimulate competition in earning marks. In fact, the principal concern of the children is higher than that: they want to become fully developed personalities.

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The Giang Vo experimental school in Hanoi is the only one of its kind in the country. It will be five years old by the end of this school year. It comprises 14 classes ranging from the first to fifth grades with a total enrolment of nearly 500 and a teaching staff of nearly 100. Early this June the

school will enrol a new batch of first-graders for the 1983-84 school year. Preparations are also being made to set up classes of the sixth grade. From a mere seedling drawing little public attention, it has become a sapling full of vitality, though it remains a controversial topic among educators.

Since the August 1945 Revolution, education in Vietnam has made giant steps forward and has gone through many reforms. The first reform took place in 1945: it consisted in replacing French with Vietnamese as the teaching medium and eliminating retrogressive elements from the curriculum in an effort to decolonize and nationalize education. This was followed by a campaign for rationalizing and democratizing the teaching programs and the organizational system of schools. It was conducted in the years 1950-51 at the height of the anti-French war of resistance. It consisted in changing the 13-year 3-level system of general education, which had a marked "concentric" character, into a nine-, then ten-year system which, though simplified, gave complete instruction in the main subjects. In the late fifties another large-scale educational reform was undertaken in completely liberated North Vietnam, this time dealing chiefly with the contents and methods of education. Immediately afterward, Vietnamese educationists set about preparing for a nationwide educational reform beginning in 1980 aimed at modernizing the general-education program and setting up a national system of twelve years.

The opening of the Giang Vo experimental school in 1979-80 coincided with the ending of the preparatory stage for this reform. Its promoters were clearly conscious of the fact that it would have to meet the needs of modern life in the last decades of this century and at the same time be in harmony with the conditions pre-

vailing in a newly-liberated country burdened with many problems, especially economic. Their viewpoints were approved by the Ministry of Education which approved its program and has been supervising its activities. Many parents, sensitive to the new trend, have asked to entrust their children to the school for experimentation. And they have not been disappointed in their expectations.

The sponsor and animating spirit of this important experiment is Ho Ngoc Dai, an educationist who began his teaching career at the age of 19 and later became a trained psychologist. Now 49 years old, he taught two classes of modern mathematics to students at the general-education school No. 91 in Moscow. His doctoral thesis was based on his successful experimentation at this school. At present, Ho Ngoc Dai is applying the results of his experiments to the Giang Vo school. The method of education whereby the teacher organizes and the pupil acts being experimented at Giang Vo is based on the results reaped by Piaget in his studies of operational psychology, the description of the process of formation of intelligence in the child. That is also the path followed by famed Soviet psychologists such as Galperin, Elkonin, and Davydov in their search of ways to control the mechanisms of intellectual activities in the child. Ho Ngoc Dai and its colleagues have been following the same track and have determined its degree of reliability thanks to the concrete processes they have worked out for both teachers and students. In his five years of directing the experiment Ho Ngoc Dai has written many theoretical papers including a 300-page text book entitled "Pedagogical Psychology". The book will soon be published by the Education Publishing House in Hanoi.

Overcoming innumerable obstacles which at times seemed insu-

perable, the Giang Vo experimental school has been able to assert itself. It has received broad cooperation from science and art workers throughout the country. For instance Professor of Linguistics Nguyen Tai Can and Candidate Doctor of Linguistics Dinh Van Duc have taught Vietnamese classes, and Doctor of Linguistics Truong Dong San, Russian classes. Many cultural and art workers have also offered free help, from translating children's stories to writing songs, dances and plays. Visitors to the school, including many foreigners, have noted not only the remarkable intellectual abilities of the pupils but also the human warmth that permeates this small and close-knit collective.

Will it become a model? This is still an open question. Anyway, it is completely different from the conventional school conceived as a place in which to prepare children for life. For the pupils the Giang Vo school is part of life itself. There lies the secret of its success.

PHAM TOAN

HOW TO IMPROVE...

(Continued from page 9)

which entailed great investments in the last 8 years which was a mistake, for they did not bring any profit and caused a lot of funds to be in stock) will supply us with a certain amount of energy and goods and materials. These material and technological bases of great value will help us solve the difficult problems of pricing and wages. Under those new circumstances, we shall be able to take a major step in working out a comprehensive system of stipulations on the management of the economy, thus creating favourable conditions for production to make great strides.

After LE THANH NGHİ

NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOURS

It takes only a few hours to travel by air from Hanoi to Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Jakarta or Manila.

For all their different social systems, the countries of South-east Asia are alike in many ways, in their landscapes, their peoples, their customs, and even their languages.

Calling on Neighbours

Southeast Asian peoples are close neighbours. Vietnamese, Thais, Laos and Khmers drink from the same river — the Mekong. Vietnam's continental shelf, which is formed by alluvium deposited by the Mekong, is linked to those of Indonesia and Malaysia.

The original inhabitants of the Philippines — dark Negroid people with crinkly hair — are thought to have come from Asia some 25,000 years ago by a land bridge that existed during the last Ice Age. Today, some of their descendants can be found in isolated pockets of the mountain provinces.

Some Vietnamese and Indonesian words bear striking resemblance. The Vietnamese say *song* (river) while the Indonesian say *sung*. We call an island *cu lao* and Indonesians call it *pulow*.

I have visited the island of Bali, which has always enchanted visitors with its richly decorated temples dotting the villages, towns and hills, its famous dances which have charmed the tourists, its famous wood and stone carvings and its intricately wrought handicrafts. I was entranced with the *Ketcak* (Monkey) dance performed by one

girl and about one hundred men chanting "tjak...tjak", or the violent *Kris Dance* in which men and boys went into a self-induced hypnotic trance, jabbing wavy-bladed daggers into their chests.

Strolling around Bali I felt as though I was in Vietnam: the same thatched houses, the same graceful, nimble-footed girls carrying baskets of fruit on their heads. The cockfight which I had to elbow my way through a large crowd to see also reminded me of my homeland.

Looking down on the plains of Thailand from the air I was attracted by the sight of so many *klongs* (canals), which recalled my tour of the provinces in the Mekong delta of South Vietnam, travelling along a maze of canals. I was told that Krung Thep (Bangkok) lying on a dogleg in the Chao Phraya River, once criss-crossed with *klongs*, has often been called "The Venice of the East" with its famous Floating Market.

In Kuala Lumpur, I stopped at open-air food stalls and tried *satay* — skewed morsels of beef, chicken or pork basted in sugar and spices and grilled over a charcoal brazier, which can also be had in Hanoi. The most interesting discovery I made was perhaps that top spinning and kite flying were also popular in Malaysia. I observed with great interest a "Long Spinning Contest" in which tops that may weigh up to 15 pounds were matched. The record for the longest spin in Malaysia, I was told, was one hour and forty-seven minutes.

I also watched the *wau* (kite flying) which is no child's game in Malaysia, because the *wau bulan* or the moon kite, equipped with a fine bow-shaped device which makes a delightful humming sound when the wind passes through it, may measure ten feet from head to tail and attain heights of more than 1,500 feet.

As I took a leisurely walk in markets in Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Bangkok and Singapore, it seemed as though I were going shopping at the Ben Thanh Market in Ho Chi Minh City itself. Almost all the fruits of southern Vietnam could be seen there: mangosteen, from which the Malays make *Halwa Manggis* (a tasty sweetmeat); rambutan — a distinctive scarlet or yellow fruit with unusual fleshy whiskers; durian which is perhaps the most famous of all tropical fruits. No wonder a European naturalist once said that it would be worth a journey to the East just to taste a durian.

I arrived in the Philippines — the world of 7,107 islands warmed by the tropical sun and ringed with mile upon mile of unspoiled beaches. I had the impression that I was in Ben Tre in southern Vietnam as my car was driving along interminable coconut plantations. My guide told me that Filipino farmers pick nearly 9 million coconuts each year, and that coconut oil, copra and desiccated coconut account for 20 per cent of national export receipts.

The Filipinos could find the same rice terraces in Vietnam's highlands, but what impressed me in Ifugao county of Luzon was that whole mountain ranges are terraced for the cultivation of rice. They were literally carved out of mountain sides by the Ifugaos thousands of years ago, and if placed end to end, the

whole length of these fields would cover a distance equivalent to more than halfway round the globe.

Southeast Asian countries are not only alike in natural conditions, but also ethnologically similar. President Ferdinand Marcos once remarked that it would be difficult to tell the difference between a Filipino and a Vietnamese in a crowd.

The famous bronze drums unearthed in Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines bear proof to cultural intercourse in ancient times. In Vietnam, they are vestiges of a great stage of development — the Dong Son Culture.

Watching the Lantern Dance in Bangkok, the Pole Dance in Manila and the Sword Dance in Kuala Lumpur, I felt as though I were attending an art show at home.

Several hundred years ago, under the Nguyen Dynasty, Vietnamese merchant boats used to call at Indonesian ports. Cao Ba Quat, a 19th-century scholar and poet, dedicated this to the dancers he had seen in this largest archipelago in the world:

Clad in exquisite dresses

They dance like angels,

*Bodies gracefully swaying to
the tune of a flute,*

*Smiles worth a thousand taels
of gold.*

Wide Scope for Cooperation

Southeast Asian countries have so many things in common that would allow them to cooperate with and learn from one another. Many Indonesian friends told us that Indonesia and Vietnam have experienced almost identical histories of development, that both

States were born out of hard and protracted struggles.

To the Vietnamese people who have gone through great sacrifices, their land being heavily devastated by thirty years of war, the experiences of their neighbours in national construction can be very instructive.

Malaysia is the world's largest producer of natural rubber and supplies 44 per cent of world requirements. More than one-third of the world's tin supply comes from Malaysia. She is the world's largest producer of palm oil and accounts for 64 per cent of the world's exports.

At the Rubber Research Institute of Malaysia (RRIM), I inquired into the basic research philosophy in production to raise productivity and reduce cost of production as well as to ensure supply to meet rising demand. This had been achieved, to a great extent, through the discovery and implementation of yielding materials, improved exploitation methods, shortening immaturity period, discriminating fertiliser usage and improved agro-management practices. The things we heard and saw at the RRIM could be of great value to Vietnam where rubber production is being expanded.

Visitors to Manila may find it hard to believe that it was one of the world's worst devastated capitals during the war, that the Philippines' transport system and industrial base were crippled, that its agricultural production was down by half, that 41 per cent of the water buffaloes were killed and one million Filipinos perished.

In reconstructed Manila I saw thousands of taxis cruising about and also thousands of colourful "jeepneys" — rebuilt US Army jeeps.

Manila is now a bustling metropolis with a population of 8 million. Vietnam can benefit from the Philippines' experiences in rebuilding devastated towns and also in expansion towards the sea. Indeed, I had a very pleasant stay at the Philippine Plaza, a modern hotel erected on a stretch of land newly reclaimed from the sea along Manila Bay.

Over the past few years, Vietnam has been fighting very hard for food self-sufficiency. And we have followed with great interest the "Masagana 99 program". *Masagana* is Filipino for "abundance" and 99 stands for the target of 99 *cavanes* per hectare (a *cavan* is equivalent to 50 kilograms). Until the introduction of "miracle rice" the average yield per hectare of Philippine riceland was among the lowest in the world.

At the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Los Banos, about 60 kilometres south of Manila, I could observe some agricultural and rural development problems which the Philippines and Vietnam have in common. The record of IRRI since its inception was impressive and its breeding program created a sturdy dwarf rice — IR 8 — a high-yielding variety which has been widely grown in Vietnam over the past years. The IRRI Director General cited several ways in which IRRI — Vietnamese cooperation could result in their mutual benefit. He said that the IRRI has developed high-yielding rice varieties, some of which are suitable to the acidic soil in southern Vietnam, as well as varieties that can grow in neck-deep water, as in the Mekong delta. On the other hand, he said, the Institute could profit from Vietnam's experience in planting hundreds of thousands of hectares in northern Vietnam, in which the *azolla pinnata*, a

blue-green alga capable of catching nitrogen from the air and giving it to the soil, grows symbiotically with rice.

Thailand is one of those Southeast Asian countries with enormous potentials. The Thai economy includes many branches of production quite familiar to the Vietnamese. We can benefit from Thailand's experience in rice, maize and cassava planting, in food processing for export. Thailand may sell to Vietnam food, textiles and building materials and, in return, may buy Vietnam's coal. The two countries may also cooperate in fishery.

In "Singapura" (Lion City), a fairly young city, I saw no ancient monuments to attract the traveller. But as one of the world's great ports, Singapore is rapidly industrializing, and I had the impression that the island was groaning under the weight of countless high-rise blocks of flats. Between Vietnam and Singapore trade relations have existed for a long time, and Vietnamese trade companies have set up offices in this country.

Mutually Beneficial Relationships

The countries of Southeast Asia today are very conscious of each other as neighbours in one region.

"It takes only three hours to travel by air from Hanoi to Kuala Lumpur. From Ho Chi Minh City to Kuala Lumpur, it takes only one hour and a half. We being so close to each other, there's no reason for the relations between our countries not to be the same." These heartfelt words spoken by former Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Hussein Onn during a meeting with Premier Pham Van Dong in Malaysia in 1978, have always been fondly remembered.

In the past years, there have been among Southeast Asian coun-

tries more and more frequent mutual visits of personalities and journalists, who upon returning home, have related what they had seen and heard, thus contributing to bettering understanding among nations in the region. "I have learnt more about Vietnam from our two-hour meeting than if I had read two books on the subject," remarked a leading figure of ASEAN.

We are for the promotion of bilateral and multilateral cooperation between the two groups of countries in Southeast Asia in the fields of economy, science and technique, culture and sports.

We do not deny the fact that there still exist disagreements among the various countries in the region. But dialogue can promote mutual understanding and trust. Any disagreement among neighbours can perfectly be settled by peaceful means through negotiations.

Regardless of differences in social and political systems, the countries of Southeast Asia today have much to do to promote the present atmosphere of detente and dialogue. There is no reason why they cannot establish mutually beneficial relationships based on the principles of respect for each other's independence and sovereignty, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual agreement, without any unilateral imposition whatsoever and without interference from outside. This is completely in conformity with both the immediate and long-term interests of these nations, with the interests of peace, stability and cooperation in the region, and with the principles and objectives of the Non-aligned Movement.

HOANG THINH

«I ACCEPT THIS SOCIETY»

By chance I met two overseas Kampuchians who had returned home for a visit. For a week we ate at the same Phnom Penh restaurant. At meal times I generally arrived before them and would sit near the table reserved for them. And when they came, walking past my table, they would nod and say in French and in a low voice:

"Good day and good appetite!"

It was clear that they had been living in France. After some time, we became friends.

"In France I am a refugee," said Unsak Héng, "and a worker in Montpellier, near Marseilles."

"My name is Yath Sarath and I work in Paris. I live there alone. My wife and children are still in Battambang"

*
* *

Unsak Héng had just had his fortieth birthday in his home town, one week after National Day on January 7.

"How time flies," he said. "The new regime has entered its fifth year. The National Day was a joyful occasion, wasn't it? It couldn't be otherwise after that bloody tragedy!"

This hint at the Khmer Rouge genocidal regime caused me to inquire about his escape, and the answer was not long in coming:

"I was working in Battambang when the Khmer Rouge seized power. Hurriedly I took my wife and six children to Thailand. I was a policeman under the rotten regimes of Sihanouk then Lon Nol.

I had to feed my family and myself. To tell the truth I feared the Khmer Rouge, but at first I still hoped they would bring a new turn for Kampuchea. But throughout the six months we spent in a refugee camp I only heard terrible news from home. My hopes for a return were dashed and I decided to emigrate to France."

Mr Héng was well built with a dignified air and a round and pleasant face. I tried to imagine him in a puppet policeman uniform and "decidedly he could not possibly be a thug", with serious misdeeds upon his conscience. Indeed, he did not feel the need to disavow his past.

"Let me congratulate you on your choice," I said. "Had you opted for the Khmer Rouge, not only you but your whole family would certainly have met with great difficulties."

"Thank you. This option saved eight lives. However, while our small family escaped death, our clan suffered a huge toll. I lost two brothers, two sisters, two sisters-in-law, one brother-in-law, five nephews and nieces—my brothers' and sisters' children, twelve persons in all. It was fortunate that my parents had died long before the genocide. It was a truly horrible period."

"Have you found any of your relatives? How do they fare now?"

"Yes, I have found some, thank you. They now live a normal life, with enough food and clothing. Their children go to school. They also receive medical care when

needed. Pagodas have been restored and religious activities are unhindered. For us Buddhist believers this is very important. Cultural and moral life is wholesome and richer than in the past. As a former policeman I appreciate the fact that order and security in the capital is fairly good. I have revisited Kompong Chhnang, Pursat, Battambang, Siemreap, Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom. There is no problem in these places to speak of. It is quite a contrast to what the situation was under Lon Nol: the administration bilked its soldiers and closed its eyes to the plunder they committed in broad daylight right in Phnom Penh. It is true that in some rural areas, especially near the border with Thailand, the Khmer Rouge still roam about so that the roads at night are not so safe as under Sihanouk. However, the prince himself bears no small responsibility for this situation as he is now acting in collusion with the Khmer Rouge."

Asked about his general impression of his country, Mr Héng has this to say:

"I am pleased because my homeland has come back to life. Material living conditions are comparable to those in 1970 when Lon Nol overthrew Sihanouk. In many respects the people are happier than formerly. For a comparison there is no need to recall the genocidal regime whose crimes are known all over the world. I did not have direct experience of it, but I did live under the regimes of Prince Sihanouk and Marshal Lon Nol."

And I believe he had a deep understanding of those regimes having been in the police under them.

Mr Yath Sarath, 42, had a strong build, a swaying, bearish gait, a gentle and placid face. As we talked he looked calm and pensive.

Born in Battambang, one of the granaries of Kampuchea, he had almost finished elementary education. He considered himself a peasant. With ten hectares of land, he could be classed a rich peasant, if not a landlord. However, the local Khmer Rouge did not kill him because they needed a driver, a job he could do.

"They put me at the wheel of a big lorry," he said. "I had to carry wood and salt, toiling and mulling day and night, but was given very little food. Most horribly, when they began their massacres I did not know when my turn would come. After more than a year of this life I fled to Thailand. I could not take my wife and children with me and they were left to their own fate. Luckily enough, they were all safe—a very special case for a Kampuchean family. With the help of the people's power I have found my wife and five daughters."

In the same restaurant I had occasion to meet Mrs Sarath and one of her daughters. Both were thin and weak, perhaps due to the long years of suffering under the genocidal regime. They are now members of a production team, a lower-level agricultural cooperative. Both were lost in thought as Mr Sarath himself was, for he was going to leave them soon.

"Do you intend to take your family to live in France with you?" I asked. "Would the Foreign Ministry of Kampuchea agree to that?"

"I do not intend to do it. The difficulty comes from the French side, not from the Kampuchean

side. Six more people to feed are not welcome when France has already two million and a half unemployed. And I have not mentioned the difficulties springing from the differences in climate, language, habits and so on."

"What are your plans then?"

"I will ask for permission to return to Kampuchea."

"Would life be possible for you who are now accustomed to French living conditions and way of life while your country is still beset with many difficulties?"

"I think I can manage it. Last year my wife and daughters harvested 200 bags of paddy, each weighing 25 kg. I myself am well acquainted with both farming and machinery so I'm sure we shall get enough food and clothing. As for the way of life, I am a Kampuchean, am I not? The difficulties will be overcome because the future is in sight. I have thoroughly studied the situation. I accept this society."

"Does this mean that you will return to Battambang to live with your family? Don't you fear an invasion by the Khmer Rouge from Thailand?"

Shaking his head slightly, Mr Sarath affirmed:

"No. This situation is irreversible. The Khmer Rouge cannot come back. Our people do not want them to return and will not let them return."

"Will the many Kampuchean refugees now in France share your acceptance of this new society in Kampuchea? Do they believe in the ultimate total defeat of the Khmer Rouge?"

"It is clear that the Khmer Rouge have been utterly defeated. However, I cannot affirm that all our fellow-countrymen in France think as I do. The Kampuchean community there is fairly numerous and complex as it comprises both those fleeing the Khmer Rouge and those who have been settled in France for a long time. Although belonging to many

political tendencies more and more of them are turning to their homeland. It is my belief that under the impact of facts the number will grow of those who think the same way about the problems of our country as Mr Héng and myself."

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* *

One day before they left Phnom Penh, I called on them at a pretty villa in a quiet street with shade trees. In the adjacent Son Ngoc Minh boulevard, formerly named after King Monivong, two streams of cars, motorbikes, pedicabs and bicycles were flowing. People wearing clothes of many colours and styles were coming and going. No more of those walking skeletons I had seen four years ago, right after liberation. On the pavements in front of the villa a swarm of chubby children with the dark tan of crickets were having a match of football. Another group of older children were going to their afternoon class. A truly peaceful scene which reminded me of Mr Sarath's words: "I accept this society."

Who then refuse to accept this society? And on whose behalf? Are they speaking for the Kampucheans at home or abroad?

"Never mind on whose behalf they claim to speak," said Mr Unsak Héng. "What is certain is that that three-headed government will be a flop."

"It has no following," added Mr Yath Sarath. "For the people know only too well who Sihanouk, Son San and Khieu Samphan are."

The knocked-down Khmer Rouge monster has become what Mr Héng and Mr Sarath call a three-headed government. Three heads which do not sprout from the country, but live as parasites on a host outside it. They are together, yet are at daggers drawn. What a strange being!

VU CAN

CHRONOLOGY

(April 16 — May 15)

APRIL

16. Closing of a friendship visit to Vietnam by Aruna Asaf Ali, President of the National Federation of Indian Women and Vice-President of the Women's International Democratic Federation.

17. A spokesman for the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry makes a statement demanding that the Chinese authorities immediately stop their armed provocations against Vietnam on her northern border.

18. The Secretariat of the Party Central Committee issues instructions on strengthening Party leadership with regard to the work of the Vietnam Fatherland Front in the new stage.

20. Holding in Ha Nam Ninh province of a seminar on local consumer goods industry.

— The Secretariat of the Party Central Committee gives instructions aimed at better guidance of Party's archival work.

22. Opening in Ho Chi Minh City of the Sixth Vietnamese Film Festival.

24. Closing of a friendship visit to Algeria by Vietnamese Minister of Public Health Dang Hoi Xuan, begun on April 15.

25. Hanoi: Enforcement of the decree on industrial and commercial taxes in the private sector begins.

27. Signing in Hanoi of an agreement on a five-year cooperation plan (1984 — 1988) between the Journalists' Associations of Vietnam and Bulgaria.

29. Holding of a summing-up meeting by the Ministry of Water Resources to mark the 25th anniversary of its foundation.

MAY

2. A part of the Vietnamese volunteer troops is withdrawn from Kampuchea.

3. The Vietnamese Foreign Ministry returns to Thailand 40 Thai nationals captured while illegally intruding into Vietnamese territorial waters and demands that Thailand stop violating Vietnam's territorial waters, poaching there, and provoking Vietnamese fishing vessels.

— Signing in Paris of a convention on cooperation between the Vietnam Institute of Sciences and the French National Centre for Scientific Research.

— The Secretariat of the Party Central Committee issues instructions for the completion of the readjustment of land holdings and the stepping up of the socialist transformation of agriculture in the southern provinces.

4. A delegation of the Communist Party of Vietnam visits Algeria at the invitation of the NLF Party.

5. A Soviet economic delegation, headed by T. A. Pasca, First Vice-President of the Soviet Planning Committee, pays a friendship visit to Vietnam.

6. A spokesman for the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry issues a statement denouncing the Chinese authorities' scheme to annex Vietnam's Truong Sa (Spratly) archipelago and hold exclusive control over the East Sea in furtherance of their expansion into Southeast Asia, through their publication of names for islands, reefs and shoals in the East Sea including those belonging to Vietnam's Hoang Sa (Paracels) and Truong Sa archipelagoes.

7. Holding in Nha Trang, Phu Khanh province, of a symposium on science and technology activities in provinces and cities in the whole country under the sponsorship of the State Commission for Science and Technology.

10. Promulgation of a decision by the Council of Ministers on administrative sanctions against speculation, smuggling, counterfeiting and illegal trading.

11. General K. V. Krishna Rao, Chief of the General Staff of the Indian Army, pays an official friendship visit to Vietnam.

— Closing in Hanoi of the Second Conference of the Episcopal Council of the Vietnamese Catholic Church, begun on May 6.

12. Vietnamese Minister of Foreign Trade Le Khac, envoy of the State Council President Truong-Chinh, pays a visit to Algeria.

14. Closing of a visit to Vietnam by an economic delegation of the Bulgarian Government, begun on May 8.

— Closing in Hanoi of the Second Congress of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, begun on May 12. Huynh Tan Phat is elected President of the Front's Central Committee.

CHAM ART MONUMENTS

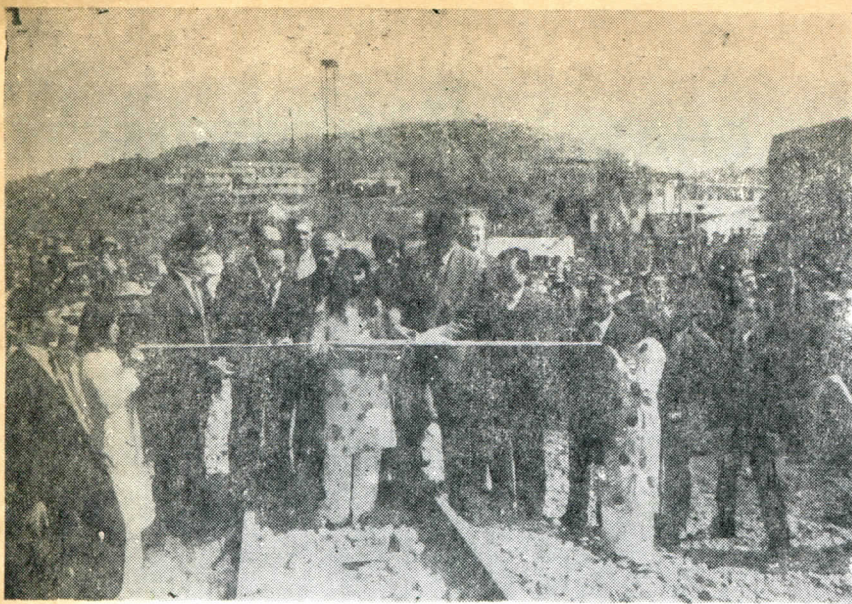
(See article on page 19)



1. Bas-relief carved on sandstone found at An My in 1982.
2. The bronze statue of Avalokitecvvara found at Dong Duong in 1978.
3. A corner of the Cham Museum in Da Nang.
4. Cham towers in Tam Ky.

Photos: LE VUONG and The Cham Museum in Da Nang.





A NEW COAL MINE AT MONG DUONG

(See article on page 8-9)

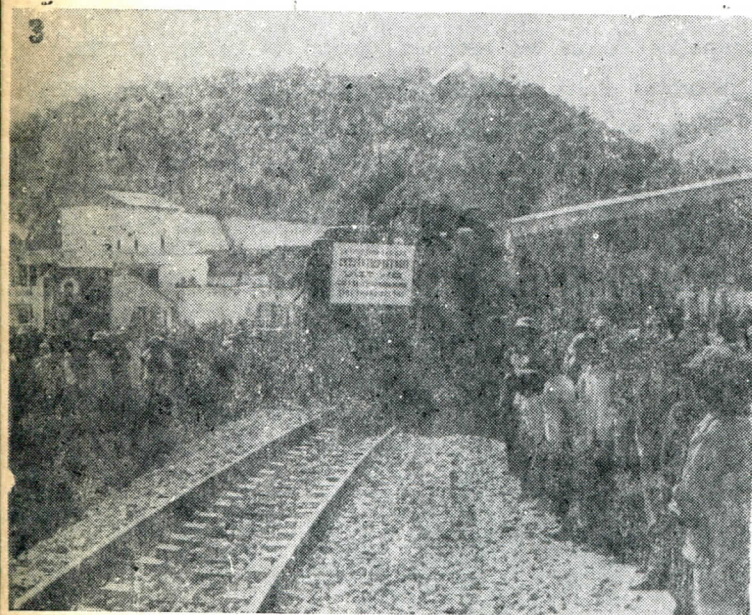
1. Inauguration of the Mong Duong coal mine on December 28, 1982.

2. Extracting coal from the western seams of the Mong Duong mine.



3. Transporting coal from Mong Duong to Cua Ong port.

Photos : NGUYEN DAN



Vietnam
courier

Le courrier
du Vietnam

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ВЬЕТНАМА

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