

EMBASSY OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM
PRESS AND INFORMATION SECTION

12 Victoria Road - London W8- Tel. 01-937 1912

THOSE WHO LEAVE
(THE "PROBLEM OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES")

Thousands of people are leaving Viet Nam seeking to settle somewhere else.

Who are they ?

Why are they leaving ?

How to settle the problem ?

It is clear that a problem of this kind, owing to its human and political implications, cannot be treated in a simplistic way by means of a few humanitarian tirades sprinkled with political slogans on human rights. It can only be grasped within the present context of Viet Nam, which is facing multiple problems left by several decades of war and more than a century of colonization; it can only be solved by taking into account certain exigencies and restraints, some related to universally accepted principles, others connected with concrete historical and social circumstances.

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THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

How did Viet Nam appear after the historic date of 30 April 1975 when Saigon and the whole of South Viet Nam were completely liberated - a liberation which put an end to thirty years of continuous warfare ?

For the first time since 1945 - in fact since 1939 the country had peace - a peace which was only relative, as everyone knows now. For long years every Vietnamese had lived under the constant threat of bombs or shells falling on his house, his garden, his children, of foreign soldiers or local mercenaries coming to kill, burn, and rape. At last, he can now live in peace and devote himself to peaceful labour.

For the first time since 1859, after 116 years of French, then American colonization, the country was at last free and independent. Free to build a new life, to exploit its natural resources for the sake of its own people, not just a few multinational companies ; free to live its own way, not according to norms and patterns imposed by foreign conquerors.

Last but not least, for the first time in 21 years, since 1954, North and South were reunited. In those 21 years, families could not even correspond, children were without news of their parents, husbands did not know what had become of their wives, people lived in anguish thinking of what might have happened to their relatives and friends. Scientists, writers, artists could not exchange their ideas and experiences.

Another nightmare had also ended. For 21 years, American imperialism, having at its disposal colossal technical and financial means together with sophisticated mass media and other means of propaganda and ideological poisoning, and created enormous military and police machine which had turned

many Vietnamese into torturers of their own compatriots. Worse still, within a given family, father and son might find themselves in opposite camps, and a man might be the murderer or torturer of his own brother. Now, those tragedies, which had happened every day in South Viet Nam under American occupation, ceased to occur.

And end was likewise put to the anguish felt by many families, often well-off ones, at the prospect of seeing their daughters becoming prostitutes, their children taking to drugs and other degrading practices. At last, one could lead a wholesome life and this cleansing of society was felt even by those who opposed the revolutionary power.

Peace, independence, reunification, liberation - perhaps one has to be a Vietnamese to feel the whole depth of the feelings that animated our people in those historic days. Millions of people were at last able to meet again their parents, husbands or wives, children, friends, colleagues. The people as a whole, even those who had not taken part in the struggle, were proud to be members of a heroic and indomitable nation.

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Man, however, does not feed on sentiments alone.

After those years of war, the country was but an immense expanse of ruin and misery. Let us quote a few figures, already known to all but which some are trying to erase from the memory of men.

Fourteen million tons of bombs and shells dropped on the country - 22 times the tonnage used in Korea, not counting napalm and phosphorus. About 25 million bomb craters : in many regions not a single roof was left standing, not a splint. Here is an example : in Nghia Binh province, 2,5 million coconut-palms had been destroyed by defoliants, bombs and shells ; on liberation day, there remained only half a million palms in the whole province. You can imagine what had become of villages and people under those coconut-palms.

If one adds up the areas of cultivated land hit by the bombs and especially by the sprayings of defoliants, account being taken of successive sprayings, one finds the figure of 10 million hectares. Five million hectares of forestland were affected ; large expanses of forest were burnt by napalm following defoliation. Hillsides denuded of vegetation by defoliants were brutally eroded by tropical rains and as a result several million hectares of land were lost, in many cases definitively. About a million head of cattle - buffaloes and oxen - were slaughtered : the American command, repeating a practice initiated by French officers, massacred these animals with a view to driving the rural population to famine.

In the South alone, 9,000 hamlets, out of a total of 15,000, were damaged or destroyed.

In the North, material damage was not less. The American general Curtis Lemay recommended that every industrial installation, every factory be destroyed and that this destruction be continued until no two bricks were left that were still joined together.

industrial

All establishments in the North, and all rail and road bridges were repeatedly bombed. All cities and towns were damaged, and some, like Vinh, Hong Gai, Dong Hoi, and Phu Ly, entirely destroyed ; two-thirds of the rural communes were affected ; 1,600 water conservancy works, which irrigated or drained hundreds of thousands of hectares, were wrecked. So were 1,000 stretches of dyke which protected the country from river floodings and prevented the intrusion of sea water into rice fields. Sixty-eight out of 70 state farms were hit, as well as nearly 3,000 schools and colleges, 350 hospitals, and 1,500 village infirmaries-maternity homes. The great leper hospital at Quynh Lap (2,500 beds) was razed to the ground.

In February-March 1979, Chinese aggression upon the six provinces along our northern border caused considerable damage; 4 towns seriously damaged, 320 rural communes affected, the Lao Cai Apatite mine wholly dismantled, and 904 schools, 691 day nurseries, 430 hospitals and health stations and 42 logging-camps destroyed. Fifteen per cent of the cattle were killed or taken away.

Let us note that in both North and South, American ordnance continues to main people. The tonnage of unexploded American ammunition left in our country is estimated by American experts at between 150,000 and 300,000 tons. Every day, children at play or peasants at work in the fields are wounded or killed by a mine or some anti-personnel device. In three years, there were 3,700 victims in Quang Nam province alone.

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Material damage is not the only sequel of wars.

Even more serious are the human losses and the social and moral upheavals.

On liberation day, hundreds of thousands of people were freed from jails-sick and disabled. In the South alone, war invalids numbered more than 360,000. The number of civilian victims for the period from 1965 to 1973, when the American troops were directly involved, is estimated at 1,5 million. Again for the South alone, the war left one million widows, 800,000 orphans and children abandoned by their American, Korean, Filipino soldier fathers.

On top of it all, American strategy spawned a large number of "uprooted" people-the key problem of post-war years.

Unable to conquer rural and hill-forest areas, the American command had recourse to the policy of "forced urbanization". Repeated bombings of villages and chemical sprayings of crops ended up driving 10 million rural people (figure supplied by American services) from their villages and fields. They flocked into the towns, cities and regrouping centres under American control.

What was to become of those uprooted country people who overnight found themselves stranded in towns and cities where there were no industries to provide them with jobs? When the American war began in 1960, South Viet Nam, like other under-developed countries, had 15% of its population living in towns and the remaining 85% in the countryside. When the war ended, only 35% of the population were living in the rural areas, the remaining 65% were concentrated in overcrowded cities and towns.

The American strategy aimed at killing two birds with one stone: on the one hand, to weaken the Vietnamese by "draining away the water", i.e. the people; on the other, to turn those same people into mercenaries of Washington. For those men who roamed the pavements of the towns had no other recourse than to enlist in Thieu's army and police. In this way 1,200,000 men were pressed into that army and police commanded by more than 50,000 officers, well-trained, indoctrinated and supervised by tens of thousands of American advisers. If one adds to these numbers the civil servants, political agents, and leaders of various anti-communist parties and organizations, one will find that at least 1.5 million people were living from salaries paid by the American budget-not to mention the taxes paid by the local population.

To serve that war machine, a whole commercial network-especially to import the luxury goods consumed by the Americans and the privileged strata-and a "tertiary" set-up-banks, insurance companies, coffee-houses, bars, hotels, brothels, drug traffickers-mushroomed. On liberation day, 300,000 Saigon households were registered as "traders" at least twice the number of factory workers.

American military aid averaged 1,3 billion dollars a year, economic aid 600-800 million dollars; not to mention the on-the-spot expenditures of the

American expeditionary corps and services, the CIA for instance, which maintained at least 30,000 "pacification agents", not to mention, too, aid from other capitalist powers : France, Japan, Great Britain, West Germany. All that money—two billion dollars a year on an average—allowed several million people to live without participating in any productive work.

A real western-style "consumer society" with the most up-to-date gadgets came into being, especially in Saigon where American, European and Japanese firms were able to dump their goods amid a frenzied atmosphere. It was a rat race overshadowed by war and death, while police terror was on the rampage, Drug-taking made havoc of a bewildered youth who found no way out except in a military career in the service of the foreigners.

One understands why there were in South Viet Nam on the day of liberation :

- More than three million unemployed people ;
- Several hundred thousand prostitutes and drugaddicts;
- Several dozen thousand gangsters and other criminals, whose numbers later increased with the release of the former Thieu police, para-troops and rangers ;
- One million tubercular people ;
- Several hundred thousand people affected by venereal diseases ;
- Four million illiterate people.

The former regime had wholly neglected social medicine ; medical doctors cared solely for a rich clientele ; endemic tropical diseases continued on the rampage, there being cases of plague and cholera in Saigon itself, malaria was wreaking havoc.

In a word, one had to rebuild not only a country which had been ruined materially but also a society which had been completely perverted and turned upside down, in which millions of people had forgotten how to perform honest labour and had lost all sense of national and moral values. A society which had to be remade ; people who had to be reintegrated into the social community.

In French colonial times, the population of Saigon was 500,000. By liberation day in 1975 it had increased to 3,5 million. The city took 80% of American aid ; it was the hub of the former regime's administrative, military, police and commercial apparatus and also the main provider of its fleshpots. No wonder that after liberation it ran into all kinds of difficulties. American aid in food—300,000 - 700,000 tons each year—had been specially reserved for feeding its population .

Immediately after liberation, American aid and that supplied by other western powers were cut off. Chinese aid to the North was reduced then completely interrupted. Right at the start of its immense work of national reconstruction, Viet Nam lost three-fourths of the assistance given to North and South in the war years.

Neither the Vietnamese people nor their leaders allowed themselves to be disheartened by the scope of the difficulties encountered. An overall line was quickly defined :

- Quick reunification ; election of a national assembly and a government for the whole country ;
- Reconversion of the socio-economic structures of the South with a view to turning colonial and neo-colonial structures into national ones, and a gradual advance to socialism ;

- Large-scale economic and social measures aimed at giving work to millions of unemployed people, rehabilitating hundreds of thousands of prostitutes, drug-addicts and delinquents; ensuring decent living and education to nearly one million orphans, quickly organizing a health system capable of stemming endemic and social diseases, eradicating illiteracy in the whole of the South while developing the school system in the whole country ;

- Strenuous efforts to develop science and technology, and a national and progressive culture while integrating traditions into this speedy modernization of society and culture ;

- Harmonious integration of about sixty diverse ethnic groups-ethnic minorities making up about 20% of the population.

Let us give a broad outline of the achievements in those fields : quick repair of communication lines between North and South, which had been interrupted for 21 years ; illiteracy eradicated in the South (in the North the problem had been solved 20 years before); educational development which made it possible for 15 million children and young people to go to school in 1979 (total population : 50 million) with help from the North, the South has set up a health system which reaches down to the village and set about eradicating endemic and social diseases. Remarkable results have been obtained in the medical and social rehabilitation of prostitutes and drug-addicts thanks to the atmosphere of social renovation prevailing after liberation and the devotion of cadres engaged in this work. By helping clear large tracts of land of mines, the people's army has made it possible for many villages to be rehabilitated and new ones to be built. The urban authorities, by setting up handicraft workshops and getting factories to operate again in spite of material shortages, have given jobs to hundreds of thousands of unemployed people. The people actively participated in the general and local elections, to the national assembly and the administrative committees of villages, town quarters, and towns and cities. By putting under crops land which had been devastated by war, building irrigation works, and reclaiming virgin land, about one million more hectares of arable land have been gained.

The champions of "human rights" in the West, from Jimmy Carter to the correspondents of *Le Monde*, are apt to forget those results which have given back to millions of Vietnamese their human dignity flouted by a century of French colonization and twenty years of American intervention. Human rights in a former colony are first of all the right to national independence ; the right to choose a line of development which does not sacrifice its natural and human resources to the greed of multinational companies, and that of a minority of landowners, capitalists and agents of foreign powers ; the right to education, health care work no equitable observer can deny that the present regime in Viet Nam has made considerable efforts in this direction and has achieved results beyond the capability of any other regime in the present circumstances.

Let us add that wartime destructions are not the only obstacles to the development of Viet Nam. ~~Since 1975 two more factors have contributed to aggravating the situation :~~

- Natural calamities of unprecedented scope; and
- Peking's aggressive policy (in fact, that of the Washington-Peking axis).

In 1977 a great drought affected the whole country for several months resulting in a deficit of more than a million tons of rice for that year's crop. The year 1978 saw a series of exceptionally violent floods and typhoons, which hit areas with an aggregate population of 6 million. Three million tons of rice were lost, not to mention the washed-away irrigation works and bridges, the submerged orchards and drowned cattle, and the losses of people's household possessions and personal belongings

But the major obstacle to the progress of reconstruction has been the aggressive policy pursued by Peking. Here are the main episodes :

Following Kissinger's visit in 1971 and the Shanghai Communique in 1972, Peking pledges itself to support Washington's international policy, with a view to bolstering its anti-Soviet position, emerging as the world's third superpower, retrieving Taiwan, and also gaining substantial technical and financial assistance. This about-face of Chinese international policy had manifested itself in Bangladesh, Chile, Iran ... Starting in 1971, constant pressure was brought to bear on Viet Nam to compel its people to forsake all attempts to liberate the South, and moves were initiated to provoke a "cultural revolution" in the country. In 1974, Peking resorted to armed aggression to occupy the Hoang Sa (Paracel) islands, which were then held by Saigon forces. This military operation was only possible with American assent.

In 1975, the Chinese Government was not at all pleased to see Viet Nam win total liberation. But it would be difficult under the circumstances to launch a direct attack on Viet Nam ; no Chinese soldier would have obeyed such orders. So Peking had Vietnam's South-Western flank attacked by Pol Pot's Kampuchean forces, which were equipped by China and commanded by Chinese advisers. Immediately after the liberation of Saigon, Viet Nam had to face a new war. A war which compelled its government to evacuate all villages located along the 1,000-kilometres-long border with Kampuchea, thus losing a not negligible area of cultivable land. The atrocities perpetrated by Pol Pot forces also compelled 300,000 Khmer and Chinese refugees to seek shelter in Viet Nam - a burden for the Vietnamese Government. Before this happened, hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese residents in Kampuchea had left that country for home.

The war by proxy made by Peking on Viet Nam by means of the Pol Pot forces was soon followed by a series of manoeuvres aimed at sowing trouble within Vietnam itself through the agency of the numerous Hoa community (people of Chinese origin) and through military pressure exerted on the China-Viet Nam frontier, ending in armed aggression on 17 February this year.

Viet Nam, ruined by thirty years of war, thus had to face the power of China immediately after its liberation and this considerably aggravated its economic, political and social difficulties.

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Economic or social problems were not the only ones. A very preoccupying problem was that of security, in other words, that of counter-revolution and civil war. Gerald Ford had announced in 1975 that there would be a blood-bath. Why should he have committed the honour of a President of the United States of America by issuing such an affirmation if he had no good reason to do so ?

The rapid collapse of the Saigon regime was the result not of the extermination of the pro-American armed and political forces, but of their ~~disbandment. After liberation there still remained, fully alive, 1.5 million~~ soldiers and police together with more than 50,000 army officers and as many political agents. In his book "Decent Interval", Frank Snepp, Head of the Analysis Department of the CIA in Saigon from 1972 to 1975, tells us that the CIA had left in Saigon, besides several thousand of its direct operatives, about 30,000 agents of Operation Phoenix, i.e. people specially trained for the assassination of revolutionary militants. In South Viet Nam there also existed "feudalities", i.e. organized groups still little integrated into the national community. The French colonialists, then the Americans, had employed reactionary elements within those heterogeneous communities for counter-revolutionary action. This was the case of the Hoa-Hao religious sect in the Mekong delta, which claimed two million followers and whose armed militia had given very effective support to French then American troops ; the Cao Dai religious sect, of which the most important group was found in the border province of Tay Ninh and also had armed forces at its disposal. In the mountain regions, the French had created F.U.L.R.O. (Front Uni de

Liberation des Races Opprimées) which was later taken in hand by the Americans.

So Washington did not consider the loss of Saigon to be definitive, the more so since its collusion with Peking dates back several years already. Revolutionary Viet Nam, facing as it did enormous economic and social difficulties, would not be able to resist a two fold offensive- internal subversion combined with external aggression. Immediately after 30 April 1975, the counter-revolutionary networks installed by Washington started operating. Civilian and military cadres were murdered, factories and store houses set afire ; in some highland areas of the South, some convoys, mostly civilian ones, were fired on.

In those conditions, what was to be done about the 1.5 million soldiers, police, and civil servants of the former regime ? Pol Pot had devised a simple solution which consisted in the outright liquidation of all those who had served the Lon Nol regime. It was clear that the Vietnamese government could not resort to this kind of action. All those soldiers, police, and civil servants who had had no important political responsibilities were quickly returned to their families, and the great majority of them were able to vote at the general elections of April 1976. But the army officers, the "pacification" agents, the holders of important political posts, those who had ordered massacres, bombings, wholesale destructions of villages, torture of prisoners, could not be released immediately without creating the risk of a civil war. Those men, operating within a still unstable society, would not fail to fan up troubles. This was by no means an imaginary danger. From time to time, arms caches and workshops turning out counterfeit money and propaganda material would be uncovered. In particular, networks would be exposed, some quite well organized and essentially composed of former officers who had refused to register with the revolutionary authorities. Those counter-revolutionary army officers provided with shelter and financial assistance by Hoa traders of Cho Lon. Subversive network created by the American quickly coordinated its action with that set up by Peking with a view to sabotaging the Vietnamese revolutionary movement.

So the revolutionary government decided to keep those men in order to "re-educate" them. What does this mean ? Kept in camps far from the towns, those army officers and other responsible agents of the former regime were to participate in political discussions and take a look back over their past while careful investigation was conducted on what they had done under American occupation. The point was to assess whether so-and-so, if released, would join a counter-revolutionary organization. As time passed, the majority of those men had their conscience awakened and realized that they had been mistaken in siding with the Americans. Their investigation revealed that in the past they had merely executed orders given by others. So they could be released and given the chance to become honest citizens again. There were, however, some people among them who persisted in believing that the revolution could never win for good ; for them anti-communism had become second nature and they would rejoin counter-revolutionary organizations as soon as they were set free.

~~One realizes that such an undertaking could be complex and would take time, that errors could be made and abuses committed. Just imagine a European country, France or Belgium for instance, which would be occupied for twenty years by Hitler, who would leave behind him hundreds of thousands of members of his S.S. The problem was all the more complex since in Europe Hitler had collapsed and no longer was able to maintain the networks he had set up, whereas the American services can easily give financial and political support to their agents. They can even send them arms, for boats can secretly sail from Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, and reach the shores of Viet Nam where they will take away agents who feel they are about to be discovered and bring in others who have been carefully trained.~~

That there should still be about 20,000 such men who remain obstinately counter-revolutionary, out of the 1.5 million who worked for the Americans, is a situation about which the revolutionary administration can do nothing,

except wait until the time comes when, helped by the evolution of events, those men will eventually understand that socialist revolution is there to stay in Viet Nam and that it is utterly useless for them to oppose it. The concerted actions of Washington and Peking are certainly not designed to help those counter-revolutionary diehards change their minds.

And so, on three occasions, in 1954, 1975, then 1978-79, imperialist and reactionary forces have availed themselves of difficult circumstances to provoke an exodus of refugees in Viet Nam. The aims have remained the same : to stir up and exacerbate serious social and economic difficulties in revolutionary Viet Nam ; to weaken it from within, thus preparing conditions for renewed armed aggression. Aggression and the threat of aggression is a new factor urging people to flee. At present, the Chinese aggression of February this year, then the threat uttered by Deng Xiaoping to give Viet Nam a new "lesson" and Chinese troop concentrations along the Sino-Vietnamese border are pushing the Hoa into a new exodus.

Economic, political, social difficulties : for those who are not inspired by the will to rebuild their ravaged country, the only way out is to go away and try to find elsewhere a more comfortable life.

PART TWO

THOSE WHO LEAVE

The first population exodus of these long years of war took place in 1954. Under the terms of the Geneva Agreements the French expeditionary corps was regrouped South of the 17th parallel. About 800,000 people followed them South : soldiers and police, civil servants, business-men, but mostly catholics (more than half a million) who had been living in villages put under ecclesiastical authority, both temporal and spiritual. The campaign that accounted for that catholic exodus had been carefully prepared by the Franco-American services. This was a political operation which aimed at providing the Southern regime led by the integrist catholic Ngo Dinh Diem with a popular support, both military and political. The catholics regrouped in the South were to serve as a frame for a powerful army bank-rolled, equipped and trained by the Americans ; the rest were assembled in Parishes concentrated in strategic regions. Saigon in particular was surrounded by a belt of catholic Parishes which prospered thanks to substantial American aid and from which columns of demonstrators would march on the city to voice support for the government. These Parishes had armed militia units which actively joined in the hunt for revolutionary militants. There were also several thousand Nung soldiers, members of an ethnic minority in the North, whom the French had grouped into a special unit.

That influx of hundreds of thousands of catholics from the North, conducted by aggressive priests, gave the South Vietnamese catholic church a strongly reactionary character. For a long time, the church was to be the main supporter of the Saigon administration and the most fervent advocate of American intervention. Diem and Thieu, the two presidents of the Republic, many cabinet ministers, army officers, deputies, senators, were catholics ; the church was a real armature for the regime, a violently anti-communist church that even refused to follow the resolutions of the Second Vatican Council.

After the signing of the Paris Accord of 1973 and following the withdrawal of American troops, the American services, anticipating the defeat of the Thieu regime, worked out a plan for the evacuation of several hundred thousand people. This new exodus was to serve as a pretext for a political campaign to discredit the Vietnamese revolutionary government and would provide personnel for opposition movements in exile, or even an emigre government.

The rapid collapse of the Thieu regime and the lightning victory of the revolutionary forces left the American services little time. About 150,000 people were taken away helter-skelter in the last weeks by sea or air. Among that first wave of refugees there were :

- Many generals and other army officers who had perpetrated often unforgivable crimes : Nguyen Cao Ky, the air "vice-marshal" who had sworn to defend the country to his last breath against the "communists", was among the first to fly to the United States.

- The influential members of former pro-American Governments, first of all Thieu, followed by many cabinet ministers, deputies, high-ranking officials, leaders of political parties, politico-religious sects, rabid anti-communists, people regarded by the American services as running a "high risk".

- Rich merchants and industrialists who had been able to buy their places on the departing planes from American officials in charge of organizing the exodus ;

- The staffs of many American services, including intelligence agents and torturers as well as cooks and maidservants taken to the States by their masters.

- People who should have no reason to flee but who were seized by panic, on account of the terrifying rumours spread by American psychowar services : the communist victors would perform wholesale massacres, there would be a bloodbath, women found with varnished fingernails would have them torn off, everybody would be sent away to do hard labour, young girls would be forced to marry war invalids, etc...

Those with money, gold, foreign currencies, diamonds could settle in the United States or France to set up businesses ; technicians were recruited by the administrations or private firms of those countries ; the others had to resign themselves to doing hard work or living from subsidies. In the United States in particular, the local populations did not give a warm welcome to those immigrants who, not knowing the language of the host country and lacking professional qualification, had to lead a hard life. The American administration, like the reactionary Western organizations, has been recruiting among those refugees agents who specialize in slander campaigns against the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

Some of the refugees, former officers and mercenaries of the Saigon army, have been receiving training in special camps. They are to be reintroduced into the three countries of Indochina in order to man the subversive networks there. Trained agents can come back quite easily to Kampuchea and Laos overland ; in the case of Laos they just have to cross the Mekong river; and to Viet Nam by sea.

It would be utterly naive to believe that after their defeat, the American services have lost all interest in Indochina and will allow Kampuchea, Laos and especially Viet Nam to follow their destinies. The many counter-revolutionary networks set up by the Americans in Viet Nam continue to keep in touch with foreign countries, mostly by sea. The South Vietnamese coast, nearly 2,000 kilometres long, cannot be entirely patrolled by the Vietnamese navy. Between Viet Nam and the neighbouring countries - Thailand, Malaysia, Hongkong, The Philippines, and even Australia- ships are plying clandestinely, taking away those who wish to leave the country-businessmen seeking fortune elsewhere, counter-revolutionary agents who feel insecure ...- and bringing to Viet Nam specially trained agents, weapons, and also money to finance counter-revolutionary organizations. From Laos Meo people continue to depart, going to Thailand. Also called H'Mong, they are hill tribes that the C.I.A. had organized into a 30,000-strong army before liberation and who used to serve as the best prop for pro-American regimes in Laos.

This is the way things happen : a rich merchant wants to leave Viet Nam, against payment of a handsome amount of cash- 2,000-3,000 U.S. dollars on an average- a clandestine organization will take him and his family to a coastal port where they will hide in one of the hundreds of fishing boats that put out to sea every day. At sea, they are picked up by ships which will take them to neighbouring countries. For an "intellectual", especially a technician with good qualifications, the journey will be free of charge, for the point is to perform a "brain drain" to the detriment of Viet Nam and simultaneously raise a political hullabaloo.

Let us point out that those with relatives living abroad, especially in France, and who submit applications to this effect, are authorized by the government to leave the country legally in order to settle abroad.

From 1975 to 1978, there was thus a regular outflow, of limited scope, of emigres, both legal and illegal. It posed no serious problem either to Viet Nam or to the host countries.

In 1978, a new element was to give the problem unprecedented gravity : the Hoa.

This is the designation give to people of Chinese descent living in Viet Nam and other countries of Southeast Asia : Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, The Philippines, about 1.5 million of them live in Viet Nam, with two major concentrations, one in provinces bordering on China, the other in Cho Lon, a separate part of Ho Chi Minh city. The presence of Hoa people in Viet Nam is by no means recent, for the past twenty centuries, each time a particularly disastrous natural calamity, or a change in the political scene, happened in China many Chinese would leave their country to seek refuge in Viet Nam. The Vietnamese authorities would grant them permission to establish separate villages or town quarters. There they lived together, speaking the Chinese language, observing the customs and habits of China, but recognizing Vietnamese jurisdiction. The second or third generation would start learning the Vietnamese language, going to work in other villages and quarters, mingling with Vietnamese folk, and would finally become Vietnamese. A large number of present-day Vietnamese are thus of Chinese descent, and the normal historical process was the gradual integration of immigrants into the Vietnamese national community. There never was any discrimination against the Hoa, who were called by the friendly and familiar appellation of "Chu Khach" (uncle guest, uncle foreigner).

In the border provinces, especially in the coastal province of Quang Ninh, the Hoa established large villages of farmers and fishermen. The Bay of Ha Long is dotted with small islands, many of them peopled by Hoa fishermen. In those border provinces, the Vietnamese live in peace side by side with not only the Hoa but also other ethnic minorities : Tay, Nung, Meo, Zao ... the following are some of the major migrations :

- In the 17th century there was an exodus of partisans of the Ming dynasty following its overthrow by the Manchus who founded the Ching dynasty. Those Ming partisans were authorized by the Vietnamese administration to settle in the Saigon area and in the Western part of the Mekong delta. Side by side with the Vietnamese they reclaimed virgin land in Nam Bo and built the commercial port of Saigon. Their descendants were totally integrated into Vietnamese society.

- In the 19th century China was shaken by big peasant revolts, the Tai Ping movement in particular (1850-1864). The failures of those insurrections and their savage repression forced large numbers of peasants to flee China. All along the latter half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th, there were great upheavals in China : disintegration of the Ching empire, revolution of 1911, internecine struggle among "warlords", anti-Japanese war, civil war between nationalists and communists. This gave rise to many waves of immigrants who were especially attracted by Saigon - Cho Lon, then in full development.

French colonization, begun in 1859, brought about an important change in the economic and political status of the Hoa and interrupted the historical process of their gradual integration into the Vietnamese national community. Following the classical method of conquerors, divide and rule, the French turned the Hoa colony in Viet Nam into a separate community. They used Hoa traders to collect rice in the villages with a view to export, and to retail industrial goods imported from France. Thus the profits drawn from that two-way trade were shared between French firms and Hoa merchants. A Hoa comprador bourgeoisie came into existence which, acting in concert with the French colonial administration, stemmed the development of a Vietnamese bourgeoisie. Solidarity between Hoa and Vietnamese workers was impeded by the special status accorded the former by the French, a status superior to that granted to the "natives". The Hoa community was allowed to administer its own affairs and had representatives who treated directly with the French administration, these representatives being for the most part members of the Hoa bourgeoisie. The Hoa workers were thus caught between conflicting feelings: those who attracted them to the Vietnamese workers, and those who tied them to the Hoa community. While a number of them took part in workers' and patriotic movements side by side with Vietnamese, many were prisoners of the meshes of communal life in Hoa villages and quarters and came to share with the Hoa bourgeoisie a feeling of superiority vis-a-vis the Vietnamese population.

American intervention, accompanied by an enormous inflow of Dollars and goods, was a period of great prosperity of the Hoa bourgeoisie. It held the practical monopoly—at least 80 percent—of all important commercial, industrial, and banking businesses in South Viet Nam. Many of its members became business "King", reigning over such domains as scrap iron, cement, sodium glutamate, barbed wire... Cabinet ministers and army generals allied themselves with Hoa comprador bourgeois in order to get rich. The militaristic and bureaucratic regime in Saigon, which was born of the war and grew rich as the war proceeded, was closely tied to the Hoa comprador bourgeoisie.

Liberation from the American neo-colonialist system completely upset the living conditions of the Hoa businessmen. No more U.S. dollars, no more U.S. goods, no more hold on foreign trade. Some immediately fled abroad, but others remained in Cho Lon where they owned important stocks of merchandise, foreign exchange, gold, diamonds, large trading and industrial establishments, luxurious residences.

The stocks of goods were quickly distributed to innumerable small shop-keepers and peddlers who took advantage of the scarcity of commodities and set the prices skyrocketing. An ubiquitous network of rumour-mongers in the immense city of Saigon-Cho Lon would at intervals create panics and provoke a rush on such or such commodity. In this way fat profits were reaped. With the money thus collected, the big Hoa bourgeoisie and its agents went to the countryside where they bought up as much as possible of the supply of rice, meat, fish and vegetables, which would be resold to the urban population at exorbitant prices. A whole stratum of traffickers got rich at the expense of the people, who suffered from acute shortages of necessities while in posh bars and restaurants, rich customers would order drinks and dishes that cost as much as the whole monthly salary of a middle-ranking cadre.

This situation could not of course last for ever. State stores and people's cooperatives were gradually organized and they narrowed down the field of activity of the traffickers. In March 1978, the big trading firms, whether owned by Hoa or Viet people, were ordered to close. The stocks of goods were purchased by the state and the big traders had to devote their capital to productive activities: handicrafts, agricultural or fishing undertakings... It is to be noted that this measure affected Viet as well as Hoa traders, but Peking nonetheless claimed it to be a discriminatory and xenophobic step aimed at the Chinese. How strange to see a government styling itself a socialist one protests against the suppression of commercial

capitalism in another country !

Peking's campaign against Viet Nam concerning the Hoa question in fact started long before the decree of March 1978 on private capitalist trade in South Viet Nam. As early as the last months of 1977, Peking agents, acting under the direct control of the Chinese Embassy in Hanoi, were telling the Hoa community that Peking would soon make war against Viet Nam : that in these conditions the Vietnamese would certainly start massacring the Chinese; that the Hoa would be well-advised to leave Viet Nam as soon as possible and go back to China where a warm welcome would be accorded them by the Chinese Government and where they would be able to participate in the reconstruction of great China. For the Hoa living in the provinces along the border between the two countries, the situation was a tragic one ; to leave Viet Nam would mean to abandon their houses, gardens, and occupations in order to go and live in China, which most of them hardly knew at all, but to stay would mean running the risk of finding themselves caught in a crossfire in case of armed conflict and facing the necessity of taking up arms one day for one side or the other. China was only a few dozen kilometres away, and so many Hoa living close to the frontier opted for leaving.

When they arrived at the frontier, the Chinese authorities did not allow them to take the normal passages for crossing, thus compelling them to ford streams and travel along jungle tracks : Chinese cameramen were on hand to film poignant scenes of exodus which helped the Peking propaganda machine to present the Vietnamese people to Chinese and world opinion as an ungrateful people who, forgetful of the great assistance granted by China, were now persecuting and expelling Chinese residents. In this way and with the backing of Western mass media, Peking was able to launch an anti-Vietnamese campaign as early as 1978, harping on two major themes : a Viet Nam driven by hegemonistic ambitions attacking Kampuchea ; an ungrateful and xenophobic Viet Nam.

In 1978, about 160,000 Hoa people left Viet Nam in the conditions described above, most of them starting from the border provinces. We shall see again many of those Hoa when China attacked Viet Nam in February-March 1979. For, once back in China, large numbers of Hoa were given training and formed into special units specializing in reconnaissance, commando, and sabotage operations : having lived for long years in the border region, they knew every nook and cranny of it. In the course of that aggression, the Chinese command considered them to be a precious trump-card.

The precipitate departure of Hoa people threw the economy of some provinces into utter confusion. This economic dislocation was to become one of the targets of Peking, specially in Ho Chi Minh city where lived particularly large numbers of Hoa traders and workers. Clandestine Peking's subversive networks urged the Hoa population to engage in economic sabotage. The Chinese invasion of February-March 1979 and the subversive activities of on-the-spot Peking agents put the Hoa in Viet Nam in a particularly distressing situation ; many decided to leave the country in order to avoid having to face agonizing choices. Hence a massive wave of departures in 1979. Hoa businessmen and traffickers did not of course wish to go back to China but sought to emigrate to countries of Southeast Asia- Thailand, Malaysia, The Philippines, Indonesia-where 20 million of their compatriots were already living and where they were controlling the main economic levers. A comprehensive organization was thus set up with a view to taking the Hoa to those countries.

The impasse in the negotiations between the Vietnamese and Chinese Governments and the bellicose declarations of Deng Xiaoping with regard to Viet Nam have given rise to great anguish among the Hoa community. The problem of leaving the country assumes special gravity. So long as Peking's warlike policy continues, it is to be expected that the exodus will go on.

POLITICAL PROBLEM, HUMANITARIAN PROBLEM

In the outflow of people leaving Viet Nam it is thus possible to make a distinction between those who are doing so for economic reasons and the Hoa, whose departure is based on much more complex factors. These departures give rise to two kinds of problems.

- Political problems : who is responsible for this human tragedy ? What is at stake politically ?

- Humanitarian problems : How to alleviate the sufferings of people reduced to leaving a country where they have been living for long years ?

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One need not be a learned scholar or a shrewd politician to see that the deterioration of the living conditions of people in South Viet Nam is not wanted by the revolutionary administration. The Vietnamese are not the only people in the world to recall the responsibility of the men who had sent their troops to Viet Nam : the Washington leaders, who are at present among those shouting the loudest at Viet Nam.

If the American Government, and its allies, had contributed to the reconstruction of Viet Nam, this would certainly have spared many South Vietnamese the necessity of leaving their country. On 1st February 1973, the then president of the United States, Richard Nixon, sent to Prime Minister Pham Van Dong the following message :

"The President wishes to inform the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam of the principles which will govern the United States' participation in the post war reconstruction of North Viet Nam. As indicated in article 21 of the Agreement on ending the war and restoring peace in Viet Nam signed in Paris on Jan. 27, 1973, the United States undertakes this participation in accordance with its traditional policies. These principles are as follows :

1- The Government of the United States of America will contribute to postwar reconstruction in North Viet Nam without any political conditions.

2- Preliminary United States studies indicate that the appropriate programs for the United States' contribution to postwar reconstruction will fall in the range of 3.25 billion dollars of grant aid over five years. Other forms of aid will be agreed upon between the two parties".

Thus the American Government can use no pretext to evade the fulfilment of that written and formal pledge. And yet, for the past six years, Washington has not disbursed one single dollar for a country that American weapons had terribly ravaged. For the U.S.A. this is not only a political question but one of moral credibility. Senator George McGovern rightly pointed out : "The war left tragic, lasting scars on the land and people in Viet Nam. The cost to that country is difficult to grasp, so deeply did it affect every aspect of Vietnamese life. Because the major share of the damage was inflicted by the vast military operations of the United States- from bombing to shelling, to defoliation, to population relocation- the U.S. has not only a pragmatic interest but a moral obligation to do what it can to help heal the wounds. Even if the scale of aid which we can now contribute is small in relation to the need, it is important for our country that we give it- important to our own self-respect, to respect for the United States in the world community, and to the goodwill it can foster between Americans and Vietnamese."

Political obligation, moral obligation : any self-respecting American will think of the problem in these terms, the more so since the United States is the country which can most effectively help both in the reconstruction of Viet Nam and in providing the emigres with a decent livelihood

Responsibility for the refugees thus should not fall on the countries of Southeast Asia, as is now the case, but on the United States in the first place.

As for the Hoa living in Viet Nam, who has driven them to the present tragic situation? As early as 1955-57, an agreement was reached between the Vietnamese and Chinese Parties and Governments under the terms of which the Hoa would henceforth fall under Vietnamese jurisdiction and would be gradually integrated into the Vietnamese society. The Vietnamese authorities did all they could to implement this agreement. The Hoa were allowed to engage in whatever trades and occupations they wanted; they could enter the administration or become officers in the Vietnamese army; they could be elected to the National Assembly or be admitted to membership of the Communist Party of Viet Nam, it is only due to the subversive activities of Peking's networks and its warlike policy that the Hoa have found themselves in the present situation.

It is indeed strange that Peking should strive its utmost to denounce Viet Nam for persecuting the Hoa while keeping its mouth tightly shut when Pol Pot was massacring the half a million Hoa who were living in Kampuchea. Indeed tens of thousands of those Hoa fled the Pol Pot regime and sought refuge in Viet Nam - a burden for the Vietnamese authorities. And when Vietnamese negotiators asked that the Chinese Government repatriate those refugees to China, the Chinese Delegation turned a deaf ear. It is not the interests of the Hoa that the Peking leaders care about, but only the possibility of using them for political and propaganda purposes. It is only logical that China should give shelter to those Hoa who no longer wish to live in Vietnam - not, let us say it once again, the countries of Southeast Asia.

The two main responsible parties, the U.S.A. and China, having refused to shoulder their political and moral obligations, the considerable burden constituted by the refugees has fallen on the ASEAN countries. It is only legitimate that these countries should protest and ask to be relieved of this responsibility. (This is, however, no justification for inhumane measures).

What share of responsibility should be ascribed to the Vietnamese Government? Has the regime established after liberation turned the country into an immense concentration camp, as claimed by some? thousands of foreigners, among them many journalists, film-makers, television reporters - American, French, Japanese, Swedish, Indian, Algerian, Italian, Mexican... not to mention those from the socialist countries - have visited Viet Nam from North to South, filmed re-education camps and interviewed inmates. Thousands of experts not only from the socialist countries but also from the West - French, Swedish, Dutch, Belgian, including American professors - have been working all these years in Viet Nam. The concordant testimony of these observers has given the lie to that charge.

Could there be in Viet Nam massive repression which is compelling part of the population to seek refuge abroad? ~~Life is not all roses here, but this is not due to any political repression, economic difficulties being the basic factor.~~ We have said above who have been required to go through the process of re-education. Viet Nam has not followed the Western pattern in building a new society. Historical circumstances are different and have led us to build another kind of society in which the people will exercise the "right of collective mastery". This is a new concept and the Vietnamese people are devising ways to put it into practice: institutions, legislation, rules, modalities of implementation, political and ideological education of the masses.

If the Vietnamese regime were a ferocious one, comparable for instance to that imposed by the Shah of Iran on his people, how could one then explain the fact that the entire people rallied like one man behind their government and Communist Party against the 600,000 troops sent by Peking? Why is it

that the people, to whom the government had distributed arms in abundance, did not take advantage of the occasion to liberate themselves ?

Could the Vietnamese Government find any advantage, economic or political, in this question of refugees ? We can say this clearly and distinctly : The Vietnamese Government compels no one to leave the country; on the other hand it does not forcibly retain anyone who wishes to go and settle elsewhere. The outflow of refugees, among them doctors and engineers, disorganizes the economy and disturbs social order. To think that the Vietnamese Government is forcing people to leave is to believe it masochistic.

The Vietnamese Government only wants certain principles to be observed :

- Those who leave should do so legally, after performing all necessary administrative formalities ;

- Clandestine departures, organized en masse with the complicity of national and international reactionary forces, affect the security of the country, disorganize its economy, and infringe national sovereignty ; such departures are therefore prohibited.

There may be cadres who have availed themselves of the situation to get their palms greased, but this is not government policy. What government can claim that none of its employees has ever been tempted in certain circumstances to fill his pockets ? From time to time, Vietnamese courts have tried dishonest civil servants for seeking to extort money from emigres. Quite recently, the Director of a fishing enterprise in Tien Giang province, a man named Dang Thanh Dong, was sentenced to ten years in jail for using boats of his undertaking to get people out of the country clandestinely, against payment to himself of big sums of money. In a country that has been ravaged by war and where Phoenix operations conducted over long years by the American command had literally decimated the ranks of revolutionary militants - in some sectors, 95% of the cadres were murdered - it has been particularly difficult after liberation to set up a state apparatus without opportunist or degenerate elements worming their way into it. Any offences committed by a few corrupt cadres may cast aspersions on the honour of the whole apparatus. Let us stress that while a number of Vietnamese cadres have allowed themselves to be corrupted, no senior cadre has ever been involved in such affairs for in Viet Nam no cabinet minister or army general keeps accounts in foreign banks or is connected with major foreign companies (Lockheed for instance ; or CF. Watergate).

The major political fact in this question is the vast anti-Vietnamese campaign launched throughout the world by the mass media of Peking and the West in a well-orchestrated manner.

This campaign is no novelty. It has indeed started in Washington where the American leaders, unable to use Vietnam's tribulations to erase from people's minds the immense responsibilities of their government and stubbornly refusing to honour their aid pledge, seek to give a good conscience to the American people. Jimmy Carter has found the method : human rights. Vi Viet Nam, the victim of American barbarity, will thus find itself in the dock while the U.S.A. will smartly join the ranks of the defenders of law and justice. There have been former friends of Viet Nam who have lent a hand to this legerdemain trick ; some in good faith and without being aware that they are being manipulated ; others knowingly. The mass media have immediately supported the operation. On 27 December 1976, the Los Angeles times ran a big headline : " No human rights, no aid !"

From the USA the campaign has spread to Europe. Now, the Western and Pekingese press, radio and television are in a frenzy over the question of refugees. The American and European Governments are seeking to put the problem in a tragic light and isolate Viet Nam from its Southeast Asian neighbours. All this concerted action has given rise to an atmosphere of cold war vis-a-vis Viet Nam.

This cold war may lead to a shooting war for world opinion is being conditioned for a passive acceptance of a new aggression upon Viet Nam. In the eyes of the imperialist forces and the Peking leaders, this country is guilty of at least three "crimes":

- That of being the third-world country which stubbornly refuses to be integrated into the world economic system set up by the multinational companies ;

- That of being a socialist country ; Viet Nam is considered the vulnerable link of the socialist system at present ;

- That of being the major obstacle to Chinese expansion into Southeast Asia (in fact it has played this role repeatedly in the course of history).

It is no accident that while the campaign is being feverishly conducted, American and French military missions have made long stays in China to make a study of weapons to be supplied to the Chinese army and the strategy and tactics to be recommended to it. Although the failure of their invasion in February - March 1979 has seriously shaken the Peking rulers, their aggressiveness has not been damped down. Deng Xiaoping keeps talking of giving Viet Nam a new lesson and looks to Washington and other European capitals for support to a new adventure.

Such is the true political stake in this violent anti-Vietnamese campaign on the subject of the refugees.

The same Western and Pekingese mass media that shed tears over the Vietnamese refugees are hushing up the fate of Palestinians forced into exile and have let the millions of victims of the "great cultural revolution" sink into oblivion. Human rights are not their true concern.

All this hullaballo should not cause men of goodwill to forget that there is a human problem, a tragic one in certain respects, that should be solved and for which quick and appropriate solutions should be found. For several categories are to be observed among the refugees :

- The great majority have left Viet Nam for economic reasons, unable to bear the privations and having failed to find occupations to their liking. Among them are not only big traders and rich traffickers but also mere employees-bartenders for instance-whose trades have dropped out of use and who could not muster the courage to go and reclaim new land ;

- Some are former war criminals or are now members of counter-revolutionary networks who feel they are about to be discovered ;

- In the case of the intellectuals, there are various factors which combine in varying degrees. All have experienced a serious drop in their standard of living ; when a medical doctor who used to travel in a car and live in an air-conditioned villa becomes a cadre in a public hospital, his salary is barely one-tenth of his former income. To this is added the difficulty he feels to adapt himself to the new society, to the constraint of a revolutionary society which is, moreover, facing innumerable hindrances. It is with a heavy heart that those intellectuals resign themselves to leaving a country which, at bottom, they would like to serve.

Whatever category the refugees may belong to and whatever reason may be behind their departure from Viet Nam, the Vietnamese Government and the other governments concerned, together with the international community, must coordinate their action in order to resolve the problem.

The Vietnamese Government has agreed with the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (U.N.H.C.R.) that the question be resolved on the basis of a seven-point accord which provides for the following modalities :

- All those wishing to leave shall perform the necessary administrative formalities with the Vietnamese authorities ;

- The Vietnamese Government shall hand over to the U.N.H.C.R. the list of would-be emigres so that the latter may approach potential receiving countries ;

- The U.N.H.C.R. shall organize the journeys of those who will have obtained the consent of receiving countries.

All those who through personal channels have obtained the necessary visas from certain governments-this is the case of people with children or relatives living in France, Canada, Japan, etc. - can leave the country through the normal ways. As we said above, illegal departures, which may affect the security, sovereignty and economic stability of the country cannot be tolerated. Those who are standing trial before courts of law or who are holders of important economic and administrative responsibilities cannot leave. Obviously those who have left can return to Viet Nam only with the formal and individual authorization of the Vietnamese Government. One should not forget that the Chinese Government which drove the Hoa into a massive exodus to China in 1978 is now demanding that the Vietnamese Government agree to the return of that mass of refugees who had left Viet Nam of their own free will. Such a massive return of those Hoa will give rise to innumerable economic and political difficulties.

The Government of rich countries, the USA in particular, should give assistance to the countries of Southeast Asia on which the burden of the refugees, especially the Hoa, has fallen. To date the Governments of some of the richest countries have only picked technicians and intellectuals from the mass of refugees, abandoning the rest to the care of the ASEAN countries.

The Vietnamese people, fully engaged in healing the wounds of long years of war, fervently wish that this painful problem be resolved in the quickest and most humane way possible. Those who leave will remain for them brothers, friends, compatriots.

We earnestly call on people of goodwill throughout the world to

- Actively help the emigres to obtain decent living conditions in the receiving countries ;

- Demand that the American and Chinese Governments fulfil their duty vis-a-vis people whom their warlike policies have uprooted and driven into exodus ;

- Be on their guard against political exploitation of the problem with a view to preparing for war.

For its part, Viet Nam is resolved to cooperate with all international organizations to settle this problem in the most humane way possible.

Hanoi, 18th July, 1979.

~~CONSPIRACY TO LURE "REFUGEES" FROM VIET NAM~~

Hanoi VNA July 17.- After the liberation of South Viet Nam, American and other reactionary forces incited Vietnamese to flee abroad and actually organized departures. Some people exploited this situation to make money. Some details of these activities are contained in a report by Dr. Yack, General Secretary of the World Council of Religion and Peace, denouncing an organization for trafficking in refugees.

The report says : "In December 1976, a project to pick up refugees was devised with the participation of 38 individuals, four organizations, plus the French Embassy, a representative of the U.S. Embassy in Singapore and

The High Commission for Refugees (HCR). With the help of the five member countries of ASEAN, Japan, the U.S. and Australia, Bonze Thich Nhat Hanh was put in charge of the project, and was assisted by Cao Ngoc Phuong.

"They rented the ship "Saigon 200" whose captain was Byandon. The ship set out from Singapore on December 7th, to seek "refugees" on the seas around Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia. From Dec. 10th to 12th, 1976, this ship delivered leaflets in Vietnamese to a tanker to be distributed to refugees at sea. The organization also rented a Malaysian plane to search the coasts and islands.

"The association to pick up refugees' also rented a U.S. marine mine-sweeper to pick up refugees. It set out from Singapore on Jan. 17th, 1977, with eight seamen, including Cao Ngoc Phuong and Anton, a friend of Thich Nhat Hanh, the ship raised a religious banner painted with a portrait of a refugee and the triple-striped flag of the deposed regime of Nguyen Van Thieu. It distributed leaflets in Vietnamese to gather, incite and persuade Vietnamese to flee abroad.

"At the same time British, American and French radios announced the project, encouraging people to leave Viet Nam.

"The ship picked up 301 refugees but offered them a miserable life on board. The tanker "Le Apden" build in the U.S. 30 years ago, was also rented to pick up refugees from Thailand. It picked up 254 refugees who also suffered greatly on board. Some people had to be sent ashore for hospitalization.

"Thich Nhat Hanh, exploiting the situation, said that he would take refugees to Australia for a price of 300 U.S. dollars per head. Thich Nhat Hanh also sent Cao Ngoc Phuong to make contact with a representative of the "Association of Religion and Peace" to carry out a propaganda campaign saying that they could take refugees out of Viet Nam for a certain price, thereby deceiving those people with relatives in Viet Nam.

"Worse still, this representative sold each place on "Le Apden" at 650 U.S. dollars plus 150 dollars in extra fees. There were 100 people who paid 80,000 U.S. dollars for their passages.

"A representative of the Thai Association of Religion and Peace also denounced three Chinese for selling 2,000 places on "Le Apdan" at unspecified prices.

"Thich Nhat Hanh told refugees that he would take them to Guam or Australia, but in fact, he left 555 people crowded and suffering on board the two ships, "Rolanon" and "Napolan" for months".

Dr. Yack's report is just one account of how the defeated imperialists and profiteers co-operated to create the refugee problem. They cynically exploited the vulnerability of many people to create uncertainty and lure them out to sea with false promises./.
