

# **Viet Nam**

*Forward to a New Stage*



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FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE — HA NOI — 1977

*VIET NAM*  
*Forward to*  
*a New Stage*

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## INTRODUCTION TO FOURTH PARTY CONGRESS

### TWENTY MONTHS AFTER SOUTH VIET NAM'S LIBERATION

Editor's note : *Can a new Viet Nam rise from the ruins left by 30 years of imperialist war ?*

*Can she advance rapidly, vigorously and steadily from scattered, small production to large-scale socialist production ?*

*Dr. Nguyen Khac Vien asserts that a review of the first 20 months following the complete liberation of the southern part of Viet Nam, will give an idea of the encouraging prospects for Viet Nam's post-war reconstruction.*

*Follows the full text of Dr. Vien's exclusive article written in connection with the approaching Fourth Congress of the Viet Nam Workers' Party :*

### False Predictions

The predictions never came true.

Under Thieu southern Viet Nam received an average of two billion dollars a year in economic and military aid ; once this umbilical cord was cut, the country was expected to get into a mess after liberation : millions of unemployed, an acute

shortage of foodstuffs, fuel, consumer goods, raw materials, equipment. Several million persons lost their jobs overnight, and hundreds of thousands of merchants, big and small, formerly supported by the puppet regime, by striving to hoard and speculate, made prices soar and further aggravated the shortages.

Such a situation might normally have led to serious popular discontent, especially when Washington had over 20 years built up a huge military, police and administrative machine several millions strong, when US-supplied weapons were plentiful, when the CIA was continuing to maintain a swarm of agents skilled in staging plots and coup d'etats. Many revolutions have been followed by civil war, in countries where conditions were not so serious as in southern Viet Nam.

President Ford thus had every reason to stake his personal credibility on southern Viet Nam being plunged into a bloodbath, and anarchy, economic and social chaos lasting a long time naturally. Facts have given the lie to Ford's predictions. There has been no civil war. The million mercenaries, policemen and special agents carefully trained by American services simply returned to their homes, 90 per cent of them have had their civil rights restored, and on April 24, 1976, less than a year after the liberation of Saigon, they went to the polls like the rest of the population.

Only a handful of die-hard elements who have on their conscience abominable crimes committed

when US weapons made them absolute masters, and are hiding in mountains where they furtively attack a passing vehicle from time to time. Some of them engage in acts of sabotage in the cities, but all these elements have been neutralized by security forces assisted by a vigilant population. And great has been the disappointment of imperialist circles.

The take-over of southern Viet Nam has been rapid and sure. At all levels, in Saigon as in the remotest villages, the organs of people's power are functioning smoothly, order is maintained, general and local elections have been carried out in a regular manner. The process of North-South reunification is taking place smoothly. The picture is that of a regime making its way, not easily, but surely, overcoming many difficulties, and not at all that of a country foundering in a quagmire.

The setting up of the organs of people's power has been no easy task, after the upheavals caused by 20 years of US intervention. A large number of experienced revolutionary cadres were killed by a police organized and trained by the Americans and equipped with powerful technical means. Those who return after a long stay in the resistance bases or the prisons have no experience in administration and management, particularly in the cities deeply transformed by neo-colonialism.

Taking advantage of such a situation, opportunists and enemy agents have infiltrated the people's revolutionary committees set up after liberation and engaged in sabotage of the measures advocated.

However, the devotion of the cadres, the adoption of a correct policy, and assistance by popular organizations have made it possible to gradually remedy shortcomings and inevitable mistakes in the first days, and ensure the progress of the regime along the road that has been chosen. Washington propagandists, disappointed because they could not report serious disturbances, have had to content themselves with drawing the attention of the world public to some negative aspects of the situation, leaving aside what has been achieved since liberation.

To find negative aspects is quite easy in a country where the consequences of war are incalculable. Let us recall these in a few words: 9,000 out of 15,000 villages and hamlets bombed; one million wounded, disabled (by torture) and sick persons; 800,000 orphans and abandoned children; half a million prostitutes most of whom have venereal diseases; 10 million people forced to leave their villages devastated by bombing (in ten years) who now have to be resettled; at least 150,000 tons of unexploded bombs and shells which are still daily causing loss of life; several million hectares of ricefields, gardens and forests destroyed by bombs and chemicals; permanent threat of epidemics (malaria, plague, cholera, typhoid). And that is only the aftermath of war in the South. In material terms, the North has suffered as much, if not more.

Can a new Viet Nam rise from these ruins? The achievements of the 20 months following liberation will give an idea of the prospects for the period ahead.

## Leniency and Re-education

The first and most important task has been the control and re-education of former soldiers, policemen, agents and functionaries of the former regime. Without assistance from the population, from women's youth and old people's organisations, it would have been impossible to carry out this task, as almost one million persons including about 40,000 officers had to be registered and controlled. The return of all these personnel to their families, their reintegration into normal civilian life after many years of service in the neo-colonialist machine naturally raise countless problems.

As has been said above, most of these personnel have been freed unconditionally; only officers and a number of high-ranking agents of the former regime have been detained for the purpose of re-education and screening. These privileged persons under the old regime must be made to understand where the national interest lies, how they have erred to the point of becoming in many cases real criminals at the service of foreigners. And we have to ascertain which of them have been forced by circumstances to serve in the puppet army and which are real counter-revolutionaries.

For 20 years, these highly paid officers and agents of the old regime have greatly benefited from US aid and have been continuously indoctrinated by psychological war services. Now they are beginning to open their eyes, but not without

difficulty. Those whose records have been clarified, have been freed one after another.

A number of former puppet officers who have not reported themselves to the revolutionary authorities form the core of a few terrorist and sabotage organisations which have been promptly neutralized. In February 1976, a search of a Saigon church revealed that some Catholic priests were colluding with reactionary officers (in the church weapons and a printing press to make counterfeit bank-notes were concealed, and the parish priest, caught red-handed, gave the order to fire on the security forces, killing one of our men).

The huge military, police, administrative, economic, ideological and cultural machine set up by Yankee neo-colonialism comprised almost two million persons. How to re-employ these personnel, what place to give them in the new society which is built on concepts and standards diametrically opposed to those of the former regime: these problems are indeed delicate and complex ones. What has been required is not only a general policy of clemency, concord, national union and vigilance, but great perspicacity at all levels to deal with each individual case. Patiently, the revolutionary cadres have tackled the most complicated personal situations, from that of former ministers or generals to that of a simple policeman in a town or militiaman in a village who, by order of his superiors, had committed the most atrocious crimes.

It may be said that never before has a revolution had to face such a situation. The question is not so

much to carry out large-scale repression as to awaken in these people feelings of national pride, love of honest work, the sense of human solidarity dimmed by a long past in the service of imperialism.

There have been fumbings and false steps, mistakes in this or that case, but in general the work has been done in the right direction, that of progressive reintegration of an important part of the population into the national community. And those who want to exploit discontent among this part of the population to foment more or less serious disturbances have been quickly disappointed.

By their vote on April 25, 1976, more than 90 percent of the South Vietnamese population have shown their will to break decisively with the neo-colonialist past and to support a regime that has brought them definitive peace, national independence, a healthier society, a secure future for their children. All the present economic and social difficulties have not made them forget these fundamental realities.

The closely linked economic and social questions have required urgent measures as well as a long term policy.

Since the first days of liberation, in all big cities and some rural or mountain areas devastated by the war, the revolutionary authorities have distributed food to needy families. The US-held areas imported 300,000 to 700,000 tons of foodstuffs every year. This shows the scope of the assistance that the revolutionary authorities had to bring the



population in liberated areas. There has been no famine anywhere.

But it was obvious that only a policy of rapid reduction of the urban population with the return of several million persons to farm work could provide a radical solution to the acute problem of supplying the congested towns. The problem would be a simple one if the refugees' native villages had not been razed by US bombing, and in most cases, new villages had to be created on newly reclaimed land. A whole infrastructure — roads, houses, wells, health services, schools — had to be set up before the inhabitants could come and settle down, not to speak of dangerous mine-clearing operations which have cost the lives of many of our cadres and soldiers.

And there is the fact that those people who had sought refuge in the towns for so many years have lost the habit of farming, that a former soldier, officer or merchant does not willingly become a peasant again. And here again, political explanation, the patience of cadres, the example of militants, material aid (in foodstuffs, seeds, building materials, transport, medicines, machines.) and technical and social aid (physicians, teachers, technicians) provided by the people's power have made it possible to launch a movement which has already attracted hundreds of thousands of persons, a movement which is bound to continue for several years.

## A New Movement

Thus new economic regions have gradually been created, where each settler's family is given a plot of land for cultivation, where administrative and social services have been set up by the state to serve the population, and cooperative groups are being formed. On its part, the State has been actively reclaiming land, and introducing industrial crops. New economic zones have been created in the vicinity of Saigon as well as in remote provinces. If life is rather hard in the first year, it has been improving rapidly as with a fertile soil and a favourable climate, crops in the South rapidly provide food to the families. Many people have realized that life on newly reclaimed land with a secure future, is much healthier than the cramped, filthy slums in overpopulated cities where jobs are extremely hard to find.

Vanguard youth brigades and Liberation Army men and women have given considerable assistance to the population. In a year and a half, Saigon has sent half a million persons to new economic zones. Da Nang, to which inhabitants of surrounding provinces fled in panic during the first battles in the Spring of 1975, has quickly resettled most of those refugees in their villages and sent a number of them to new economic zones. The city has been relieved of 60 percent of the population it had on liberation day. Other cities, Hue, Nha Trang, Can Tho, have resettled tens of thousands of persons. On a national scale, this is a vast movement

which has mobilized considerable technical and material means as well as personnel. Only misinformed or ill-intentioned journalists can remain silent on achievements of such scope.

Simultaneously with the creation of new economic zones, the people's power has taken measures to renovate agriculture. Neo-colonialist rule concentrated its efforts on a small section of the territory and a small group of well-to-do peasants whom US aid provided with machines, fertilizer, and seeds, while the greater part of the country was neglected. A double consequence was:

- a backward agriculture, with low yields on 90 percent of the land which gave only one yearly crop, although the soil is particularly fertile and the climate is among the most favourable.

- an outwardly modern agriculture on a small part of the territory, which is completely dependent on imported supplies and has been paralyzed by the cutting off of US aid.

The former regime completely neglected hydraulic works which are of vital importance to rice cultivation and to crops in general in a tropical country with alternating monsoons, with a rainy season and a hot one. For several years, the canals with which the Mekong delta is chequered were not dredged and the maintenance of dams and channels was discontinued.

Without waiting for modern equipment, the people's power has called on peasants to build important hydraulic works with their own hands. Millions of persons have responded and everywhere

from the northern provinces of Quang Nam and Thua Thien to the Mekong delta in the South, thousands of peasants are seen digging canals, or building dykes, channels or water reservoirs.

Intellectuals and students from the cities have joined hands with the peasants, and in so doing have discovered their own country and an aspect of human solidarity of which they had no idea. Only a truly revolutionary regime can carry out such a mobilization, and the result obtained in the first year is equal to the movement: half a million hectares have received water during the dry season, thus making possible a second crop. Southern Viet Nam no longer has to import rice as under US occupation.

The first step has been taken toward a radical renovation of South Vietnamese agriculture. Basic studies have been made, and major projects have been completed for agricultural hydraulic works, fertilizing waste land- acid soil in the Plain of Reeds, submerged areas in the Mekong delta, salt land along the coast and in the highlands. These projects will be carried out next year, when the new five-year plan (1976-1980) will come into force. No doubt much of southern Viet Nam, particularly the Mekong delta and the Tay Nguyen (Central Highlands), will in the coming years become important agricultural regions which will ensure the whole country a sufficient supply of foodstuffs and of raw materials for export and for industry.

Here are a few figures :

- in a year, 1,8 million cubic metres of earthworks built in the vicinity of Saigon. 31,000 hectares newly reclaimed or giving 2—3 crops a year, owing to hydraulic works (Saigon belt of cultivated land covers 100,000 hectares) ;

- 5,000 km of canals dredged, rebuilt or newly built by the population, 950 km of river and sea dykes rebuilt or newly built ;

- 15,000 small dams and channels ;

- 20,000 wells and pools dredged or built ;

- four million cubic metres of earthworks moved within the framework of major State projects ;

- newly reclaimed land : 53,400 hectares in Minh Hai province, 23,000 in Gia Lai — Kontum province, 25,000 in An Giang province ;

- 1976 summer-autumn crop (second yearly crop) ; half a million hectares have given 1/4 million tons of paddy.

Increasingly, the State is providing peasants with machines, fuel, fertilizer and seeds.

### Merchants and the Market

The situation in the cities, particularly in Saigon, is very complex, chiefly because of the presence of a large number of merchants who for many years have engaged in trades of all kinds, and of elements without a definite trade who have been making a living in every imaginable way.

Since liberation these people have been hoarding foodstuffs, consumer goods, medicines, raw mate-

rials, and spreading rumours aimed at whipping up a real shortage psychosis ; they managed to make prices soar and to get big profits. Availing themselves of the economic policy of the revolutionary government, which recognized the legal existence of five economic sectors — the State, cooperative, joint-state-private, capitalist, and individual sectors — many capitalists and merchants have brazenly engaged in fraudulent undertakings, supplying spurious goods and adulterated medicines. The consequence is a somewhat anarchic market situation, particularly in Saigon.

The State has taken measures, firstly to eliminate the comprador bourgeoisie as a class, then to gradually reduce trafficking, fraud and hoarding. All banks have been nationalized, external trade has become a State monopoly. Private rice trading is forbidden, making it possible to maintain a stable price for this vital commodity. The collecting of rice from peasants still engaged in individual production, the sale of cheap rice to the urban population, and the prevention of fraud have required great efforts on the part of the revolutionary power on the financial plane as well as on the plane of administrative personnel.

It should be mentioned that the State has been supplying free rice to needy families. Women's organisations in city districts have contributed to the distribution of goods, the sale of rice and the prevention of fraud effectively. Supplying a city of 3.5 million inhabitants like Saigon is no simple matter, and there are difficulties in finding not

only enough rice, but also enough meat, fish and vegetables, as the wholesale trade in foodstuffs was in the hands of the comprador bourgeoisie. The latter directed a large network of middle and small merchants, and were allied with many small producers (farming and fishing).

The struggle between these sharks (formerly known as « kings » in such or such a sector) and the State trade services has been an arduous one. However, the revolutionary cadres have gradually learned how to run a big city, and as the State trade services are taking over the distribution of more and more goods, the rise in prices has been checked, at least in some sectors. Many purchasing cooperatives have been set up in city districts where the population can now do without the service of merchants. The struggle remains arduous, considering the scope of the trading and the number of merchants to be re-educated and guided toward productive activities.

For this is the main thing to be done. Southern Viet Nam's cities, particularly Saigon, made a living essentially from « service » trades. Enterprises whose owners fled abroad have become State-owned; the government is encouraging private industrialists to continue running their enterprises. Formerly, these enterprises well needed imported raw materials and foreign technicians; the State now has to give them aid by supplying raw materials which are sent from the North or imported.

A great effort has been made, with the cooperation of research services in the North, to find

replacement raw materials in the country. Contracts have been signed with some foreign firms to ensure continued functioning of a number of enterprises. The State is also cooperating by supplying capital and technicians to some private enterprises which are to be transformed into joint State-private enterprises. About 7,000 enterprises have resumed operation, particularly in light industry (food processing, textile, sugar, paper, rubber...)

Small industry and handicrafts which were neglected under the former regime are now developing rapidly, using local raw materials, to meet the needs of domestic consumption and export. Eleven thousand groups of handicraftsmen are working in Saigon. The role of handicrafts in the total value of national production is increasing continuously.

In the domain of industry and handicrafts, cooperation with the North has been most effective, and basic data have been obtained for elaborating a plan for the whole country. The state has supplied fuel to tens of thousands of fisherfolk, which has made it possible to maintain the production of fish, nuoc mam (fish sauce) which is indispensable for daily meals, and shrimps for export.

The elimination of the comprador bourgeoisie as a class, the reconversion and reeducation of small and middle merchants as well as that of the capitalists is a long-term task which requires coordinated economic, administrative and educational measures. The popular masses, workers, housewives, intellectuals must be invited to participate in it. It is an arduous task in which revolutionary cadres must

display tenacity, shrewdness, business sense, and also unfailing integrity, as the comprador bourgeoisie has a long practice of corrupting functionaries under the former regimes. There have been and there will continue to be many ups and downs but there is no longer any doubt about the outcome of the battle: the installation of socialist structures in trade as in industry is slow but sure, and there is no chance at all for capitalism to regain the lost ground.

### Clearing Away the Refuse

On the social and cultural plane, it may be said that a new current is sweeping away much of the refuse left by the former regime. Overnight violent and pornographic films disappeared from the cinemas and provocative posters disappeared from advertisement boards. Persons of goodwill, formerly powerless, can now devote themselves to helping the disabled, orphans, drug addicts, and prostitutes. Several centres for the "restoration of women's dignity" the re-education of drug addicts and for abandoned children have been opened under the auspice of the state but functioning with the assistance of women's and youth organizations.

The medical service is giving wholehearted assistance, using traditional methods in some cases (for example, acupuncture for the treatment of drug addicts). The social rehabilitation of these hundreds of thousands is being carried out gradually.

Simultaneously with the diffusion of national and revolutionary cultural and artistic works, the cultural sequels of 20 years of neo-colonialist domination are being gradually eliminated. Realizing the evil effects of pornographic or ferociously anti-communist publications circulated by the psychological war services under the former regime, the population have handed a large number of them to the revolutionary authorities.

For many years, the population in US-held regions had access only to very adulterated art works which had lost all national character. Patriotic writers and artists were muzzled, art and literature were used only to further Washington's war policy and the interests of the greedy comprador bourgeoisie. For the first time in 20 years, the population is coming into contact with a national and revolutionary art born in the resistance zones or the socialist North. The youth in particular have a passion for songs, poems and films born of the 30-year resistance against imperialist aggression. Among all strata of the population, in industrial enterprises and city districts, a very active political and social life is returning.

In the course of study and heated discussions, many questions have been raised: the sense of national liberation, the struggle against traffickers, against the pernicious neo-colonialist culture, the role of women, the tasks of writers and artists. The citizen in the South can thus gradually get rid of the erroneous ideas crammed into his mind over so many years by a massive propaganda using up-to-date

technical means and most varied forms. Superstitious practices encouraged by the neo-colonial regime are disappearing. Many amateur art troupes have been organized in schools, enterprises, city districts. Artistic life has an increasingly popular character, with festivals and exhibitions on the local or national scale where new talents have been discovered.

The former regime has left several million illiterate persons (in the North the problem had been solved as far back as 1958). Using proven revolutionary methods, the people's power tackled this problem immediately, and in a year, half a million persons have learned to read and write. Efforts are being made to completely eliminate illiteracy by the end of 1977. Complementary education courses have been organized for adults, particularly militants and responsible cadres of popular organizations, administrative organs and enterprises. In these different courses, many persons who belong mostly to the under-privileged classes are experiencing a real resurrection, as their deepest aspirations which were stifled under the old regime are now being fulfilled.

The new regime has brought them not only peace, but also a purpose to their life.

Naturally, the school network has been given special attention by the revolutionary regime which, despite economic and financial difficulties, has taken charge of all public and private schools of the former regime.

The nationalization of private schools is a heavy financial burden for the State, but it has benefited hundreds of thousands of school children and students, as education is now free and of higher quality than that provided by profit-seeking schools under the old regime. Former schools have been reopened and new ones have been created, particularly in rural areas that were completely neglected under the neo-colonial administration.

For the 1976-1977 school-year, 10,000 educational establishments in southern Viet Nam have enrolled four million students who will be given free education.

The State also provides free textbooks. In the course of many study and discussion sessions, the teachers have realized the historic turning point that has taken place and become acquainted with new curricula and methods. They have exposed the US scheme to put the schools at the service of their neo-colonialist policy, not only by administrative and police measures, but also by an anti-national character given to the content of the teaching, glorification of Western, and especially American civilization, and a systematic falsification of national history and culture.

Ho Chi Minh City has enrolled about 800,000 pupils in more than 800 general education schools; there are 22,000 more first-form pupils than under the old regime. The city has also sent more than 600 teachers to new economic regions. And for the first time in the big city, many kindergartens have received children of poorer districts: 530 establish-

ments with 64,000 children for the first year. Hundreds of nurseries have been opened.

Higher education has been reorganized. In particular, the excessive number of law and literature students which made up half the total number of college students has been reduced, while the technical and pedagogical branches now have a greatly increased number of students. For the 1976-1977 school-year, 15 higher education establishments have reopened their doors: 8 in Ho Chi Minh City, 4 in the Hue-Da Nang region, 1 at Nha Trang (oceanography), 1 at Can Tho, and 1 at Da Lat.

Preparations are being made for opening a university for the Central Highlands in the near future. This year, 60,000 have sat for college entrance examinations. Now on a new basis, higher education in southern Viet Nam is making a good start.

In the medico-sanitary field, there remains much to do. The former regime completely neglected medico-social problems, the medical corps was also exclusively at the service of a well-to-do clientele. In contrast with the North, many epidemic diseases are rampant in the South: including malaria, typhoid and leprosy. Major social hygiene measures had to be taken, in many cases, as matters of urgency: cleaning the slums, mass vaccinations. Besides the former hospitals and research centres which continue to function normally, many health care stations and dispensaries have been opened in city districts and villages. For the first time, the medical corps is serving the popular masses. Traditional medicine is again highly valued.

## Decisive "Rear Base"

The South's emergence from the ruin and upheaval wrought by the war, is due to the efforts of the population and also to the decisive aid it has received from the North, which continues to play its role of "rear base" in reconstruction work as formerly in combat. The North itself has suffered immense destruction: all industrial installations were destroyed or damaged; all highway and railway bridges destroyed; six important towns heavily damaged, some almost razed to the ground; about thirty provincial towns and several thousand villages severely bombed.

However, while the North has suffered material destruction as serious as in the South it does have the advantage of possessing socialist structures which have enabled it to ensure the social and ideological stability so propitious for reconstruction work. It does not have to carry out a reconversion of socio-economic structures, an indispensable condition for rapid progress.

By the end of 1975 it could be said that considerable progress had already been made in comparison with the situation before the bombings. In comparison with 1965, the value of fixed capital in production has been multiplied by 2.5, electricity production by 2.4, the production of chemical fertilizers by 2.5, that of engineering by 2.5. Several industrial centres and installations have been rebuilt or enlarged:

—The industrial suburb of Hanoi with the Dong Anh, Van Dien, Thuong Dinh sectors.

—The Haiphong industrial centre with its numerous enterprises (including cement and glass works, port installations and dockyard).

—The Quang Ninh mining area with its coal mines (severely damaged during the war), its new engineering factory at Cam Pha, its dockyard at Bai Chay.

—The Viet Tri industrial centre with its chemical enterprises.

—The Thai Nguyen industrial centre with its steel complex.

—The new centres at Pho Yen (Bac Thai province) and Tam Hiep (Ha Nam Ninh province). New power stations and factories of all sizes have been built.

All the destroyed bridges have been rebuilt, as well as many railway stations and port installations. Engineering factories have been making great efforts to supply spare parts for means of transport. Newly built roads link rural areas on a distance of over 10,000 kilometres. An airline and a sea line ensure communications between Hanoi, Haiphong and Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City), while Vietnamese ships now sail to ports in Africa and Europe.

In agriculture, the most important achievement has been the completion, by and large, of the agricultural hydraulic system. The major works undertaken by the State have been completed with local networks of canals, ditches and reservoirs, mostly built by districts and cooperatives. In ten important

agricultural provinces, hydraulic works have ensured water control in an area of 500,000 hectares. In the whole of the North, the area now irrigated in all seasons covers 900,000 hectares. A number of provinces have built important works with their own efforts: Ha Son Binh with its Dong Mo reservoir for 90 million cubic metres of water can irrigate 27,000 hectares, and Nghe Tinh province with its Ke Go dam will irrigate 5,000 hectares in 1977 in the initial stage.

The completion of the hydraulic system as well as innovations in seed, selection and management brought a good harvest in the spring of 1976, despite severe cold during the winter of 1975. Agricultural mechanization has been given a strong impetus with the creation of pilot districts which are to experiment in new management methods to be applied throughout the country in the coming years.

In the medical and cultural fields, rapid progress has been made. Thousands of schools, infirmaries and hospitals destroyed during the war have been rebuilt. This school-year, 11,832 general education schools have enrolled 5,300,000 pupils, 233 professional schools 84,000 students, and 39 higher education establishments 61,100 students (the corresponding figures in 1965 were 2,670,000, 42,600 and 29,300).

Significant progress has been made in the medical field.

	1965	1975
Hospitals	252	442
Beds	69,700	109,900



In addition, there are 5567 village medico-sanitary centres for first-aid, natal care, and social hygiene measures; most of them grow medicinal plants.

With this rapid restoration, the North has been able to give the South substantial aid in foodstuffs, goods, and cattle. More than one and a half million tons of foodstuffs and various other goods, and tens of thousands of head of cattle have been sent to the regions in the South most severely hit during the war. Tens of thousands of teachers and technicians from the North, many of them born in the South, have afforded precious assistance to the organs of revolutionary power.

### Construction for the Future

While healing its wounds of war, the North is also building major works for the future. Two of these are particularly worthy of mention: the two-tiered Thang Long bridge over the Red River in Hanoi, and the big Hoa Binh dam on the Da River. Built across a mighty river, this dam will create a lake stretching over 300 km, and its hydro-electric power station of almost 2 million kw will generate 8 billion kwh a year. Construction will take at least ten years.

The reconstruction of destroyed habitations in the towns has made great progress, and in Hanoi's suburbs, in the cities of Haiphong, Vinh, Viet Tri and others three or four-storied buildings, mostly pre-fabricated, have gone up. In the villages, new brick houses with gay red tiles are appearing.

Particularly important, economically and politically, is the reconstruction of the North-South railway. This 1,700 km-long railway was repeatedly subjected to destruction during the two wars. Two sections, that of Vinh-Hue, 369 km-long, in the North, and that of Da Nang — Phu Cat, 279km long, in the South, had to be completely rebuilt.

About 3 million cubic metres of earth had to be moved, and in a country where there is a river, every ten or twenty kilometres, sometimes a large one, several hundred bridges had to be built, some more than 500 metres long. The construction of these bridges in a country with a fledgeling industry has required immense efforts. It should be recalled that it took the French colonial administration 30 years to build this railway.

Trains will be running on the Hanoi — Ho Chi Minh City line in 1977. The reconstruction work now being done on the North-South railway by hundreds of thousands of people from different provinces is the most vivid image of the rapid reunification process following the total liberation of the South. Let us also note that on the "Ho Chi Minh Trail", work has begun to make this road an important North-South highway in the future.

A measure of great importance has been taken to speed up reconstruction work: the use of army units in the task of economic construction.

The year 1975-1976 has witnessed rapid progress in the reunification of the country: immediately after the liberation of the South, hundreds of thousands of persons crossed the 17th parallel to be

reunited with their husbands or wives, parents, brothers and sisters they had left 30 years ago. Postal communications were immediately reestablished. Technicians and enterprises in both zones have been cooperating to solve many difficult practical problems, to remedy the shortage of raw materials, and to make indispensable machines or products. A result of the cooperation between enterprises in the two zones is the manufacture of a tractor well adapted to conditions in the country.

This economic and cultural cooperation is based on the complementary character of natural resources, or on the specialization in various branches. Thus, apatite (a phosphate fertilizer) is being increasingly used for soil improvement in the South, and rubber from the South is being supplied to factories in the North. The North has experience in management of a national and independent economy, a socialist economy built on a very weak material and technical base.

Technicians in the South who chiefly used imported raw materials are learning to rely on national resources. In agriculture, the long experience of the North in hydraulic works has greatly benefited the South; the use of fertilizers obtained from animal breeding and the culture of green fertilizers like azolla, has been popularized in the South. The economies of the two zones which have been following different directions for 20 years are being gradually integrated on a national scale.

Cultural integration is facilitated by the use of a common national language, the existence of a

deep-rooted national tradition and the presence, always active, of patriotic and revolutionary scientists, artists, writers and journalists, who during many years have braved all dangers to make their voice heard in US-controlled regions. After liberation, artistic troupes, books and films from the free zones of the North have been warmly welcomed, especially by the young people.

Intellectuals in the South are in general cooperating easily with their colleagues from the North.

### Elections Decisive

National reunification took a decisive step with the general elections on April 25, 1976, a year after the liberation of Saigon. Despite enemy threats to sabotage the elections, over 90 per cent of the population voted, four hundred and ninety-two deputies were elected for the whole country, comprising representatives of various political and religious tendencies, different social strata and ethnic groups in the North and the South. Representatives of the former third-component political group were elected.

The National Assembly met from June 24 to July 3 for discussions on the basis of a political report by Le Duan, First Secretary of the Workers' Party Central Committee. Several important decisions were arrived at:

— Reunified Viet Nam takes the name of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.



The Colombo conference of non-aligned countries accorded the SRVN delegation an enthusiastic and fraternal welcome.

Several times the UN General Assembly and a large majority of Security Council members have voted to admit the SRVN to the United Nations Organization. Only Washington's veto, which is unjustifiable in every respect and has aroused unanimous protests throughout the world, is delaying Viet Nam's admission. Such an attitude can only further aggravate the diplomatic isolation of the US administration.

Thus, it is in an improving political and economic situation that the Workers' Party, less than two years after the conclusion of a 30-year war, convenes its 4th Congress in mid-December 1973. The main points in the draft Political Report have been presented by Nhan Dan, the Party's daily newspaper, to be discussed by all citizens, Party members and non-members.

The Vietnamese people are entering a new stage, with a single fundamental task: carry the socialist revolution and socialist construction in the whole of the reunified country to success. This revolution is taking place in favourable conditions but must also deal with difficulties:

— It is being carried out in the wake of a decisive national victory, by a courageous and industrious people, with important human and natural resources, in a country where one half has built solid socialist structures.

— International conditions are favourable: rapid progress of the world revolutionary movement with its three components, (socialist countries, national liberation movements, worker's movement for democracy in capitalist countries), serious crisis of the capitalist and imperialist system, accelerated scientific and technological revolution.

— difficulties, however, are still numerous, because the country has to advance from a backward economy of small production, with an insignificant material and technical basis, toward large-scale socialist production. Social production work is mostly done by hand, heavy industry is still embryonic, organization and management capabilities are still limited.

— destruction wrought by 30 years of war is immense, and the social and human effects of 20 years of US intervention, very serious.

The principal theses to be discussed at the Congress are:

— Strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is to be realized by the working people exercising their right of collective mastership in all domains, at all levels. The Party must assume general leadership, and the State, the administration and management of society, in which the working people exercise their right to collective mastery.

— promoting a triple revolution, in production relations, science and technology, ideology and culture, with the scientific and technological revolution playing the key role. Industrialization is central in socialist construction.

— strengthening the Party, taking into account the fact that it is now a party in power; theoretical and organization work, efforts to raise the standards of members, strengthen unity, and combat bureaucracy must be intensified.

— working to strengthen the world revolutionary movement, by contributing to restoring and consolidating the unity of the socialist system, of the international communist and workers' movement, on the basis of Marxism — Leninism and proletarian internationalism.

The major tasks for the 1976-1980 five-year State plan have been outlined. In the South, the struggle for the socialist transformation of socio-economic structures must be continued, so that these may soon be unified in the whole country. Socialist industrialization will be central in socialist construction, heavy industry being given priority in a rational manner, and the development of agriculture and light industry constituting the basis for developing heavy industry. This is why agriculture must make considerable progress in the next five-year plan (including livestock breeding, fishery, and forest exploitation) as well as some branches of light industry. On a regional scale, the district (the level beneath the province, grouping on an average from 100,000 to 150,000 inhabitants) is to become an economic unit in both agriculture and industry.

Lying in the heart of Southeast Asia, reunified Viet Nam is rapidly healing its wounds of war, and advancing with sure steps toward socialism, under the leadership of an experienced Marxist — Leninist

party. The Vietnamese people, who have to overcome immense difficulties, are highly conscious of the fact that the fulfilment of their national tasks will also contribute to strengthening the forces of peace and progress in the world, that fraternal aid by friends in all countries will not be lacking, and this will make their own efforts still more fruitful.

## **SOUTH VIET NAM '76**

*Editor's Note — After an extensive tour of southern Viet Nam. Dr. Nguyen Khac Vien had an interview with staff members of Viet Nam Courier. Following are the main points of the conversation :*

### **I**

**QUESTION —** What is the strongest impression left on you by your recent trip to the South ?

**ANSWER —** First of all I felt an immense joy and deep emotion to see again uncles, cousins, friends and comrades I had left long ago. The last time I was in Saigon, Hue, Nha Trang, and Dalat, was in 1937. So that is almost 40 years ago, and what years ! I met again an uncle who had settled near Saigon 52 years ago. He is now 87 years old. I met again friends and comrades whom I left more than 30 years ago. I made the acquaintance of new friends, new comrades, and these first contacts were enough to help me to realise the magnitude of the US defeat. Six US presidents from Truman to Ford, spent 150 billion dollars trying to create a separate

south Viet Nam, to turn our countrymen in the South into foreigners. But they have completely failed. We have found ourselves again, after 20, 30, 40 years, of separation, all deeply Vietnamese. Everywhere, as far south as Cape Ca Mau, in the remotest villages, in houses on stilts built along rivers where I stayed to eat and sleep, as I felt inclined, with my friends and relatives, even with those I didn't know before, it was the great emotional reunion of North-South, everyone embracing again. People lavished care on me, asked me for news, and we kept talking and talking for whole nights. And when we stood together to pay silent respect before the graves of comrades shot or tortured to death by the enemy, we felt deeply how much we were bound together, those of the North and of the South, in life as well as in death, by indestructible bonds, bonds which the last years of suffering and of glory have only strengthened.

**QUESTION —** What subject is of most interest to our southern countrymen?

**ANSWER —** Of course we talked of everything, but eyes brightened, and ears were pricked up when we spoke of Uncle Ho. All of us deeply regretted that our Uncle was unable to pay a visit to our southern countrymen. They asked about the last years of Uncle Ho, they dreamed of being able one day to go to Hanoi to visit the President's Mausoleum. Certain people, and there were many of

them, even remarked that it is not proper to sell Uncle's portraits in the bookshops, that it would be better to offer them as gifts, people would willingly make contributions to the printing charges, contributions which would surpass all expectations from the sale.

The second subject, for those who didn't have the opportunity to take part directly in the fighting, was the causes of our victory. They had seen with their own eyes the overwhelming numbers of the US forces: aircraft, tanks, navy. They were still dumbfounded by the total defeat of the power of the USA. I also felt that they were very proud of that victory, even those who had been pressed into service with the puppet army and administration. In this feeling also, they are deeply Vietnamese.

This victory is now deeply engraved in all hearts and minds, and make part of the national inheritance, having become our common property, creating a new outlook shared by all.

**QUESTION —** Some foreign news reports mentioned an armed revolt. Is there any substance in this?

**ANSWER —** I toured south Viet Nam for two months, unescorted, the length and breadth of it, the most densely populated quarters of Saigon, as well as the country villages of Ca Mau, and the mountain area of Da Lat, without encountering the

least disturbance. A million puppet troops, and some 200,000 puppet policemen were set free soon after victory. Of this million only some tiny groups of tough guys still wander somewhere in the forests and, driven by hunger, occasionally venture to stop a car to rob the passengers. A few acts of banditry, as in Saigon, hold-ups, robberies or burglaries, that's all. The failure of the CIA to foment some sort of resistance is obvious in spite of the abundance of dollars and weapons that can still be found more or less everywhere, and of the presence of numerous agents, lackeys, killers, well-trained, well-indoctrinated over many years. Not the least sign, the least suggestion of fact, could induce you to imagine any possibility of civil war, or armed opposition. Those who speak about it are simply indulging in wishful thinking.

**QUESTION — How is it that civil war is impossible ?**

**ANSWER —** The greatest danger threatening a revolutionary power after victory is obviously civil war. But this supposes the existence of social classes, of political forces with the potential to mobilize factions within the population, and to offer to the people some political alternative, a solution by replacement. In southern Viet Nam now, there are no more feudalists, no more landowners, no more mandarins, or rural notables. With the revolutionary

storm that has been sweeping through the land for over 30 years, with the intensive bombings of the countryside by the Americans, the feudalists have disappeared from the political scene. The compradore capitalists, closely bound to American intervention, have now lost their main prop, and their means of survival — banks, foreign trade, rice trade — have been withdrawn from them.

With regard to the national capitalists, who include industrialists and traders, they have never been, and can never become, an independent force. In the past, they entirely depended on American, French, Japanese, Taiwanese, and West German firms for technique, raw materials and fuel. At present, they have to turn to the revolutionary government for all that.

And often it is the aid from the North, either in technicians and equipment, or in raw materials, that fill the gap and start up again these enterprises after their collapse. The new regime has a use for the national capitalists who in turn cannot but cooperate with the revolutionary power. The PRG has in effect worked out an economic policy with five sectors: State-run sector, capitalist sector, joint State-private sector, cooperative sector, and private self-employed enterprise. Any opposition to the people's power could only come from the remnants of a huge military, police, administrative and political machinery entirely the creature of US technical and financial power. After 30 years of national and revolutionary struggle, all the reactionary forces in Viet Nam have lost their social



basis in the country. They only ever existed on direct aid from the outside. The complete liberation of the country from all foreign domination has dealt them a fatal blow. The war in the past years, after all, was not a civil war between Vietnamese. It was an American war by proxy.

**QUESTION —** Have there been any counter-revolutionary activities of any importance?

**ANSWER —** It is evident that the huge military, political and police machinery created by the Americans which was in active control for 20 years could not disappear overnight. Especially as Washington is still striving to maintain elements of opposition, and sabotage groups. You certainly know about the affair of the Vinh Son church which has brought to light the actions of extremist Catholics who worked hand in glove with elements of the former puppet army. But these are isolated attempts on a small scale. Here are two concrete examples to show you the failure of American endeavours to foment any kind of resistance. On the eve of Tet (Vietnamese Lunar New Year Festival — *Ed.*) this year, I was strolling along the streets of Saigon until two a. m. without any apprehension. This would have been a good opportunity for saboteurs to provoke ugly incidents. The whole population was in the streets, and for the first time since 1968, the public in Saigon were free to set off firecrackers. Some soldiers joining in the festivities, even

shot off their guns into the air. Firecrackers were heard everywhere. It would have been easy for a saboteur to toss a grenade or to open fire on the crowd then quickly disappear in the crowded streets. But not one such incident occurred.

Another example. Electricity comes from the Da Nhim hydro-power station which is linked to Saigon by a 250-kilometre high tension line. For 10 years, the pro-US administration was unable to ensure the protection of this line and this station was never in use. To protect a 250-km line going through sparsely inhabited mountain areas was practically impossible. Today, that line functions normally, which proves that if there are saboteurs, they are in fact not very effective. A high functionary of the former regime told me that he was very surprised that, since liberation, Saigon has never run short of electricity. In the history of revolutions, this is a really exceptional case. Of course neither weapons nor explosives are in short supply, as the routed puppet army has dropped them all over the place, and every day people still pick up quite a number. What is missing are those who want to use them to fight the revolutionary power.

**QUESTION —** You spoke of Tet. What was it like in Saigon?

**ANSWER —** In Saigon it was first of all the traditional festival with apricot blossom and other flowers, fruit comfits, and glutinous rice cakes.

Flower sellers were surprised to be selling so many flowers. They had expected a sharp fall in sales this year. What was new were the firecrackers which were crackling all night long, and for people who had known the Tet of previous years, two things struck them:

— the order which reigned in the main marketplace where the stands were better arranged, and where loud-speakers no longer poured out a deluge of jarring noisy advertisements.

— and the considerable decrease in the number of people going to temples and pagodas to ask for amulets, or prophetic lucky dips for telling fortunes, although, in comparison with Hanoi, the figure remained considerable.

First and foremost, Tet was for the young. The Tet of 76 was truly dedicated to the young. For the first time for many, many years, you could see them take to the streets no longer to protest, but to enjoy the freedom to walk as they liked, without fear of being drafted and sent to barracks. So they streamed into the streets, in Saigon as well as in all villages, to enjoy the new pleasure of loitering amidst the crowd. To understand that sort of intoxication of joy which caught them in these days of Tet, it should be known that many young people had to have their finger—the one which pulled the trigger—cut off in order to escape the draft. I saw quite a few lads with severed fingers. Such an operation with the corresponding medical

clearance cost from 100,000 to 500,000 piastres of the former regime.

You know that in Saigon not long ago many young people hid themselves away for many years together, living in dark hideouts to avoid being forced into the puppet army.

I found the same joy again in a fishermen's village on the Bay Hap river in Ca Mau area. In the past the people had to take refuge during 10 long years in the forests to avoid the draft and the bombing. Since liberation, they have been able to settle again to their lives as fishermen along the rivers, and to move about freely.

In the villages, besides the end to the bombings and shellings, people greatly appreciate the fact of being able to escape for good the blackmail of the police who used to come and squeeze money from them, and the plundering also by the soldiers. An old man of Ben Tre told me that he had, following the doctor's recommendations, raised a cock with the special aim of getting blood from it for intramuscular injections to cure a chronic asthma. He was particularly fond of the cock. One day, when a puppet army patrol was scouring the village, a soldier seized the cock. The old man cried out seeing him pluck the rooster. "If you go on kicking and screaming, I'll burn down your hut," the soldier yelled. The old man had to hide away to cry.

For people who had long suffered from the war, it was really a Tet of peace, of independence, of regained freedom.

## II

**QUESTION —** There is much talk about difficulties. What is the truth about these ?

**ANSWER —** There is no end to difficulties. The contrary would be surprising. For 21 years, the Americans, with all their technical and economic power, built up a regime which has finally collapsed. Upon the ruins of that regime we have to build a new society, new institutions, foster new ways of life, of thinking, while doing away with the legacies of the past, and readjusting, tuning, restructuring, weaving together what is being built in the North and in the South.

Someone who has only seen Saigon or caught a glimpse of the countryside along the highways would get a wrong impression of the situation. This is the case with many foreign journalists, for Saigon has, so to speak, lived apart from the war. During the tour that took me from the 17th parallel down to Cape Ca Mau, what I noticed, in the first place, was the omnipresence of war, the magnitude of war destructions. Barbed wire, watch-towers, munition and fuel dumps, airfields, barracks, block-houses, bunkers, radar stations, pylons, everywhere, everywhere. The war machinery installed by the Americans imposed its presence, blocked the horizon. You went alongside the barracks and basecamps for miles and miles in every province, along the seashore, along the mountain flanks, on the swamps. In the southernmost region, near Cape Ca Mau,

wide stretches of marshy land, in a province where people constantly waded in the mud, where you found nowhere either a grain of sand, or gravel, the Americans built the Nam Can base complete with an airfield, a jetty on a river where 200 craft could dock at a time barracks for 3,000 men with artillery, radar equipment, electric generators, and for the officers, all the comforts, air conditioners, refrigerators and TV sets, while all around, there was no end of empty forests and swamps.

Sand and gravel were brought there from hundreds of kilometres away, just to make the foundations of the basecamp. Reinforced concrete pillars 50-60 metres high, some of them 100 metres, were driven into the mud to make the foundations. This base was built in 1969, which means that as late as that period, Washington still nurtured the hope of holding south Viet Nam forever. One can hardly imagine the downfall of such a military machinery. One can understand the blind obstinacy of Washington leaders in carrying on the war, and the feeling of impotence that paralyses certain people who resigned themselves to accepting Yankee domination.

Then there is the war destruction, immense, uncalculable. I stayed dumbfounded for hours in the provinces of Quang Tri, Thua Thien, Quang Nam, Ben Tre, Ca Mau and at Cu Chi, at the sight of villages razed to the ground. Here you can no longer see the least trace of homes, gardens, roads, rice-fields, and people who return can no longer find even a bamboo-tree to build a hut with. In Binh Duong

village, in Quang Nam province, for instance, which counted in 1960 eight thousand people, 90 per cent of the houses were of brick and tile. After several years of war, however, not one single house, not a single tree is left. The forest of filao pines which sheltered the village from the sea was razed and burnt down. The sea dike which prevented salt water from flooding the paddy fields, was flattened. The canal which brought fresh water into the fields, had been filled up. Six thousand inhabitants have returned to the village. Every family has each at least one dead, victim of the bombings, tortures, or summary executions. This figure includes 2,000 crippled or sick as a result of all these ordeals. Two thousand for a single village!

You can imagine the number of disabled, of sick people, whom the revolutionary power has to take care of, to whom it has to distribute food, clothing, whom it must help in building a house, or finding a job again. From 1965 to 1975, according to US reports, 10 million people were compelled to leave their villages because of the bombings and shellings, and the spraying of toxic chemicals. You only have to look at the millions of coconut-palms from Binh Dinh to Ben Tre and Ca Mau many beheaded, others bearing on their trunks still gaping wounds torn by bomb and shell splinters, in order to realize how destructive this war has been. The U Minh Ha forest, well known for its huge trees, and the thick layer of peat that covered its floor, was first defoliated by chemicals, then charred by napalm. The fire lasted several months. Plodding through

that desert of reeds, I thought I was dreaming when I heard some one say that we were now in the very heart of the old forest.

Never should you forget all that, if you want to understand what happened in the past and what is happening today. In south Viet Nam, US aircraft have destroyed thousands of villages, while in north Viet Nam, towns and industrial centres in particular were their targets. No country has ever suffered so much destruction, and reconstruction tasks are tremendous. You must always bear in mind this huge war destruction if you want to judge current events objectively.

**QUESTION — Are there so many difficulties in the regions not affected by war?**

**ANSWER —** In the areas controlled by the US not affected by bombs, the problem is quite different. I should give you the following diagram (*see sketch*) to help you understand the neocolonial policy in its entirety. Washington has, so to speak, drowned the South of our country under a triple deluge:

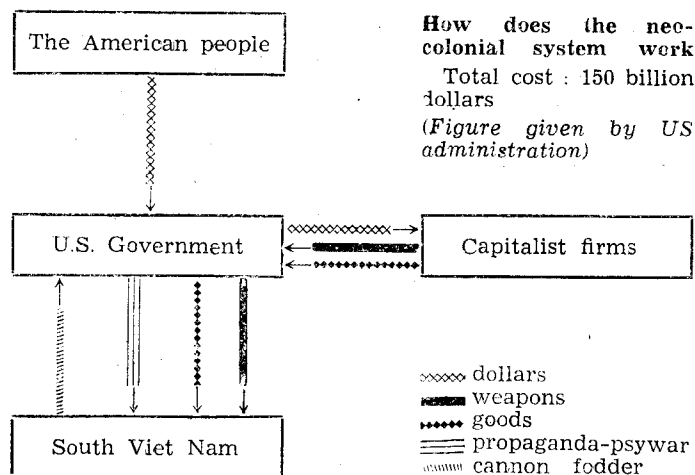
- a deluge of bombs (and other lethal means of destruction).

- a deluge of consumer goods

- a deluge of ideological and cultural propaganda and intoxication.

The more bombs fell upon the free areas, the more goods Saigon and other US-held areas received. The contrast is striking when you go from the

free zones or from towns in the North which have been bombed for years to Saigon which is roaring with thousands of vehicles, filled up with American, Japanese, and French goods, where high buildings soar above shanty towns and noisome slums. Fictitious prosperity, some people call it. I don't like this word, for the buildings, the cars, the goods, none of these things are artificial. These things impose themselves, obsess the minds, create an ambience, a new social order. I would rather say an expensive prosperity, even too dearly paid for. For if some countries paid for the Mercedes and the



Chevrolets, the refrigerators and other gadgets by the sale of their oil, south Viet Nam paid for them with flesh and blood. Half a million American soldiers cost Washington 30 billion dollars yearly to maintain, whereas one million Thieu mercenaries

cost at most more than two billion. This means that a Saigon soldier cost 30 times less. A real Shylock, Washington did not make gifts as a favour but swapped dollars for blood. When I saw these smart buildings, refrigerators and all that in Saigon, I couldn't help thinking of the graves scattered all over the fields, of the crippled lives that went begging in the streets.

Each year Saigon imported on an average 750 million dollars worth of goods, not counting the dollars received for military construction, and those spent by US troops and services. About one and a half million people and their families, let us say 6 or 7 million in all, lived on wages and salaries paid by the US, not counting the people serving all that machinery. Today, this manna has disappeared. Saigon and other cities, and regions under US control, no longer soak up that yearly billion dollars. The prices of goods naturally have been soaring. The traders, who number hundreds of thousands, naturally indulge in hoarding, which makes prices rise; the most fantastic rumours are spread, building up a kind, of collective psychosis. In brief, shortages due to speculation and the cessation of American aid have created a situation which has two major consequences:

- serious unemployment involving from three to four million people.
- an instability of prices which renders life very difficult for all those who live on fixed incomes, wages and salaries.

In the immediate future, the essential problem is to stabilize prices, while in the long term it is to create new production centres capable of providing jobs for several million persons.

**QUESTION — Could you illustrate these economic difficulties by some facts ?**

**ANSWER —** Let's take the problem of fuel, for instance. Southern Viet Nam in the American era used oil fuel to meet up to 98% of its energy needs. All the power stations were operated with liquid fuel, and there was a proliferation of petrol-consuming vehicles without any relation to local economic realities. So much so that the import of fuel in 1974 jumped up to 150 million dollars at least five times the amount of exports.

Sugar mills worked with imported raw sugar which had only to be refined locally. The biggest firm "Foremost" turning out tins of condensed milk, imported powdered milk, the steel plating, sugar and paper for the tins coming from factories which imported these raw materials. Japanese, French, West German, and Taiwanese firms had their radio and TV sets assembled here, and processed pharmaceutical products with imported ancillary techniques, spare parts, and raw materials were "finished" here. These are typical examples of neo-colonial enterprises entirely dependent on foreigners. Since the liberation, foreign technicians have left, and machine parts and raw materials are no longer imported.

**QUESTION — How did the revolutionary power cope with these difficulties ?**

**ANSWER —** First, urgent measures were taken. Food relief was distributed to hundreds of thousands of needy families in Saigon alone. On the occasion of Tet, the revolutionary power also offered all these families gifts that enabled them to celebrate this festival with dignity for the first time. It also gave temporary shelter to numerous families that had slept in the streets for years. It endeavoured to ensure farmers, fisherfolk and transport workers the necessary fuel to operate their tractors, pumps, motor boats, and trucks. The supply of chemical fertilizers was much more difficult in view of the shortage of foreign exchange. Works abandoned by foreigners or compradore capitalists who had fled overseas were taken over by the State. Those belonging to the national capitalists and traders were given help by the authorities in fuel or raw materials specially imported or coming from the North. But the most important thing was the start of a plan for total economic conversion which consists of:

1. switching over from a neo-colonial economy completely dependent on the foreigners to a national and independent economy,
2. gradually building socialist structures in order to achieve a socialist economy with the North and South completely integrated which will make it possible to pool the resources and potentials of a reunified Vietnamese nation of over 45 million.

You can see that this is a long and exacting undertaking, and while the first measures are being applied, specialized teams are making deep on-the-spot inquiries to gather the necessary data with a view to the working out of the 1976-1980 five-year plan, on a nationwide scale, from North to South. The Americans had worked out projects for their designs of post-war economic development, the best known of which is that of David Lilienthal. These projects contain valuable data, but in the main they are not much more than propaganda stunts intended to impress the US Congress into granting credits necessary to maintain the Thieu regime.

**QUESTION — What first measures have already been applied ?**

**ANSWER —** The State has first of all taken over the basis of the economy hitherto in the hands of the foreigners or compradore capitalists: e.g. banks, foreign trade, rice trade. When looking at the buildings of the 40 or so foreign banks — which were supposed to belong to Vietnamese capitalists but were in fact covers for foreign corporations — looking at those huge, shut up buildings with their deserted halls, you feel that an epoch has vanished, that of the domination of Viet Nam by foreign capital. I confess that I stayed for a rather long time to “relish” this spectacle, which is as significant as the heaps of tanks and guns abandoned by the routed puppet army. No foreign economic exploi-

tation of an imperialist type, no economic speculation of a compradore type, will any longer be possible in this country.

The State has finally taken over the home trade of rice, which made it possible to stabilize the prices of those things essential for the basic needs of the population. The network of State-run trade will be gradually completed so as to stabilize little by little the prices of other goods. For the time being, it is not yet strong enough to prevent hoarding and speculation in many goods. The export of rubber, frozen crayfish and lobsters, and handicraft articles, are objects of particular attention. The North-South trade relations already initiated are playing a more and more important role in economic development. Coal, phosphate fertilizers, certain engineering products of the North, are precious for the South which, in return, supplies to the North foodstuffs and the products of light industries.

**QUESTION — What are the most important problems for Saigon in particular ?**

**ANSWER —** Saigon was first and foremost a city of refugees, gathering all those driven away from their villages by the bombings, military operations and repressions. The city counted about half a million inhabitants in 1945. The figure shot up to 1,200,000 in 1958 to 2,500,000 in 1969, and to 3,500,000 at the present moment. The last weeks of the war saw some hundreds of thousands more

people come pouring into the city. This afflux of refugees enabled the Americans to recruit the mercenaries and policemen indispensable to the implementation of their policy, but at the same time produced a wretched mass of people jammed into infected slums and shanty towns supporting life on anything they could find.

Saigon was a city that produced practically nothing. Statistics of the former regime estimated the part of industrial production at 7 percent while the services and incomes provided by the administration represented nearly 70%. Thus a policy of conversion and reform of the economy is necessary. The first measure was to organize the return of refugees to their home villages so as to reclaim the lands left waste; but so many villages had been razed that it was necessary to open up new lands. These are the "new economic zones" where the State, while laying new roads, digging wells, building infirmaries and schools, and supplying part of the building materials, helps the population to create new villages for themselves.

Army and youth organizations bring a precious contribution to the major works. It should be pointed out that many of these regions are very dangerous because of the unexploded mines, bombs and shells that are still concealed there. Liberation Army fighters have grappled with this dangerous mine-sweeping job. In Binh Tri Thien province, for instance, on an area of 4,700 hectares, they had to remove 885,000 mines and shells. Farm workers and children were killed every day in these areas

by these lethal remnants. It could be said that American weapons will continue to kill for many more years.

However in the course of 10 months, 400,000 people have been able either to return to their own villages, or to return to the countryside to open new lands. Other measures of economic conversion have been carried out: particularly the reorganization of many industrial enterprises and handicraft workshops. The 11th district of Saigon, for instance, has organized 440 such works. However, there are still 5,000 without work and 20,000 partly unemployed in the district.

**QUESTION — We have already touched upon the political and economic problems, and you have also mentioned the complexity of the social problems. Could you give us some more concrete ideas about these?**

**ANSWER:** I will deal particularly with the neo-colonialist society, particularly the one recently created by the US intervention. I say "created", because this was a society devised and implanted deliberately by the rulers in Washington according to a predetermined and methodically worked out plan. The first step taken was the "forcible urbanization" of about 10 million of the rural population, which resulted in a tremendous expansion of the urban population of south Viet Nam, which made up only 15 per cent of the total in 1960, and rose



to 45 per cent in 1974 and even 65 per cent with the inclusion of the various regroupment centres and D.P. camps. A population with a nonrural section of 65 per cent — such a figure should only be expected in a highly industrialized country, not in south Viet Nam, which, properly speaking, had virtually no industry at all. The traditional pattern of Vietnamese society was thus completely disrupted, and some 12 to 15 million people were subjected to an intensive "conditioning" covering a number of years.

**QUESTION — What did this "conditioning" mean, and what were the methods ?**

**ANSWER :** Man is not a thinking creature ; he is a complex of reactions (behaviour), which are responses to given situations, and by creating certain situations, one can condition, transform, and mould him. Such is the theory which implicitly or explicitly motivates American practice in many spheres of activity, from the advertising industry to the planning of neo-colonialist policies. The population of south Viet Nam, urbanized by force, was subjected to an initial conditioning: all relations with the patriotic and revolutionary movement were strictly prohibited by bombings, massacres, inhuman tortures, exactly in the same way that a guinea-pig in a labyrinth is given an electric shock as soon as it takes the wrong direction. The next conditioning: the guinea-pig, as soon as it heads for the right

direction, receives a reward in the form of some tit-bits. Those who accepted the neo-colonialist regime and were willing to serve the US policy as mercenaries, policemen and administrative employees or, better still, those who "played ball" by positively aiding the regime, becoming army officers, or comprador ideologists, gained immediate access to the delights of the "consumer society". The 600 million or 700 million dollars worth of commercial aid, and the several hundred million dollars spent by the various services and the troops of the United States enabled the regime to import every year about one billion dollars worth of goods, and everyone joining in the game got a share proportionate to his services. A high ranking officer, a senior official, a comprador capitalist, a drugdealer, a well-disposed intellectual could have anything he wanted, — cars, villas, refrigerators, TV sets, air-conditioners, tours abroad, and the most up-to-date gadgets which could be obtained from the United States, Japan, France, West Germany...

**QUESTION — So, only a minority could have these advantages ?**

**ANSWER :** Yes, only a minority was granted these top privileges. But it would be a mistake to say that the population as a whole were kept out. A billion US dollars was an enormous sum for the economy of a small country with very little industry to absorb. Crumbs of the American manna fell all

around. In Saigon you can find TV sets and refrigerators almost everywhere, even in infested squatter-areas, where a dense population lives under galvanized-iron roofs, or in houses on stilts, along canals filled with rubbish and waste of all sorts, and where cholera cases are still reported from time to time. Everybody, from the president of the republic to a pedicab driver, might expect a bit from this deluge of goods. Privileged persons would get for themselves the latest and most expensive articles from the West, and would re-sell them as soon as new gadgets appeared in the Western market. These hand-me-downs, originally coming from highly industrialized countries, were paid for in cash by the middle strata, re-sold again when no longer in vogue, finally landing up in those miserable hovels and shanties, where one would not normally expect to see them. The consumer society in the West is founded on a powerful industry; but this rule did not apply to southern Viet Nam: everything came from abroad by a sort of miracle which might never happen again, hence the particular frenzy to enjoy all these goodies as quickly as possible. Everybody wanted to acquire things, not by working harder, but by trying his chance. Saigon was more feverish, more agitated than any cities in the West; people were always on tenterhooks, fearing to let a good chance slip by. There were millions of refugees, driven there from their villages by bombs. These people lacked the things they actually needed every day, and had no steady jobs; but they developed entirely

artificial needs. Take foam rubber mattresses for example. It is never cold in Saigon, and it is no pleasures at all to sleep on a mattress with bed-sheet. But, seeing how people in the West were using them, the rich in Saigon thought it a must to do the same, and the middle-class families felt obliged to follow suit. Even families with a modest income would try to get foam rubber mattresses when they had the chance. People felt deprived not to have the luxury of sleeping on a foam rubber mattress, even in the height of summer. The natural needs of the several million people who lacked the bare necessities alongside these artificial needs created by the invasion of sophisticated industrial products combined to form a peculiar atmosphere, an intensive social pressure on the people's psychology.

**QUESTION —** What was the effect of all this on the various strata of the society?

**ANSWER:** The children and young people were more easily affected by this pressure. They came to believe it was obligatory to dress in the manner of Western fashion magazines, to adopt Western hairstyles and, naturally, to change the fashions whenever they changed in the West. We have talked much about drugs — heroin, marijuana — but the race for new consumer articles is also a drug: these goodies haunt your mind, interfere with your thoughts, and blunt your feelings. Take motor-

bikes — "Honda" — motor-bikes in particular. A convenient means of conveyance in a growing city, the Honda became for those young people who did not have access to the real pleasures of culture a means to assert themselves. Imagine a young peasant from a remote village. He had toiled in muddy rice-fields all his life, and then he saw these brand-new machines, which roared past at an incredible speed. It was difficult for him to resist the temptation; it was difficult not to dream of having one, not to do everything to acquire one. What to do to have those refrigerators and TV sets, those motor-bikes, furniture suites, modish clothes displayed everywhere, and to enjoy oneself in those bars and restaurants, those hotels and dancing-clubs available in every street, every block? The temptation was omnipresent, and it took a great deal of courage to turn from it.

**QUESTION —** What was the intention of the Americans?

**ANSWER:** Having to recruit mercenaries and policemen to replace the costly GIs, Washington got going an effective drafting apparatus and a powerful police machinery to deal with the recalcitrants. The only people who could escape were those in touch with the national and revolutionary movement, and what the Americans aimed to do was to keep the young people away from this movement and empty their brains of all national, revolutionary ideas in order

to gather them like ripe fruit. "Personalism", "Defence of the Free World", "Anti-communist crusades" were all very well, but there was nothing like the permanent temptation of glossy merchandise. A man who dreamed day and night of a Honda, a refrigerator, a Mercedes was one man less for the revolutionary movement, and the day would come when he would enrol of his own free will in Thieu's army or police to get the necessary money, or if he was caught during a sweep, he would not have the courage to resist forcible conscription or to say no to the military machinery, which made him shoot, willy-nilly, his own brothers and friends. This conditioning by merchandise cost Washington only two billion a year as against the 30 billion required to keep GIs in Viet Nam.

**QUESTION —** Was there no other way to achieve the same result?

**ANSWER?:** Certainly, there was. When you make a tour of south Viet Nam you will be surprised by the number of TV antennae you can see on roof-tops, everywhere, even in the poorest quarters of cities and in many villages. The use of mass media — the radio, TV, newspapers, posters, and films — was intensive in the effort to force upon millions of people a set of notions and attitudes which were calculated to turn them against communism, bend them under the US might, and poison their minds

against any revolutionary inclination. No effort was spared to alienate people from the revolutionary movement—from anti-communism of the most vulgar kind to subtle theories with such names as personalism, existentialism, structuralism. Even the “thinking of young Marx” or “Marxology” was resorted to. Many young people boasted that they were both anti-American and anti-communist but as far as Washington was concerned, what really counted was that these people could be kept away from the revolutionary movement through their anti-communism. Indeed, to escape the draft or forcible conscription in occupied south Viet Nam, you could only rely on revolutionary organizations. Otherwise, neither Buddhism, existentialism, nor pluralism, or anti-Americanism could save you when the US military and police machinery took hold of you. What was most striking was the profusion of various religious organizations, churches and sects which flourished at that time.

**QUESTION — What was the reason for that?**

ANSWER: The war had been going on for years, leaving an endless trail of death and destruction. To many people, it was necessary to find some kind of consolation, some spiritual support in face of these calamities. There was also the fact that the whole existence of this neo-colonialist society hinged on a very unstable factor, on continued US aid. No

one could be sure of what was in store; no one, even the richest, could count on anything certain or stable on which to plan the future. Even the most scientific minds could not help thinking in terms of fate and destiny when they contemplated the morrow. Hence the development of religions with a strong element of superstition—soothsaying and horoscoping. Moreover there was the deliberate attempt on the part of Washington to assist the development of these religions by all means, in particular by financial aid. In the twenty years of US intervention one witnessed a proliferation of churches and pagodas, of Catholic, Protestant, Caodaist, Buddhist, Hoa Hao and B'hai shrines. Huge statues of Christ, the Virgin Mary and Buddha were erected on hill-tops, and religions vied with one another to put up colleges, seminaries, charity institutions and new religious groupings.

**QUESTION — Which religion thrived the most then?**

ANSWER: Buddhism seemingly, but Catholicism actually. The latter formed the backbone of the regime, from Ngo Dinh Diem to Nguyen Van Thieu, both being Catholic, as were the majority of the senior officers, provincial chiefs, senators, and other representatives. Under Ngo Dinh Diem, the Catholic Church was openly triumphant, displaying all its pomps, whereas under Nguyen Van Thieu it showed

more discretion, but still maintained all its privileges. As for Buddhism, it showed a spectacular development at times; because to many people this was an expression of nationalism, a protest against foreign intervention and against the domination of Catholicism. Now that all aspirations for peace and independence have come true with liberation. Buddhism is undergoing a decline. A great number of pagodas have been deserted, many bonzes have gone home.

**QUESTION —** Was there another way to "condition" people, besides the ones you have mentioned?

**ANSWER:** The US policy also sought to group people in innumerable social, cultural, artistic, sports, youth, popular, ethnic, or local organisations, which made almost everyone feel attached to the regime one way or another. This system of organisations was directly connected with the police apparatus. The Saigon police, like the CIA and other US secret services, infiltrated large numbers of agents and informers into all these organizations, all city wards, all villages, and information thus collected was recorded in files. The Saigon police, with modern information methods and electronic computers, could easily discover members of opposition groups, revolutionary militants and sympathizers. The regime had under its control a police force of some

200,000 men equipped with weapons of the most modern kinds and ready to crack down ruthlessly upon opponents. This "industrial" police aspect was an important component of the neo-colonial set-up.

**QUESTION —** What was the result of all these considerable means and elaborate methods of Washington?

**ANSWER:** The national and revolutionary movement has finally triumphed. This is because people, although they can be conditioned by the situations and circumstances they live in, are none the less conscious, active beings. The military and police apparatuses, the American conditioning machinery, for all their vastness and sophistication, were confronted with a conscious, organized people inspired by a vigorous national tradition and conducting a struggle under the leadership of an experienced Marxist party.

But the problem should be studied equally from another angle. The American impact has been profound, and US neo-colonialism has left behind serious consequences, so it will take much time and effort to do away with them. It is only true to admit that the people of southern Viet Nam are now in an ambivalent mood. The complete liberation of the country and the achievement of independence, on the one hand, have brought a profound, immense joy. Everyone feels proud to belong to a heroic people who have defeated the biggest imperialist

power of our time ; everyone is re-living the historic epic of the nation's forebears, who in the 13th century routed the Yuans, the world's most powerful army of those times. On the other hand, the old regime having been nurtured for years on US aid and this aid having now stopped, great difficulties are facing the people in the daily life of families, of workshops and factories. Besides, the war had caused tremendous destructions which it will take much time to repair. The great majority of the population welcomes the policy of re-unification and socialist construction ; but it will take time before all these complicated and difficult problems of everyday life can be solved.

**QUESTION—To what extent have the sequels of the old regime already been overcome ?**

**ANSWER :** One can say that the liberation in itself has had a great cleansing effect. My Saigonese friends believe that superstition, prostitution, drug-addiction—those pervading taints of the old regime—have been reduced at least by half, as if these miasmas had been blown away by a great wind. One Catholic priest has spoken of his joy in seeing the quick cleansing of the social life. Under the old regime his sermons fell on deaf ears. These evils, of course, do not disappear automatically. A series of organisations must be set up and measures taken to re-educate and re-adapt prostitutes, drug-addicts, delinquents. Good will is not lacking and

the new society has already created a particularly favourable environment. Many drug-addicts and prostitutes, having turned over a new leaf, are becoming active in the re-education movement. A ban on pornographic films and literature has helped to clean people's mind and fewer people are going to pagodas to seek favours of spirits and Buddha for cures to their maladies, or for fortune-telling sprees (to people from the North, however, the extent of superstitions and the number of street fortune-tellers is still a surprise). The greatest contribution to the wiping out of the taints left by the old regime, of course, has been made by the practical reforms and social and cultural measures already put into effect by the revolutionary administration. The society of southern Viet Nam today can be likened to an immense marsh in which lotuses are beginning to bloom and are gradually overcoming the stink of decay with their fresh colours and sweet smell.

**QUESTION— What are the main reforms and innovations since liberation ?**

**ANSWER :** There is first of all a prevailing atmosphere of justice, equality and brotherhood entirely different from the former stifling atmosphere. People have come to know members of the liberation army, revolutionary cadres and leaders—men and women who have nothing in common with the soldiers and officials of the old days ; and all the

anti-communist slogans and myths cultivated at great pains for years by US propaganda suddenly look like phantoms caught in broad day-light. All of a sudden communist "torturers", "devils" and "bugaboos" are here to stay, and they are none other than your brothers, cousins, friends and neighbours. As combatants they may be tough, but all the same they are friendly and devoted people... They are ready to give a hand to peasants building a canal, to help an old or handicapped person at harvest time. They claim nothing for themselves, but would rather accept privation in order not to upset people. There are, of course, certain soldiers or cadres who behave arrogantly, who have become corrupted, but they are rare exceptions; and people know that the majority of the cadres and combatants—with whom they are in contact every day—are truly "Uncle Ho's soldiers" modelled more or less in the image of the beloved, venerated leader. And to the people of southern Viet Nam at present communism also represents the powerful groundswell which is beginning to change society: the campaign against illiteracy, the setting up of an effective medical network which takes care even of the poorest strata, the popular tours of movie, theatre and song and dance teams which bring the benefits of culture to people, even in remotest hamlets. Communism also means the prospect of building a free, prosperous country, which is the only way to solve so many of the present difficulties. I believe that our fellow-countrymen in the South will go to the polls with this in mind.

**QUESTION — What is the reaction of intellectuals in Saigon ?**

**ANSWER :** Most of the intellectuals in Saigon have seen for themselves the evils of the old society and the crimes of the US occupation. Nevertheless they maintain an attitude of reserve towards socialism and Marxism, being strongly influenced by Western culture. Like other sections of the population, they feel profoundly the joy of national liberation and the relief of seeing society so quickly cleansing its system. I believe that their reservations will not last long when they see for themselves the prospects opened by liberation and reunification and the construction underway of a prosperous Viet Nam. Intellectuals, most of them of privileged upper- or middle-class backgrounds, have clearly seen the national bourgeoisie's inability to defend the country's independence and to build an economy free from the designs of big imperialist companies. It is highly unlikely that a patriotic Vietnamese intellectual would contemplate the future of the country against the background of capitalism. Since it is now clear that only socialism can bring out all the creative energies of the people, and since the great majority of them are first and foremost patriots, these intellectuals are being gradually won over by socialist ideology. Indeed, many of them have expressed to me their satisfaction in seeing the scientific and technological revolution regarded by the Viet Nam Workers' Party as the centre of its policy. Many are surprised and deeply impressed

by the fact that the national culture in the North, far from being stifled by socialism or destroyed by US bombs, has shown a remarkable development. They have seen how in music, literature, the theatre, dance and the plastic arts, the policy of the VNWP has helped to revive the national cultural heritage at the same time enriching them with modern ideas and development. So, I believe that the great majority of intellectuals will be able to take the present difficulties in their stride and will launch themselves enthusiastically into the building of a re-unified and socialist Viet Nam.

**QUESTION — To what extent can international aid be of use to the rebuilding of the country ?**

**ANSWER:** We cannot be too grateful to our comrades and friends in all countries for their support and assistance during the war. Today, our difficulties are immense and innumerable. We are short of everything — building materials, medicines, paper to print text-books for our children, fuels, equipment etc. We lack skilled technicians and qualified scientists. Our friends abroad can help us in many ways. We think that the essential factor is the untiring efforts of our own people. But there is not doubt that international aid is an important factor in helping to speed up our work of reconstruction and in reducing the privations of our people.

Reproduced from *Viet Nam Courier*  
nos. 47-48 — April-May 1976

## THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM: MAIN DATA

The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam forms part of the Indochinese peninsula, lies at the crossroads of communications in Southeast Asia, and is the outpost of the socialist system in the region. Hanoi is 1,120 km from Rangoon and 1,770 km from Manila, and Ho Chi Minh city is 1,100 km from Manila, and 1,890 km from Djakarta. The country lies at the heart of Southeast Asia, at an important junction on the Indian Ocean Pacific sea-route.

The following is the geographical position of its mainland.

Cardinal point	Farthest Extent	Latitude (North)	Longitude (East)
North	Lung Cu village (Dong Van, Ha Tuyen province)	23°22	105°20
South	Rach Tau hamlet (Ca Mau, Minh Hai province)	8°30	104°50
East	Hon Gom archipelago (Phu Khanh province)	12°40	109°30
West	La San Mountain (Lai Chau province)	22°24	102°10



The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam forms one continuous stretch of land from North to South, 1,650 kilometres as the crow flies between its two farthest points.

The country is widest in the north (600 km from east to west, between Mong Cai and the Lao border) and narrowest in the centre (50 km across Binh Tri Thien province). Its seacoast is shaped like an S and curves around the Gulf of Bac bo in the North. The central part of the country is dominated by the Truong Son range which runs down to the sea in some places; the South, bordered by the sea in the west, extends southwards as far as Cape Ca Mau.

Viet Nam has common frontiers with three countries totalling 3,730 km: with the People's Republic of China (1150 km) in the north and with the Democratic People's Republic of Laos (1650 km) and Democratic Kampuchea (930 km) in the west. Bordered by the sea in the east and south, the country's 3,260 km-long coast forms a "balcony onto the Pacific ».

With an area of 329,566 square kilometres it is not a large country, and as three quarters of it are hilly regions, it is a picturesque land. Its mountains are not high; the Hoang Lien Son range (in Hoang Lien Son province) is dominated by Fan Si Pang (3,143 metres), the highest peak in the country. With 50 million inhabitants, it ranks 16th in population in the world and third among the socialist countries.

Viet Nam is one of the cradles of the human race: artifacts discovered here testify to human habitation

hundreds of thousands of years ago. After a long period of travelling, integration, assimilation and division, there are now over 60 nationalities living on its territory. The Kinh (majority people) account for 84% of the total population and live in the delta and urban centres. The ethnic minorities live mainly in the uplands and highlands.

*Population figures for 55 minorities follow:*

Tay	742,000	Khmer	651,000
Thai	631,000	Muong	618,000
Nung	472,000	Meo	349,000
Dao	294,000	Giarai	163,000
Ede	142,000	Banar	78,000
Cham	65,000	Coho	63,000
Hre	57,000	Sandiu	53,000
Sodang	53,000	M'nong	47,000
Cao Lan	42,000	Ray glay	38,000
Stang	35,000	Van Kieu	29,000
Giay	26,000	Ca Tu	23,000
San chi	22,000	Ma	22,000
Ta-oi	16,000	Co	18,000
Khmu	15,000	Gie	12,000
Churo	8,000	Ha Nhi	8,000
Sinh man	8,000	Lao	7,000
Phu La	4,000	Khang	4,000
La Hu	3,700	Trang	3,000
Lo	2,500	Lo Lo	2,200
Bru	2,200	Lana	2,000
May	1,800	Chuc	1,800
Quy Chau (Pamuoi)	1,700	Pathen	1,600

Tu di	1,000	Co Lao	900
Ve	800	Công	700
Sre	400	Bo y	350
Sila	250	Tay Poong	170
Odu	140	Thuy	50
Tong	50		

Each ethnic minority contributes according to its capability, its material, cultural and spiritual level, to the prosperity of the common Fatherland. Through the generations these nationalities have merged into the Vietnamese nation; they have worked with might and main to defend the country not sparing sweat or blood. They are now cooperating more closely than ever under the Party's leadership to build the country — the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

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Viet Nam has a dense network of rivers and canals. There is a river-mouth every 20 kilometres along the seacoast, on average. With 41,000 kilometres of rivers and 3,100 kilometres of canals, the country has abundant water-supplies (about 300,000 million cubic metres), fairly evenly distributed. Our rivers represent great resources, one of the most important being hydro-electric power of an estimated 80,000 million kilowatts, which if exploited economically, is equal to 20 million kilowatts of generator capacity. Besides, our rivers are good waterways, and are a great reservoir of water for

irrigation, fish-breeding, industrial development and the people's daily needs. Our rivers carry large quantities of silt: 80 million cubic metres per year is carried down the Red River and 1,000 million down the Mekong River. With one fifth on the alluvium from the Red River we could obtain 20 million tons of silt equal to 20 million tons of medium-quantity manure. River silt constantly improves the soil and enlarges the area of the deltas.

The Red River flows on Vietnamese territory for 500 kilometres; its two big tributaries are the Da (543 km) and the Lo (277 km), and among its smaller ones are the Gam (210 km), the Chay (306 km) and the Day (241 km).

The basin of the Thai Binh river is formed by three rivers: the Cau (290 km), Thuong (156 km) and Luc Nam (178 km). Other well-known rivers are the Ky Cung (230 km), Ma (126 km), Ca (379 km), Gianh (155 km), Ben Hai (66 km), Thu Bon (102 km), and the Da Rang or Ba (290 km). The Dong Nai river is 500 km long, its source is in the highlands of our country and it forms a system of waterways with the La Nga, Be, Saigon and the East and West Vam Co rivers.

The biggest river in our country and one of the longest in the world is the Mekong (4,220 kilometres). Its source is in Tibet (China) and it flows through Laos and Kampuchea before crossing our country over its last 220 kilometres, where it divides into two arms—the Tien Giang and Hau Giang—and empties into the Eastern sea through nine mouths (hence its name Cuu Long: Nine Dragons).

Our country is also watered by other rivers which together with man-made canals form a dense network of waterways crisscrossing immense plains.

The river deltas are flat fertile plains most suitable for the growing of food crops and short-term industrial crops.

The biggest plains are:

Red River and Thai Binh

river Deltas	1,500,000 hectares
Plain of Thanh Hoa and Nghe An	680,000 —
Plain of Binh Tri Thien	200,000 —
Plain of South Central Viet Nam	610,000 —
Tien Giang Plain (Mekong)	2,241,000 —
Hau Giang Plain (Mekong)	3,354,000 —
Dong Thap Muoi Plain	535,000 —

Thanks to continuous alluvial deposits, these plains never cease to expand in area. Every year the Red River delta grows 100 metres into the sea and the Mekong River delta 60-80 metres. The mountain regions have many plains in valleys, totalling 600,000 hectares in the Northwest, Viet Bac and Northeast. Croplands are concentrated in the deltas, but one should not forget the red soil in the highlands of our country, which is rich in humus and lends itself quite well to pasture and the growing of fruit-trees and perennial industrial crops. The farmland in the upland regions totals 4.3 million hectares (2.5 million hectares in the South), concentrated on the following plateaux:

North Kontum	90,000 hectares
Duc Co	80,000 —
North and South Cheo Reo	140,000 —

Upper reaches of the Srepok river 150,000 hectares

Ban Dcn — Dac Xuu	100,000 —
North Dac lac	150,000 —
South Dac lac	100,000 —
North Lam Dong	80,000 —
Tanh Dinh, Talai	170,000 —
East Nam Bo	500,000 —

Thanks to these favourable farming conditions and material foundations, it will be possible under the Party's leadership for comprehensive and all-sided agriculture in the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to develop towards large-scale socialist agriculture.

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In our country, forests and forest-land of great potential economic value occupy an area of 16 million hectares (50% of the national territory), in which forests cover 10.4 million hectares.

One of the most varied selections of fauna and flora in Southeast Asia and the world is found there. There is vegetation belonging to 267 families, 1,850 genera and 7,000 species; there are many precious woods much sought after on the home and foreign markets: *lat hoa* (*Chukrasia tabularis*), *dinh* (*Mar-khamia stipulata*), *lim* (*Erythrophloeum fordii*), *sen* (*Madhuca pasquieri*), *tau* (*Vatica tonkinensis*), *trai* (*Fagraea fragam*), *mun* (*Diospyros mun*), *giang huong* (*Pterocarpus pedatus*), *hoang dan* (*Dacrydium pierrei*), *kim giao* (*Podocarpus fleuryi*), *cam xe* (*Xylia dolabriformis*), *gu* (*Sindora cochinchinensis*),

*kien kien* (*Hopea pierrei*), *sao* (*Hopea berrierii*), *tro mung* (*Garcinia delpyana*), *chi chi* (*Adenanthera microsperma*). Besides timber and bamboo, we boast many valuable products in great demand abroad, including shellac, cinnamon bark, resin, aniseed and eucalyptus oil.

Our forests also abound in medicinal plants (over 1,000 species), the most valuable being: *dan sam* (*Salvia multiorrhiza*), *tam that* (*Panax pseudo-ginseng*), *ha thu o* (*Polygonum multiflorum*), *sa nhan* (*Amomum echinosphaera*), *ke dau ngua* (*Xanthium strumarium*), *cay bay la mot hoa* (*Paris polyphylla*), *cuc tan* (*Pluchea indica*).

Our trees grow from 3 to 10 times faster than flora in temperate countries. Viet Nam is one of the countries with the highest number of plant species including shellac, cinnamon bark, resin, aniseed and eucalyptus oil.

Our forest is the habitat of a large variety of animals and birds (thousands of species of birds and over 300 kinds of wild animals). The big game animals include the elephant, gaur, wild buffalo, wild ox; the ferocious ones are the tiger, panther, wild boar, bear; rare animals include the rhinoceros, tapir and wild goat; and among the smaller animals are monkeys, gibbons, hares, and porcupines. Wild birds include the eagle, peacock, pheasant and grouse.

There are 500,000 hectares of submerged forests in Viet Nam, and the one in Minh Hai province ranks second in size only to the submerged forest in the Amazon Basin. We boast a primeval forest —

the Cuc Phuong National Park — in Ha Nam Ninh province which is 25,000 hectares in area and has 2,000 species of trees, 140 kinds of wild animals, 24 families of insects, a cave where some of the first men lived and a hot spring. This wide range of wild animals and birds, (some of them are now reckoned to be extinct) makes our forest a "museum" of great scientific value.

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Viet Nam's 3,260 kilometre-long coast runs from Mong Cay (Quang Ninh province) to Ha Tien (Kien Giang province). The sea teems with 1,000 species of fish, and the shoals are especially thick off Phan Thiet and in the mouths of the Mekong River; we catch about 700,000 tons of fish every year. Other valuable sea products include tortoise-shell, pearl, coral, crayfish and cuttle-fish. The coastal area itself is an immense salt-marsh which yields half a million tons of salt per year; we have high quality sand most appreciated for the manufacture of glass-ware.

Our continental shelf contains big reserves of oil and other products. Along the seacoast are many well-sheltered ports: Haiphong, Da Nang, Qui Nhon, Cam Ranh, Vung Tau and Saigon are the largest; (Cam Ranh Bay is one of the best sheltered harbours in the world). The many seaside resorts include Tra Co, Do Son, Sam Son, Cua Lo, Ly Hoa, Cua Tung, Nha Trang and Phuoc Hai. Beauty spots include Ha Long Bay, Hai Van mountain pass, Phu Quoc island.

Viet Nam's subsoil conceals a large variety of minerals including some precious ones; it can be said that Viet Nam is very rich in mineral resources for her size. The 50 kinds of minerals found include petroleum, metals, non-metallic minerals, and mineral waters.

With regard to coal, our coal-seam is hundreds of kilometres long and deposits are estimated at many billions of tons. Brown coal mines and peat found throughout the country are a big reserve of energy, chemicals and fertilizers.

There is oil and gas to be exploited on land and the continental shelf; they constitute the basis for the country's petro-chemical and other industries. Thousands of products derived from petroleum will change the economic outlook and the life of our people.

Other minerals include: iron, chromium, titanium, copper, lead, zinc, tin, bauxite, manganese, gold and mercury, indispensable to ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy. The building material industry will develop at a quick tempo, not only to meet local needs but also for future export: we have plenty of limestone, good quality sand and clinker. We also have the raw materials required for national defence and supplying people's daily needs, such as uranium, thorium, and an abundant source of mineral waters, some of them of high grade and quality.

Our rich mineral resources will contribute greatly to the development of our industry.

The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam has a comprehensive communications network by road, rail, sea, waterways and air.

This network links various parts of our country, and our country with the rest of the world. In 1974, we had 2,407 kilometres of railway (including sections in the south which were heavily damaged by the war); 72,945 kilometres of roads, 10,783 kilometres of waterways, 2,737 kilometres of sea-routes and hundreds of airfields, including up-to-date ones. The construction of the « Reunification » railway linking the capital Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City is underway, and will be opened to traffic by the end of this year. When reconstruction of other sections is completed, our rail communications system will cover the whole country.

These are most favourable conditions for the development of our economy and culture, the raising of our people's standard of living and the consolidation of our national defence.

The following table gives an idea of the climate of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

Our climate is unusual, quite different from that of tropical and sub-tropical countries. It is influenced by features determined by latitude (solar radiation and trade-winds) and by geographical conditions (typhoon and geographical features) and is therefore very varied, with no definite seasonal divisions and no « solar stability ».

Nowhere in the country do we have fewer than 1,500 hours sun a year and less rainfall than 1200mm/yr. All this enables us to develop a varied

Towns	Average temperature (in °C)		Annual Rainfall (in mm)		Average humidity (%)	
	(Average of several years)	1974	(Average of several years)	1974	(Average of several years)	1974
Lang Son	21.4	20.9	1395	1535	81	81
Lai Chau	23.2	22.7	1983	2073	84	81
Thai Nguyen	23.2	22.9	2002	1593	82	81
Hanoi	23.5	23.2	1678	1527	84	82
Phu Lien	23.0	22.8	1753	1415	85	84
Thanh Hoa	23.6	23.2	1739	1950	85	91
Vinh	24.0	23.7	1891	1528	82	83
Dong Hoi	24.4	24.1	2149	1689	84	82
Hue	25.1	25.6	3039	2288	86	80
Da Nang	25.5	26.1	2124	1402	80	79
Quy Nhon	26.6	26.9	1690	1469	80	79
Pleiku	22.1	22.4	2236		82	84
Nha Trang	26.4	26.9	1374	1298	81	78
Dalat	20.9	21.8	1562	1590	82	78
Phan Thiet	26.5	26.7	1419		82	81
Saigon	26.9	27.8	1952	1492	80	78
Rach Gia	27.2	27.6	2018	1720	83	85
Ca Mau	26.5	27.5	2303	2138	86	83

agriculture and grow various species of plants of tropical and sub-tropical regions, yielding many crops a year. There are also special products which can only be found in our country. However, these climatic features have caused us many difficulties, such as submersion, floods, typhoons, frost and insect pests.

Viet Nam boasts a cool climate and picturesque landscape in its beautiful mountain resorts like Sa Pa, Tam Dao, Mau Son, Bach Ma and Dalat. Our country's seas are studded with over one thousand islands: Vinh Thuc, Cai Bau, Cao Lo, Co To archipelago, Canh Cuoc, Cat Ba, Long Chau archipelago, Bach Long Vi, Hon Me, Nghi Son, Hon Mat, Con Co, Hoang Sa archipelago, Cu Lao Cham, Hon Chong, Ly Son, Cu Lao Xanh, Hon Lon, Truong Sa archipelago, Cai Lao Thu, Hon Da Ty, Hon Hai, Con Dao, Hon Trung Lon, Hon Trung Nho, Hon Khoai, Tho Chu, Nam Du archipelago, Hon Rai, Hon Tre, Hon Minh Hoa, An Thoi archipelago, Ba Lua archipelago, Phu Quoc and many more.

These are both strategic outposts for the defence of the air space and territorial waters of our country, and important economic bases. Each island has particular products of its own: Coto and Con Dao are known for their pearl-oysters. The islands teem with much sought-after game and birds like swallows and teal. Swallows live mainly on islands, from Binh Tri Thien to Kien Giang, especially on Cu Lao Cham. Phu Quoc island, a nuoc mam <sup>(1)</sup> manufacturing centre, produces an average 6-7 million litres per year, and up to 10-12 million litres some years. Many of the islands, such as Con Dao and Phu Quoc, abound in high quality timber trees and wild animals. Oil seepage has been detected on many islands.

(1) A concentrated fish-brine used in Vietnamese cuisine.

The August Revolution triumphed thirty-one years ago, in 1945, under the leadership of the Party: the rule of the French colonialists and their henchmen, the Nguyen feudalists, was brought to an end, and power won back for our people. On September 2, 1945, President Ho Chi Minh read the Declaration of Independence, marking the birth of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

Nation-wide elections were held on January 6, 1946 to elect the first National Assembly, which met for the first time on March 2, 1946 to choose the first government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

President Ho Chi Minh was both president of the new state, and prime minister. On November 9, 1946, the first Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam was approved by the National Assembly.

Shortly after the country had wrested back its independence, the French imperialists staged a comeback and invaded it once again. After nine years of fierce struggle we won the historic Dien Bien Phu victory (May 1954), and after their bitter defeat, the French were obliged to sign the Geneva Agreements (July 20, 1954), recognizing the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Viet Nam. The US imperialists soon replaced the French colonialists however, and invaded the south of our country. Our revolution entered a new stage, that of building socialism in the North and waging a war of liberation in the South. On December 31, 1959, the National Assembly approved the second Consti-

tution — the Socialist Constitution — designed to meet the tasks and requirements of the new situation.

Our victorious struggle compelled the American imperialists to sign the Paris Agreement on ending the war, and restoring peace in Viet Nam (January 27, 1973). The period of the national people's democratic revolution in the South ended with the victorious Ho Chi Minh campaign in Spring 1975, and a new stage is now open before us, taking the whole of our country to socialism.

From November 15 to 21, 1975, a unified consultative conference was held in Ho Chi Minh City to consider the reunification of the country at State level and decide on general elections for the whole of Viet Nam. The Sixth National Assembly elected by the entire people in the April 25, 1976 general elections held its first session from June 24 to July 3, 1976 to decide State institutions pending a new Constitution; it discussed the new situation and tasks, the fundamental policies of the reunified State, the country's name, emblem, flag, anthem, capital, the structural organization and activities of the State, and appointed the members of the leading state organs, the Constitution-drafting Committee, the Standing Committee of the National Assembly and its various Commissions, and the new Government.

Revolutionary tasks in the new situation require a strengthened organization to guarantee efficient leadership by the Party, prompt and effective State management and a vigorous development of the labour force of the people.

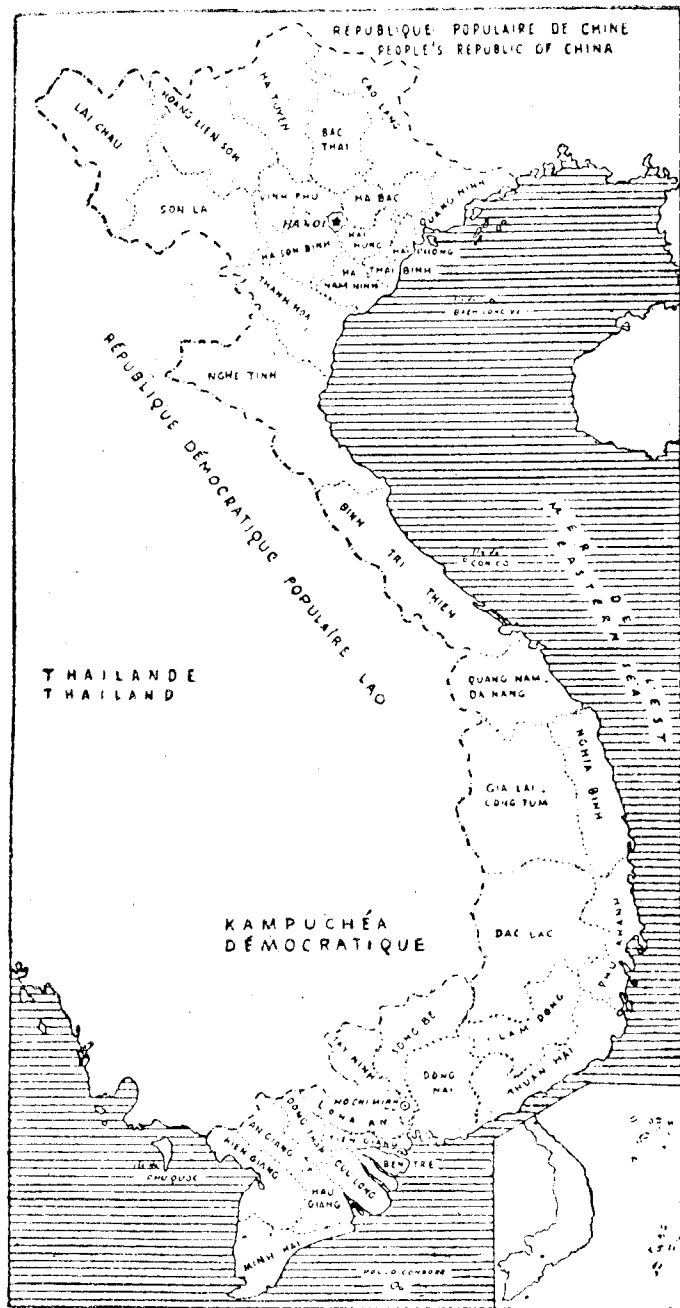
The cancellation of "zones" and the merging of a number of provinces will turn the newly delimited provinces into more powerful administrative units. The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam has three cities and 35 provinces (see list below), which are administrative and economic units under direct leadership of the central government and undertaking a combination of tasks in industry and agriculture, economy and national defence and centrally-run and local economies. They have become very important units with their own plans and budgets. Within each province, the various branches of activities are under the double leadership of the higher echelons of the branches concerned and the provincial administration.

AREA AND POPULATION OF BIG CITIES AND PROVINCES OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM

Twenty months after South Viet Nam's Liberation

	Area (sq. km.)	Population on Feb. 5, 1971 (thousands)	Density (per sq. km.)
Hanoi (capital)	597	1,443.5	2,418
Ho Chi Minh City	1,845	3,460.5	1,876
Haiphong	1,515	1,190.9	780
Provinces: Lai Chau	17,408	265.6	15
— Lai Chau	14,125	677.2	48
— Hoang Lien Son	8,615	686.4	51
— Ha Tuyen	13,519	752.9	87
— Bac Thai	13,781	843.9	61
— Cao Lang	14,656	410.1	28
— Son La	5,187	1,579.5	305
— Vinh Phu	4,708	1,466.2	311
— Ha Bac	7,076	701.8	99
— Quang Ninh	6,860	2,041.6	286
— Ha Son Binh	2,526	1,929.9	764
— Hai Hung	1,344	1,416.2	1,054
— Thai Binh	3,522	2,574.6	731
— Ha Nam Ninh	11,138	2,262.1	203
— Thanh Hoa	22,380	2,704.6	121
— Nghe Tinh	19,047	1,751.8	92
— Binh Tri Thien	11,376	1,414.4	124
— Quang Nam — Da Nang	18,480	465.0	25
— Gia Lai — Cong Tum	14,700	1,789.1	122
— Nghia Binh	18,300	372.7	20
— Dac Lac	9,620	1,066.2	111
— Phu Khanh	10,000	343.1	34
— Lam Dong	11,000	836.9	76
— Thuan Hai	9,500	561.4	59
— Song Be	12,130	1,260.3	104
— Dong Nai	4,100	625.9	513
— Tay Ninh	5,100	828.8	169
— Long An	2,350	1,137.2	484
— Tien Giang	2,400	932.0	388
— Ben Tre	3,120	991.3	318
— Dong Thap	4,200	1,319.1	314
— Cuu Long	4,140	1,361.7	329
— An Giang	5,100	1,370.4	366
— Hau Giang	6,000	834.0	139
— Kien Giang	8,000	981.1	123
— Minh Hai			





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# ERRATA

Page	Line	Instead of	Please read
81	8	quantity	quality
93	8	Provinces : Lai Chau	Provinces
93	9	Lai Chau 14,125...	Lai Chau 17,408...
93	43	Minh Hai	Minh Hai : 8,000 ...

