

# VIETNAM

*Magazine*

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MIRACLE RICE



## FROM OUR READERS

### BEST YET!

Congratulations on your maiden issue!

Its editorial content and pictorial presentation are yet the best I have seen in its field in Vietnam. Well chosen articles giving a picture of Vietnam today were enhanced by equally good photos printed with clarity that is rather uncommon here these days.

I shall look forward to more excellent reading and graphic fare from your magazine. I was indeed fortunate to have been introduced to **Vietnam Magazine** through a visit to the Philippine Embassy.

More power to you!

RUBEN L. VILLA  
Qui Nhon

### WELL-ROUNDED

I am impressed and grateful after reading «Dark Tet to Remember» in the first issue of **Vietnam Magazine**. The article is well-rounded, provides a vivid and clear picture of events from that day in January when the communists launched their attacks and desecrated the sacred Vietnamese Lunar New Year holidays.

I have scanned through heaps of newspapers, but never got as clear and comprehensive a picture of the Tet and after-Tet occurrence as I did from your article.

Your other articles were also good. And your photographs excellent!

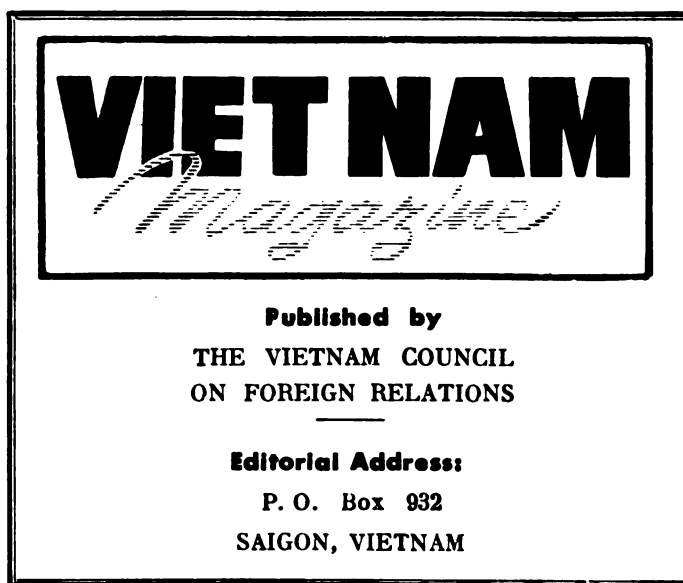
TRAN LONG  
Saigon

### FILLS THE GAP

It was a great thrill for me to read the first edition of the **Vietnam Magazine**, and what a pleasant change after all the propaganda from Hanoi. Here in England we have very little knowledge of the sufferings and the real concepts of the war in Vietnam. This is not laziness or ignorance but just a lack of any kind of literature, and now your magazine has filled the gap.

Apart from the aspects of the war I think it would be a good thing to try to show the world some of the Vietnamese culture, as we can only think of Vietnam as a war-torn and suffering country. But, obviously life has to go on even in the midst of war and we would like to have a glimpse of what this life is like. How about some articles on women's fashions, hairstyles, and the like?

ANGELA COBB  
Patcham, England



### ASIA'S YOUTH

If your first issue is any indication, your magazine will find good acceptance in Indonesia. I have read it from cover to cover and found it to be highly informative, entertaining, in short, gratifying.

I found your article on Vietnam's youth highly interesting. It gladdens the heart to know that like the great majority of Asia's younger generation, they are more preoccupied with serious than frivolous, sometimes malicious and pernicious acts such as seems to be the case of the youth in many other parts of the world.

It would be very welcome if you were to feature in a forthcoming issue more on Vietnam's youth, illustrated as effectively as you did your article on the Communist attacks during the Tet holidays.

D. SOEBARDJO  
Djarkarta, Indonesia

### PEOPLE FIRST

You are to be congratulated for most rewarding reading matter in your maiden issue. In the absence of similar publications regarding South Vietnam, I must confess to embarrassing ignorance about goings on in your country. I do not mean news about the strife against the Communists, however. We do get the usual lines about the war in our newspapers.

The people, as far as I am concerned, of any country are bigger than any war imaginable. War is material, or materiel, but people with their successes, their failures, their occupations, their daily routine, their hopes, their frustrations, and the day-to-day activities that mark this as a world of human beings can never be supplanted by the interests that go with the blood and ogre that is fratricidal conflict.

J. H. SIMMONS  
Chicago, U.S.A.

Where do they stand?

# THE CHINESE IN VIETNAM

In a typical scene in Cholon, Saigon's sister city, populated mostly by Chinese, or to be more accurate «Vietnamese of Chinese descent», the Cherry Orchard Restaurant was decked out festively. A big banner proclaimed in Chinese characters and in Vietnamese: «Give generously to the Charity Campaign.» A large, locked wooden box with a slot in the lid was prominently displayed. When each patron received his bill at the end of his meal, he put the money into the box instead of paying it to the management. All takings for the day were pledged to the relief fund. The restaurant staff also contributed their entire wages for the day.

The net take for the entire campaign amounted to the equivalent of well over one million U.S. dollars. Forty-five million piasters were handed over to the President of the Republic of Vietnam. Forty-three million were donated to the



In traditional manner, Vietnamese of Chinese origin (left) in Cholon draw attention to Dragon Dance about to begin to mark Lunar New Year.



Social Welfare Ministry. Thirty-nine million piasters were presented to the Mayor of Saigon. In addition, the Chinese relief committee took care of nearly fifty thousand refugees, both Chinese and Vietnamese, who were sheltered in Chinese schools and hospitals. The Chinese community donated rice, fish sauce, milk insect repellants and drugs to the

Social Welfare Ministry and to student organizations who collected supplies for the war victims.

### Soft Under-Belly

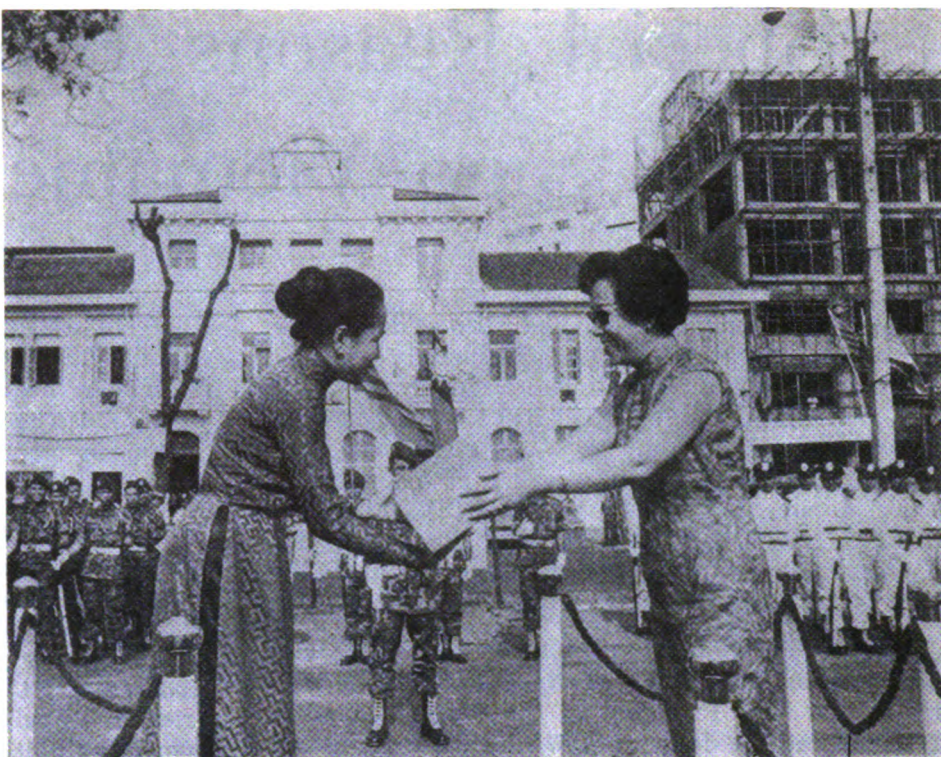
Cholon has taken the brunt of the Viet Cong attacks which began with the Tet offensive early this year. One news correspondent called Cholon the «soft under-belly of Saigon.» Many Vietnamese sus-

pected that perhaps «the Chinese» were really collaborating with the Viet Cong since many of them still have family ties with Communist China. Some based their suspicions on the fact the Viet Cong had managed to establish supply depots and operating bases in Cholon and this, they reasoned, could not be done without the complicity of the Chinese. Suspicion spread with articles in the Vietnamese press which demanded that strong measures be taken against the Chinese. Wild rumours circulated all over town that «numerous Chinese communist cadres were helping the Viet Cong in their onslaught on Saigon.»

### Slow to Assimilate

The Chinese in Vietnam are not much different from the overseas Chinese all over Southeast Asia. Hardworking, thrifty, good businessmen and merchants, many have prospered and in the process contributed to the economic well-being of their adopted country. They have also been slow to assimilate. They prefer to congregate in their own communities where they continue to practice their own customs and traditions. Adroitly they have managed to remain on the fringes of the turmoil in Vietnam during the past thirty years. Apolitical and bending like bamboo with the prevailing political winds they have largely maintained their low posture of splendid isolation.

The massive Viet Cong Tet offensive against Cholon forced the Chinese to make a decision about the war and their adopted country — as distinct from their traditional interests: their family and their business. The enemy took advan-



Upon arrival of 5,000 tons of rice from Taipei, a gift from the Republic of China to victims of red aggression, Mrs. Ouyan Chung Yien, wife of the special envoy of President Chiang Kai-shek, presents symbolic token to Mrs. Doan Ba Cang, wife of the them Minister at the Premier's office.

tage of the deeply ingrained tendency to remain aloof from politics. But the Viet Cong overplayed their hand. There was too much terror, too much arson and too many killings. There is a limit to how far a bamboo can bend.

### Nearly a Million

There are nearly a million Chinese in South Vietnam, scattered all over the country. Most of them, more than half a million, live in Cholon. Aroused, they hit back the best way they could. Chinese news-

papers and magazines gave the relief campaign big publicity and the effort was supported by business firms, trade unions and other groups. Some people contributed five or even six times. The Cherry Orchard Restaurant, for instance, raised forty-thousand piasters in its first drive and even one hundred thousand the next. The Chinese contribution to the relief fund compared favourably with the total amount raised by the entire country. The Viet Cong succeeded in turning the Chinese against them. Large sections of Cholon today lie in ruins with many thousands homeless, their belongings in ashes. If the Viet Cong really believed the Chinese of Cholon would provide the spark for the «popular uprising» of Saigon, they could not have been more mistaken. Vietnamese of Chinese extraction have proved themselves loyal citizens of the Republic of Vietnam. (MF).

# VC erred in hoping they could spark city revolt

# Special Reasons Propel Sino-Vietnamese Amity

Events in commerce and industry seldom make «big news» in the dailies, but occasionally progress in the relatively unglamorous business world gets front-page attention. One such instance was in May 1966, when a business milestone was established with the organization of the Confederation of Asian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI). This Asian institution is headed by a Filipino, President, two Deputy Presidents, one from Nationalist China, the other from Japan, and a Korean Treasurer.

The Public Relations Commission of CACCI is headed by a Vietnamese, Mr. Nguyen Huu Pha, who is also first Vice President of the Saigon Chamber of Commerce. In June of 1967, during a three-day meeting of CACCI in Tokyo, he proposed an action program, introducing special «national» days. This idea came from a highly successful «Philippine

Day» in Saigon and a similar «Vietnam Day» in Manila. Last November, a Nationalist Chinese trade delegation, headed by Mr. Hawk Yee Fan, President of the Asian Industrial Corporation in Taipei, arrived in Saigon to attend «Nationalist China Day.»

One result of the meetings between members of the Saigon Chamber of Commerce and the Nationalist Chinese delegation was the decision to open a «Vietnam House» in Taipei in the near future. This was the idea of Mr. Pham Van Phi of the Saigon Chamber who suggested the establishment of special trade centers to publicize products of member countries. In Taipei's Vietnam House there will be a permanent exhibit of Vietnamese products. Already the Saigon Chamber has requested Vietnamese industrialists to contribute samples of their specialities. Another important result of «Nationalist China Day» in the Taipei proposal to establish a workshop in Vietnam to produce a wide variety of plastic articles.

Mr. Pha, as head of CACCI's Public Relations Commission, is understandably pleased with the excellent results of both «Philippine» and «Nationalist China» days. Already envisaged are a «Japan Day,» a «Korea Day,» and an «Australia Day.»

The devastating effects of war are clearly shown in Vietnam's balance of trade. For instance, before 1961, Vietnam's principal export to Taiwan was rice. In 1967, however, Vietnam imported some twenty thousand tons of rice from Taiwan. How rapidly and drastically trade figures can be affected by war is illustrated in these startling statistics of Vietnam export figures to Taiwan in 1961 and 1962. From a high of 2.1 million U.S. dollars in 1961, exports dropped just about a year later to 0.25 million.

But, as Mr. Pha pointed out, it isn't all a matter of dollars and cents only. Said he: «Nationalist China and Vietnam are bound to further improve friendly relations between the people of our two countries. We pledge ourselves to advance mutual assistance in every field and to foster closer cooperation, particularly in trade and industry.»

Nationalist China's Minister of Economic Affairs, Mr. Kwoh Ting Li, also stressed that the security of Southeast Asia is closely tied to that of the entire Free World. Vietnam and Nationalist China have therefore special reasons to cooperate as closely as possible in their common aims for peace, freedom and prosperity. — (MF)



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... VITAL PRODUCTS  
FOR GREWING  
NEEDS ...

FOREMOST

# "LIKE A BUNCH OF BROKEN DOLLS"



«It was eerie; the quietness, no one around, and Vietnamese bodies scattered about the ground looking like a bunch of broken dolls.»

Sound similar to an ambush sight in the boonies or a Vietnamese village after the VC hit it? No, neither one of those, just a spur of the moment description by the first MP on the scene of the terrorist bombing at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in early September.

«It began as any other day of routine patrol. I was area supervisor for the 3rd Precinct in Car 30,» said Sergeant David P. Bullock, 21, a military policeman with Bravo Company, U.S. Army Headquarters Area Command's 716th Military Police Battalion. «Around 4 p.m., we were near the president's palace, only six blocks from USAID, when we heard the blast from the grenade. Immediately my driver and I headed for the sound.

«As we were heading in,» continued Bullock, a native of Sacramento, Calif., «a signal 200 (explosion near by) was radioed into WACO, our operations center, by the Security Guard on duty at the Splendid Bachelor Officer Quarters. We notified WACO where we were and what we were doing.»

**Sergeant David P. Bullock, a military policeman with U.S. Army Headquarters Area Command's 716th Military Police Battalion, a U.S. Agency for International Development official, and a South Vietnamese carry a seriously wounded South Vietnamese civilian to an ambulance after a terrorist grenade exploded in front of USAID headquarters in Saigon. Two other victims — a policeman and a woman — lie on the ground.**

After the young MP's jeep had screeched to a halt in front of the USAID building, he began moving the wounded to a Vietnamese Nationalist Police vehicle which had pulled up seconds after he stopped.

«The first person I went to was a Canh Sat (National Policeman) lying on the sidewalk. I felt for his pulse and listened for his heartbeat. There was none. The next person, a lady, also had none.

«The third was a man on his back with his eyes open. He looked at me and I said «no sweat,» trying to get through to him that I was going to help. He didn't make a sound. I picked him up and carried him to the jeep.

«After that I don't remember how many wounded we picked up or how long it took us. It was like I was in a daze.

«As soon as we loaded one into the ambulance, which had since arrived, we would run back to get another. The only thing I could think about was speed.»

The official report listed four killed and seven wounded. All were Vietnamese.

«As soon as the bodies were cleared away, the Explosive Ordnance Disposal team, which had been checking over the place looking for any other explosive devices, told us that a grenade had caused the casualties. We found a USAID guard who saw the grenade being thrown. He said that it was tossed by a man on the back of a passing Honda.

«Whoever did it has a lot on his conscience. I know one thing, I'll never forget the bloody sight of all these people on the ground. It made an impression, a lasting one.»

Sergeant Bullock, who someday wants to return home and become a California Highway Patrolman, then left to go back to his «routine» patrol. He's still on Car 30. May be today will remain «routine.» He hopes so, and so does the rest of this teeming capital city of South Vietnam.

# FRIENDS OF VIETNAM

Three prominent South Vietnamese have been invited by The Friends of Vietnam to tour Australia in September and relate the story of South Vietnam's fight for freedom.

An organization to promote friendship between the people of Australia and South Vietnam, the FOV is headed by Dr. David M. Armstrong, professor of philosophy at Sydney University, who has been described by a former colleague as a man who thinks that «Communism is the greatest threat to civilization in the whole world.»

## Invitations

Invitations have been sent to the Venerable Thich Minh Chau, a Buddhist leader; Tran Ngoc Buu, head of the Confederation of Labor; and to a South Vietnamese politician.

FOV Secretary Kenneth G. Gee, barrister at Law, visited Vietnam, July 5 to 15 and discussed with the South Vietnamese officials the best form of civilian aid which Australians could extend.

## Form of Aid

Mr. Gee said:

— Aid for South Vietnam would relate to resettlement of refugees.

— FOV would seek to arrange permanent contacts between groups of Australians and South Vietnamese.

— FOV would make representations with the Australian government to ensure that any peace in Vietnam was «a peace with freedom.»

The FOV which includes four knights and five professors was launched in Sydney on June 13 this

year. Members of the Liberal, Australian Labor and Democratic Labor and Democratic Labor Parties have joined the group. Among its members are Lieutenant-General Sir Frank Berryman; Jack Cassidy, a Sydney barrister; Sir Arthur Lee, the national president of the RSL; Sir Charles McDonald, chancellor of Sydney University; Zelman Cowen, Vice Chancellor of Sydney University; James McAuley, professor of Tasmania University; G. McCallum, professor, head of political sciences, University of South Wales; S. N. Ray, professor of Indian Studies, Melbourne University; Doris Fitton, O. B. E.; Richard Krygier, publisher of Quadrant; Peter Samuel, Head of The Bulletin, Canberra; J. Riordan, labor union official; J. B. Broadbent, John O'Neil, and Elwyn Lynn.

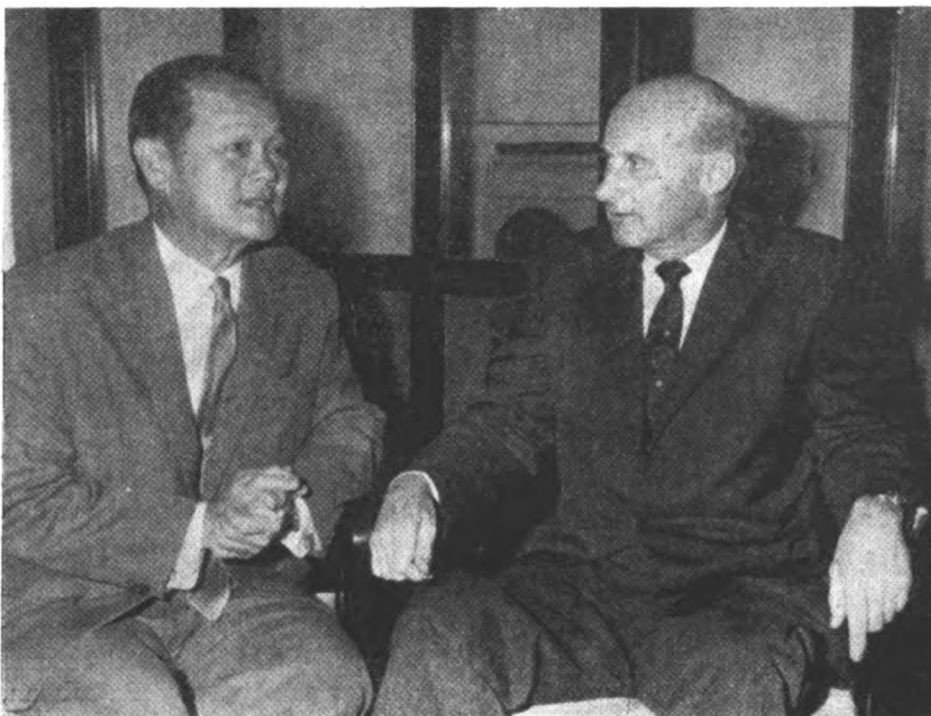
## Blow to Freedom

At a press conference in Sydney, Armstrong said that it is clear that the great majority of the Australian people support their government in its policy of «helping the South Vietnamese, with both military and civilian aid, in their struggle against Communist takeover and for peace with freedom.»

«Most of us realize that if South Vietnam fell under Communist dictatorship it would be a crushing blow to freedom,» he declared. «Communist movements in the area might then be able to put the whole of South-East Asia «through the mincing machine.»

In the course of his Vietnam visit, Gee said: «We plan to propagate our Vietnam commitment through the use of television, radio newspapers, magazines and other forms of mass media.»

He added that the FOV welcomes membership all over South-East Asia and expressed the hope that membership will surpass the two-thousand mark.



Renowned Australian jurist Kenneth Gee converses with Senator Tran Van Lam (left), Chairman of the Vietnam Council on Foreign Relations, during his recent 10-day visit of South Vietnam. He is a staunch champion of the cause of the Republic of Vietnam in the anti-Communist struggle and is secretary-general of the Friends of Vietnam Association in Sydney.



## Passion for enlightenment

When upon assuming office last April he unexpectedly lifted press censorship in the Republic of Vietnam, Minister of Information Ton That Thien surprised few colleagues in newspaper and university circles. «Conformity and timidity,» said one newsman, «appear to come in little doses in the man's life.»

Indeed, it would seem that courage and outspoken frankness have played dominant roles in Minister Thien's life judging by his experiences in recent years: his resignation as press secretary to the late President Ngo Dinh Diem over differences with the «authoritarian conservatism» of the latter's regime, suppression by the government in 1956 of *The Vietnam Guardian* of which he was managing editor, and the closing of the Vietnamese mass-circulation daily *Song* by his office.

To talk that he abolished censorship because he was a victim of it, Thien explains that there is more to it than that. «My job is to educate the public as well as government officials. For too long a privileged minority has held a monopoly on enlightenment in this country. I want to change that.»

In this connection Thien pledges that he will never restore press censorship because that would

## For Dr. Thien a distinguished award

With Republic of Vietnam national colors as backdrop, Dr. Ton That Thien is shown with RM Award presented him at the Phil-Am Life auditorium in Manila last Aug. 31 for significant achievement in Journalism, Literature and Creative Communication Arts. Recipients of this year's RM Award pose with Mrs. Luz B. Magsaysay (third from left), widow of late Philippine President, after whom the award is named. From left: John Thatcher of CARE, cited for International Understanding; Dr. Thien, Mrs. Rosario Encarnacion and Mr. Silvino Encarnacion, Community Leadership; and Li Kwoh-ting, Minister of Economic Affairs of the Republic of China, Government Service. Awardee Prof. Seiichi Tobata of Japan, Public Service, was unable to go to Manila due to illness, will accept his award next year. Bust of President Magsaysay in background is by famed Filipino sculptor Guillermo E. Tolentino, a gift of RVN Ambassador to the Philippines Cao Tai Bao, Vietnam-Philippine Association of Saigon, and Philippine-Vietnamese Society of Manila.



constitute «a backward step on the road to democracy.» But, he adds, the lifting of press censorship must be reconciled to the primacy of national survival. As such the operations of newspapers must be restricted within the «boundary of the Constitution.» Absolute press freedom in Vietnam whose existence has been constantly threatened in its 2,000 years must await the proper recourse — modification of the Constitution and existing laws, according to Minister Thien.

On Aug. 31 this year, Thien was presented in Manila with the Ramon Magsaysay Award, the Asian equivalent of the Nobel Prize. The Award established 11 years ago is given to persons in Asia, regardless of race, creed, sex or nationality in recognition of greatness of spirit in service to the people.

#### Citation

Of his choice to receive the Magsaysay Award for Journalism, Literature and Creative Communication Arts, the Board of Trustees of the Ramon Magsaysay Foundation said of Thien:

«By this election the Board of Trustees recognizes Minister Thien's enduring commitment to free inquiry and debate that gained added substance through his lifting of press censorship in Vietnam.

«Events engulfing Vietnam over the past three decades have compounded the dilemma of concerned intellectuals seeking sources for their national aspiration. Traditionally schooled in *Nho hoc*, or Confucian learning, they were cut adrift from their origins by the system of education that accompanied French colonial rule. As this elite was oriented toward France it lost touch with the peasantry and left them vulnerable to Communist persuasion.

«Minister Thien, by contrast relentlessly has sought to digest the essence of Western scientific method and wed it to Vietnamese cultural values. Freedom of thought and expression he found were essential to this pursuit. His convictions led him to act with perceptive courage and staunch individualism as writer and editor, professor, and government official.»

#### About Thien

Thien was born in Hue, former imperial city, on Sept. 22, 1924 of a Confucianist father and a Catholic mother. He attended the Thuong Tu Primary and Khai Dinh Secondary schools and obtained a Baccalaureat in Philosophy. Following World War II, Thien obtained the degree of Bachelor of Economics at the London School of International Studies in Geneva and heeded a call to join the Vietnamese delegation at the 1954 Conference there that led to independence for his country.

Thien saw service in the new government in Saigon as presidential press secretary but resigned over differences with the regime of Ngo Dinh Diem. He retruned to Geneva to complete his Ph. D. in Politics. In 1963 he was back in Saigon where he served as Director General of *Vietnam Press* under the Nguyen Ngoc Tho and Nguyen Khanh governments. He was also Director of Cabinet of People's Claims in the latter government.

Leaving the government service in Aug. 15, 1965, Thien became political columnist of the *Saigon Daily News* and went on to establish with colleagues of equal persuasion, the *Vietnam Guardian* of which he became managing editor. When the government closed the *Guardian* in December 1966, he continued to write for the London

*Economist*, *The Far Eastern Economic Review*, and *Forum World Features* among others. He also taught and became in 1967 Vice Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences of Van Hanh University where he helped organize the study group that is probing Vietnam's past for guides to the present.

Thien's passion for enlightenment goes beyond form. His aim is to introduce the scientific attitude not only to Vietnam's educated elite but to the peasantry as a means of modernizing life and making society more equal and just. But science, he insists, must only be the means — the values it serves must remain supreme.

In Manila, while replying to a columnist's tirades, Thien said: «Freedom is a fine thing, but it should be exercised in the respect of truth, and for the people's right to be told the true facts.»

#### About the Award

Since its establishment eleven years ago, the Magsaysay award has been granted to fifty-one individuals and four organizations from fifteen countries and one colony in Asia and three non-Asian countries. They have been singled out for signal achievements in community leadership, government service, international understanding, public service and journalism and literature. In 1965, the journalism and literature category was expanded to include other mass communication media used effectively as a power for the public good.

The awards carry a cash stipend of \$10,000 each and are formally presented in a ceremony in Manila every August 31. This year's presentation marked the 61st anniversary of the late President Ramon Magsaysay.

# Poem from a VC to his mother

Mother, sweet and dear,  
You remember that morning bright and clear,  
When I bade you farewell, without sorrow,  
Outside the gate of our little house?  
I was moved, but so proud.  
With my comrades I walked through Laos,  
And then, day after day, ever deeper into the South,  
Through jungles green and deep,  
Up and down mountains blue and steep,  
Scorched by the sun on the sand along the sea,  
Drenched by the rains pouring down the forests through  
the trees,  
It was hard, but what did it matter?  
We were young; our life was like a blooming flower.  
For Peace we were fighting,  
For Peace we accepted suffering.  
Day after day, month after month, we marched,  
Our stomachs were empty, our throats parched,  
Our feet were wet, our shoulders cold:  
Against rocks and thorns neither shoes nor shirts could  
Beloved and respected mother,  
When dusk falls, and I have nothing other,  
Than the complete silence on the Truong-Son\* for company.  
Then before my eyes floats the image of our village and  
family:  
The blue smoke drifting lazily in the breeze,  
The lovely pumpkin plants spreading their luxuriant green  
leaves,  
The small butterfly fluttering happily about,  
The curved roof of the village temple, so old and proud.  
Oh! how much I wish to be there, to smell, and touch, and  
see  
The thousand little things that mean so much to me!  
And now, here I am, in the South, land of our dream and  
our aim,  
Where to me people's faces are unfamiliar, and things do

not look the same,  
Yet it is our country,  
For here also the roads smell sweetly  
Of ripe golden paddy,  
Here, blue smoke also drifts with the breeze  
Over the fences and through the trees,  
Here too, at dusk, the sniffing buffalo slowly heads his  
dusty way home,  
While his little master plays a plaintive tune  
On his bamboo flute,  
The way our boys at home also do.  
What then is liberation?  
I searched my mind for reasons, fiercely and with despe-  
ration,  
But round me, what do I hear and see?  
Markets crowded and merry, rice fields vast and green  
like the sea,  
The sounds of bells from the nearby pagoda carrying the  
worshipper's message,  
Singing children filling the schools with their voices loud  
and happy,  
And, in the cabbage field, atop the golden flowers,  
Little butterflies murmuring in each other's ear: drink,  
dear, drink of the sweet nectar,  
From one end to the other of the village life is flowing rich  
and full.  
Why then burn and destroy? Why was I ordered to pull  
The trigger that would make of a happy child an orphan,  
and his mother a widow?  
There were times when my hands shook like a willow  
On laying the mine that would spill  
The blood of people like you and me, our kin.  
There were nights when my face was wet with streaming  
tears,  
When I twisted and turned on my couch, haunted by a  
thousand nightmares...

Annamese ranges

This poem was written by a Viet Cong who died at Duc Co. It was addressed to his mother, Mrs. Tran Thi Phan, Hai Duong, North Vietnam. Minister of Information Ton That Thien says the name of the author was not given, and he does not know if the authorities have it. In any case, adds Mr. Thien, rarely have I come across a poem of such beauty. It has a richness, and a depth of feeling, together with a beautiful form, which strangely remind one of Rupert Brooke. I am convinced that it will rank as one of the most beautiful poems written in recent years. I have attempted to give as near a translation of it as possible. Alas, traduttore; traditore!

Mr. Thien feels the poem can be considered as marking a turning point in the war, and raises also the question: are the people on the other side all communists?



# HEAVY DAMAGE INFLICTED ON V.N. BUDDHIST TEMPLES

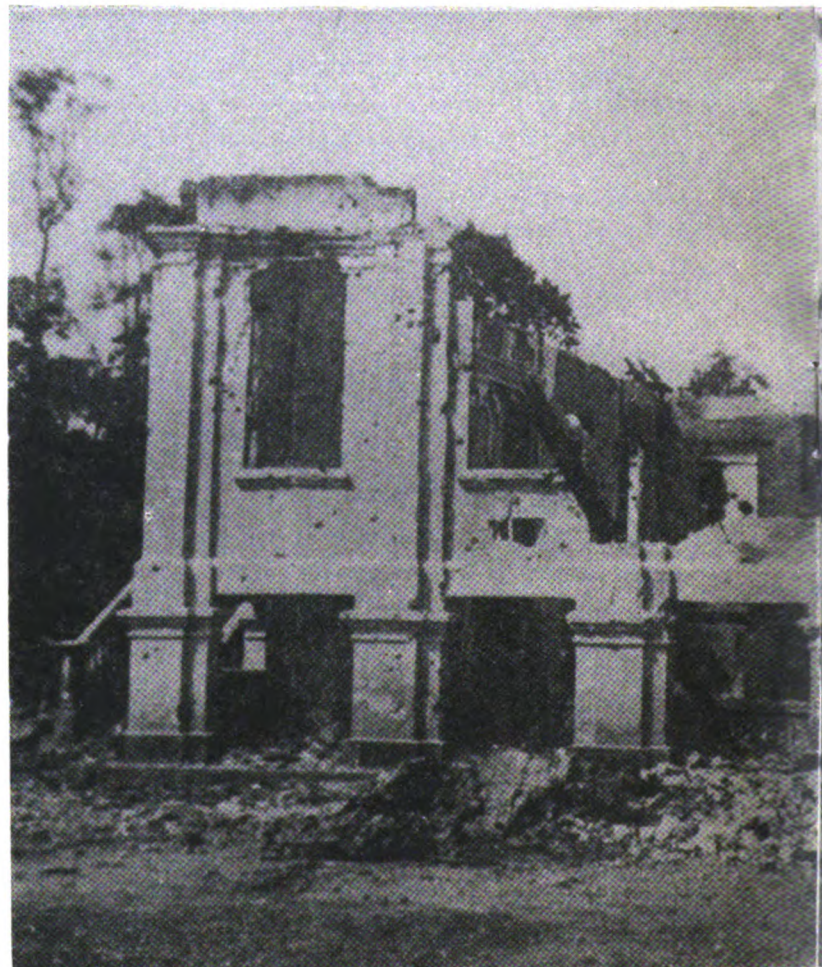
Vietnam's Buddhist temples suffered heavy damage during both the Viet Cong's Tet and the recent «peace talk» offensives. Twenty-six Buddhist monks were killed. Fifty-one temples were destroyed or heavily damaged. The Theravada Sect of Buddhism, which has most of its followers among Vietnamese of Cambodian descent, suffered the heaviest damage. This sect has some 500 temples and 20,000 monks in 16 of Vietnam's western provinces.

The Venerable Kim Sang, head of the Theravada Sect in the Republic of Vietnam, said five pagodas were completely destroyed. Twenty-four others were heavily damaged. The An Quang faction, known for its militant opposition to the government had one temple completely destroyed and 19 others heavily damaged. Most of the damage was in the old imperial capital of Hue. There was also heavy fighting around the An Quang pagoda in Saigon's sister city of Cholon. It is this temple, headquarters of the Venerable Tri Quang, leader of the militant faction, which gives the faction its name. Some buildings and the temple compound, used as printing facilities were burned down but the pagoda itself was not badly damaged.

Certain sources believe some temples suffered damage because Buddhist leaders allowed their pagodas to be turned into strongholds by the Viet Cong. Since the overthrow in late 1963 of the late President Diem, who was considered anti-Buddhist, successive governments have respected the temples as virtually inviolable.

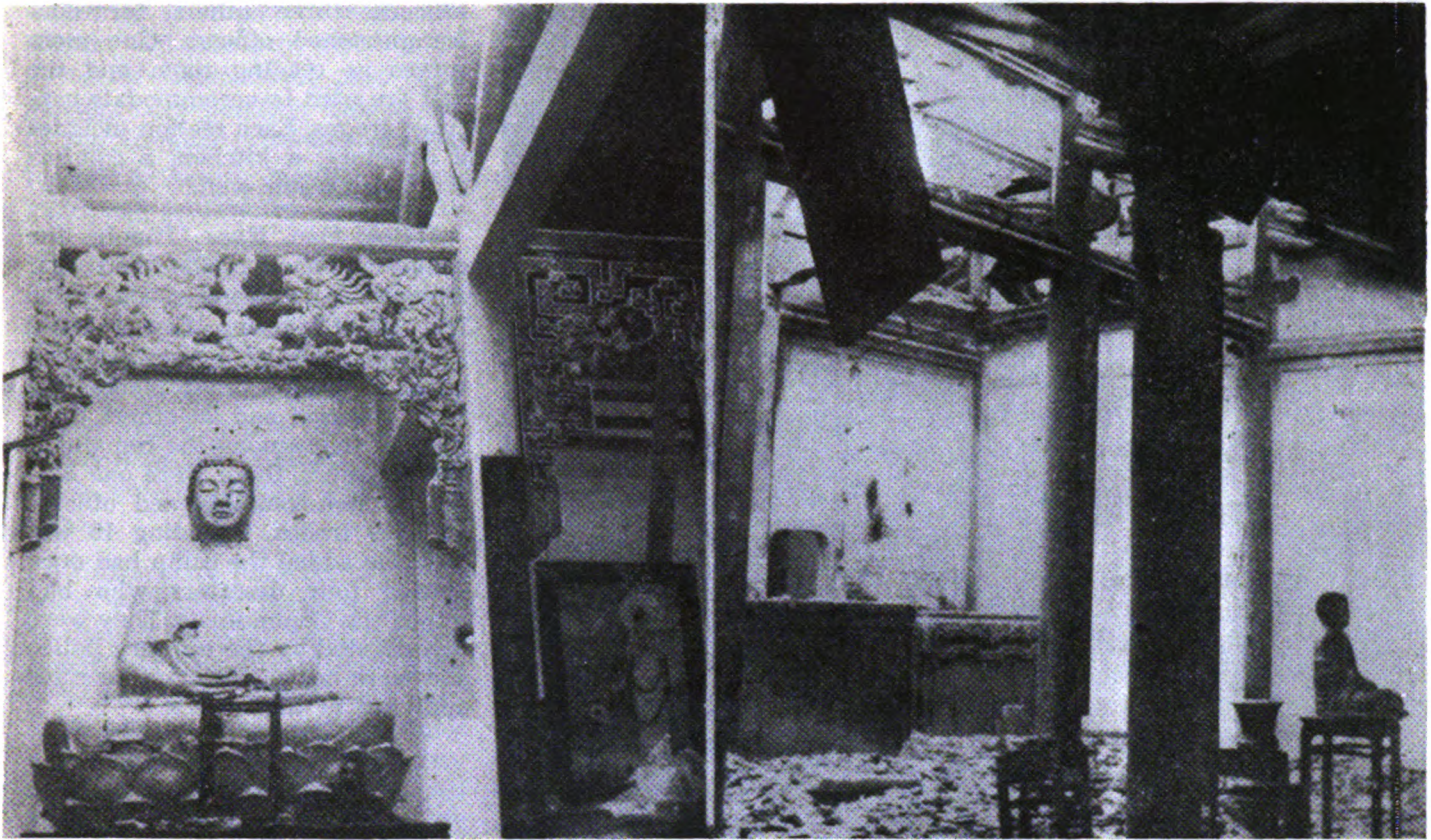
It is believed some Viet Cong took advantage of this and disguised as Buddhists, used pagodas for meetings and even to store their weapons. In fact, only very few temples were misused in this manner. During the Tet offensive, for example, Viet Cong units occupied most pagodas over the strong protests of the monks in charge.

The leader of the Theravada Sect said that in Vinh Binh province, the Viet Cong forced nearly 200 monks to go with them when they attacked the Government forces, and used the monks as shields. At Soc Trang, in the Mekong Delta, monks were used in the same way. A spokesman for the United Buddhist Church said that at Can Tho and Soc Trang, monks were forced to sit in front of their temples while the Viet Cong took up sniper positions inside. In Vinh Binh province two monks were forced to carry a message to an outpost, held by government troops, to demand their surrender. Both monks were arrested.

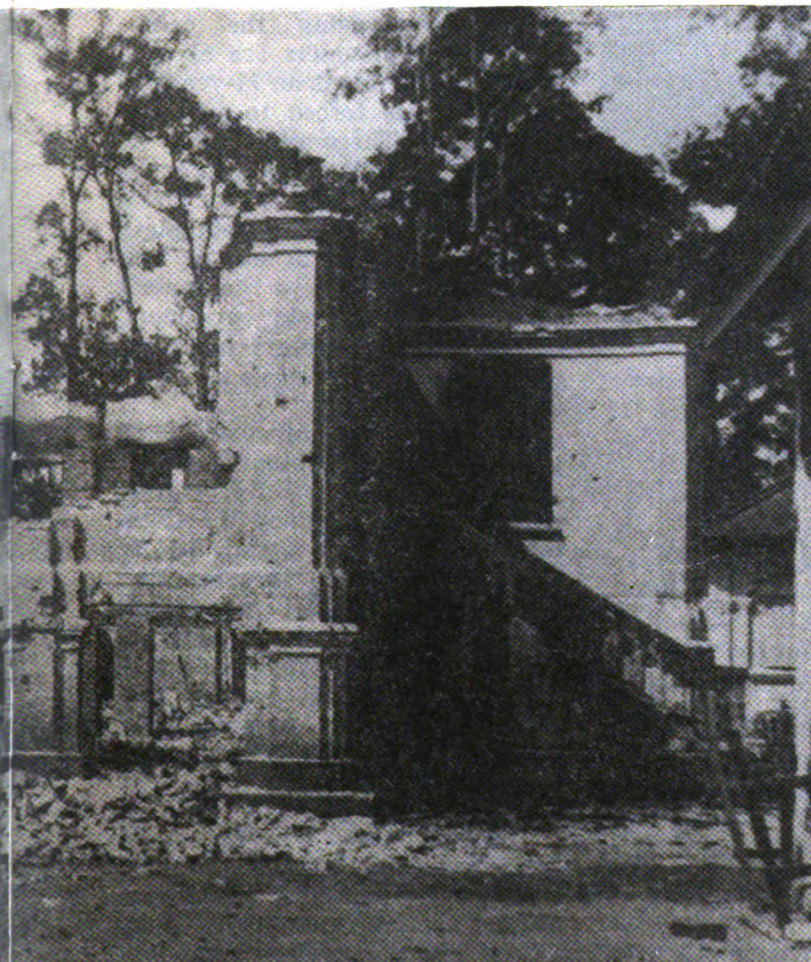


**Temple Podhislareaj of the Theravada sect in Vinh Binh province, 140 kms south of Saigon, was almost levelled.**

Mekong Features photos



**This is what is left of pagoda Linh Quang in Hue after three weeks of Viet Cong occupation early this year. It belongs to militant Buddhist faction An Quang.**



Government forces in Saigon captured two monks wearing the characteristic saffron robes and found the inside of the robes were embroidered with the words «National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.» The government asked the Theravada sect leader to identify the suspects. They were impostors.

The Viet Cong used these tactics because many Vietnamese government soldiers are of Cambodian descent and pious Buddhists who would hesitate to attack temples or search monks.

Many people, however, realized the losses the Buddhists suffered during the Viet Cong attacks this year were caused by the communists. The United Buddhist Church spokesman said: «Nearly half a million Buddhists became victims of the Viet Cong attacks.»

Some Buddhists are critical of the government's role. A monk of the An Quang group complained that government troops «should be more careful in their pursuit of the Viet Cong.» Another monk said he thought the Buddhist organization was too loose. «It is difficult for the Government and even the sect leaders to expose every Viet Cong impostor,» he said. But almost without exception, Buddhists from whatever group are opposed to the Viet Cong for their atheistic beliefs and their total disregard of Buddhist institutions. — (MF)



Prisoners of war captured during Communist offensive in May are interrogated by ARVN officer following defeat in Saigon suburb of Cholon.

## *At POW camps: majority minors*

The rising number of Communists captured in the face of intensified infiltration by the enemy has resulted in the promulgation by the Armed Forces of a code on the treatment of these prisoners of war and the establishment of prison camps in each of the country's four tactical zones.

The IV Corps Area prisoner of war camp was visited recently by

Vietnamese and foreign newsmen during their tour of the Area.

Located approximately two kilometers north of Can Tho, the camp occupies 120,000 square meters and consists of three sections: the commanding staff's special division and divisions 1 and 2 with 24 houses for prisoners. One house is reserved for women, another for

officers, three others for non-commissioned officers. One more serves as reading room and the rest are used to accommodate captured troops. Each section includes a refectory, a kitchen, a comfort room and water well.

Major Dao Ngoc Thanh, the camp commander, disclosed that since its establishment on April 30, 1967, the camp has received 3,090 Communist prisoners, 2,146 were moved to other places, 127 were released and 20 others died. He said that among the remaining 809 prisoners, there were one officer, 10 non-commissioned officers and 779 troops, including 16 women. He added the camp had once housed four deserters who had joined the Communists. They were investigated by the military police and were not covered by the rules applying to the POWs.

### **Mostly Minors**

Before being concentrated at the camp, the prisoners were detained in various jailhouses. According to officers supervising the camp, most of the prisoners are minors. The youngest one is an 11-year-old boy who was forced to join the communists. There are as many as 95 prisoners under 16 and as many as 120 prisoners 17 years old. There are only eight North Vietnamese prisoners between 20 and 24. The camp has opened a beginner's course for illiterate prisoners. Camp officers said the minors prisoners were more «docile.»

The newsmen interviewed 20 prisoners mostly minors. A 13-year-old boy told a B.B.C. correspondent how he joined the Communists. He was persuaded to carry ammunition for the Viet Cong by Communist propaganda cadres while he was loitering around the Ba Xuyen market place. He added he was not told anything until he was captured and brought to the camp during the Tet offensive.

Through barbed wire one could see prisoners playing football on a large field. Some others sat around chatting animatedly. Elsewhere other prisoners were doing

carpentry and masonry work. The officers said prisoners who rendered useful service were paid eight piasters each per day. This is one of the humane privileges granted to war prisoners by the government and noticed by visitors.

Entertainment consists of sports, music and information broadcasts from a loud-speaker. The art troupe of the Political Warfare General Office, entertains the prisoners once a month. All male prisoners wear yellow khaki uniforms while female prisoners wear brown ones.

Prisoners are allowed to correspond with their families and to be visited by their relatives. Prisoners may also fill out letter cards to be sent to the North. Last year, 1,332 letters were sent to their kinsfolk in the South and they received 134 letters in turn. Last January alone, the camp sent 578 letters and received 76 answers. In February, 599 letters were sent but only 57 answers were received.

### Camp visitors

Before the Tet events, the prisoners' kin were allowed visits on Fridays and these were extended when the Tet holidays drew near. Lately for security reasons, visits to the POWs have been restricted. Last year, there were 6,764 visitors to the camp and last January there were 4,862 visitors.

Prisoners who die in the camp are buried according to traditional rites at a nearby cemetery. The officers told us leniency was accorded obedient or disabled prisoners. They said they believed that prisoners under 16 years of age will soon be isolated and given special treatment. Minors do not have to do any hard work and are well treated. Major Thanh mentioned some of the female prisoners' difficulties such as the problem of water supply. A well 90 meters deep has just been dug but there is still no water and water has to be supplied from Can Tho. The daily ration for each prisoner is fixed at 20 piasters.

Since the Tet holidays, the camp has been shelled thrice by the Viet Cong. In the first attack last Feb. 2, mortar rounds landed near the Commanding Staff division and hit the house of officer prisoners, wounding 18 of them. The second shelling occurred exactly a month later but caused no casualty. In the third mortaring on March 29, the camp was seriously damaged with two prisoners killed and 22 others injured. Major Thanh told newsmen that night after the attack he picked up shell fragments and showed them to the prisoners who acknowledged the origin of the munition.

The prisoners have never undergone political indoctrination and the camp is able to nip in the bud conspiracies of mutiny. The authorities have always paid much attention to defensive measures at the camp especially during the Tet offensive, Major Thanh said. — (VP).

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Typical of new Asian woman:

# VN student at USC

Vo Hoang Yen, a delicate, demure young foreign student from Saigon, is an example of the new flowering of womanhood in South-east Asia.

Soft spoken yet spirited, poised yet purposeful, she clearly illustrates the changes that have taken place among women in her country, South Vietnam, during the war years.

With a severe shortage of manpower and necessary funds, women have entered the work force to help support families, to fill vital jobs.

«And many have achieved a great deal,» says Yen. «They now have equality with men and are running their lives more, like my mother.» She runs a kindergarten and day nursery school.

## Running a Hotel

«At the same time, she is running a hotel and restaurant that my family has just built.»

Long committed exclusively to family life, women of South Vietnam are now branching out and becoming doctors, lawyers, pharmacists, teachers, politicians.

«But not many women are chemical engineers,» she adds, with a note of pride. That is her major at USC, where she will complete the second semester of her freshman year next fall.

She chose the subject because her father, an esteemed Vietnamese pharmacist of the traditional school and also president of the Vietnamese Football Assn. plans to build a pharmaceutical laboratory for her brother.

There Yen plans one day to help

produce medicine and medical products.

She feels she is on her way, having received an A in mathematics last semester. «I was so happy,» she beams.

She chose USC over numerous other colleges and universities and arrived in the United States Nov. 1, several months before new semester began, with trepidation in her heart.

«I was so much scared. I couldn't imagine how brave I was. I made myself not cry,» she says of that fateful day when she arrived in Los Angeles knowing no one.

She checked into a hotel called the foreign student office at USC and wrote to her relatives, a distant uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Do Ba Khe, who live in Temple City and with whom she later stayed, all the while knowing very little English and having no one to call in case of an emergency.

## Eastern Frugality

«Though I was scared, I know I could work things out,» says Yen, whose inner strengths, gracefully coated by Eastern fragility, are manifested in a far different manner than those of the American woman.

«My parents trained me to be out in social life and in front of people. Plus I've learned how to organize from my mother,» she says softly.

Although surviving quite nicely in a new and different culture, Yen, who nevertheless still wears



MISS VO HOANG YEN

her handsome native dress — the *ao dai* — to class, notices many changes between Vietnamese and American women.

«Girls here are much more excited in everything. In my country, girls are more quiet. They are more involved in family life and themselves. They don't care much for social life.

## More Dependent

«Even though traditions and customs are changing there, girls in Vietnam are still more dependent on their parents and the people around them.

«We dare not do many things we might get blamed for. Girls there are more shy, not like here where they do everything and have more freedom.»

She was sent here by her parents in part to study and learn English better, and in part to be away from the war.

In truth, a child of war, Yen, who has three brothers and three sisters, has been exposed to it during the entirety of her lifetime, which has been 20 years. — Reprinted from the *Los Angeles Times*.



«It is high time we paid attention to a program for national reconstruction, Minister of State Vu Quoc Thuc told *Vietnam Press* in a recent interview.

Minister Thuc, head of the Post-War Economic Study Group since February 7, 1967 and a professor of economics at the Dalat and Saigon universities, said the end of the present war will see development of the nation as a «life-or-death problem» and national reconstruction will create favorable conditions for such development of the nation.

The economic study group is continuously gathering data and formulating recommendations for a draft of the national reconstruction program which is envisaged after documents on war damages are received, he said.

He outlined the program as aimed at four fields: public infrastructures, production facilities, housing, and manpower. He said manpower is the most essential and indispensable element since it will provide the prime requirement of any development project.

The financing of the reconstruction program will be huge, said Minister Thuc, and will rely on national and foreign resources.

He said that when peace comes, domestic resources will depend on revenue from additional taxes or the floating of national bonds.

Thuc expressed optimism over the prospects of foreign aid, stressing the strong bonds between Allied countries and the Republic of Vietnam. He said the United States in particular would support the progress of Vietnam consistent with her position as an anti-communist power. Such support is most probable before the U.S. withdraws her troops, otherwise such a withdrawal would be meaningless, he added.

He emphasized that «we would receive foreign aid from Allied

## Minister of State Thuc:

# Reconstruction program vital need of Vietnam

countries under easy terms or from international financial and economic organizations.»



MINISTER VU QUOC THUC

A vital prerequisite of the reconstruction program, he said, is a thorough investigation and assessment of war damage on the countryside in order to obtain a detailed breakdown of destruction to property, civilian casualties, and allowances received from the government.

Thuc disclosed that allowances for reconstruction and settlement of war damage claims are now being expedited through the «Army-People Campaign» which has tackled 50,861 cases with a fund estimated at VN\$ 1.5 billion and which has spent VN\$ 800 million for relief service out of the total VN\$ 1.6 billion provided by the Central Relief Committee.

The Minister of State is confident that a law on the national reconstruction program will immediately be promulgated at war's end.

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# MIRACLE RICE COMES TO



# VIETNAM



Tet is the lunar New Year. Since the dawn of Vietnam's 4,000-year history, Tet has been the year's biggest festival, the time to celebrate the annual rice harvest.

This year, while communist guerrillas were poised in the jungles for their big offensive, farmers all over South Vietnam were putting away their last bundles of paddy and rejoicing over their well-earned holiday with fireworks, music and colorful costumes.

But in one village, Vo Dat in Binh Tuy province northeast of Saigon, a group of farmers ignored the traditional merrymaking. Instead they were out in their fields, laboring over a new rice crop.

Everyone else planned to relax for three months until the beginning of the next planting season. They had fun mocking the fools who missed the celebrations to work in the fields.

A month later the fools had the last laugh. Each of them harvested 2.6 tons of rice per hectare and was getting ready for yet another planting. Those who had mocked were not even ready to start planting their first post-Tet crop.

### Hope for Millions

Thus did the «miracle rice» come to most of Southeast Asia, bringing with it an agricultural revolution and new hope for Asia's hungry millions.

For more than 5,000 years, Asia has been growing and eating rice. The earliest known records show Chinese wading through the water of their rice paddies around 3,000 B.C., tossing in handfuls of seeds, invoking the spirits' help for a good crop, and waiting for the harvest, seven to nine months later.

One rice crop, grown once a year, feeds one family until the next harvest. The small amount left over is traded for other family needs and goes to feed city dwellers.

From West Pakistan to Japan, more than one billion Asians, with widely different forms of government and different religions, languages and traditions, all grow the same crop and eat the same food — rice.

Not long ago, most of these countries had some of their rice crop left over for export at the end of each year's harvest. In less than a decade, rice production increased by 25 percent. Yet Asia no longer exports rice. City dwellers in rice-growing countries are going hungry.

Why? Because one million rice eaters are born

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**President Nguyen Van Thieu plants IR-8 seedlings in course of recent visit to provinces where «Miracle Rice» grows.**



Settlers in Phuoc Dien hamlet plant «Miracle Rice» together with PHILCAGV troops, Filipinos introduced IR-8 strain in Tay Ninh province last year after clearing 600 hectares in Thanh Dien forest.

each week. The supply of rice is no longer equal to the demand. Asia is steadily losing the race between food and population.

#### Alternatives Unpopular

In attempts to head off starvation for millions, many solutions have been tried, with varying success. Modern birth control methods are not widely understood or accepted by the Eastern mind. Suggestions for substituting wheat from a world surplus have failed to change the diet of most Asians. Efforts to persuade farmers to grow other crops, such as soybeans, have been resisted.

But the race is not yet lost. The answer may lie in rice itself.

Throughout the world, governments, private organizations, agronomists and scientists have set themselves the task of improving rice. The United Nations named 1966 the International Rice Year, and its Food and Agriculture Organization initiated a worldwide program dedicated to increasing rice production.

Hundreds of scientists and

specialists have joined the search for hardier, more productive rice plants at such laboratory centers as the Central Rice Research Institute in Los Banos, near Manila.

Several Western nations, including the United States, have turned from importing rice to producing and exporting it. The grain that flourished for centuries in the East now comes in shiploads from the West, often as gifts, to feed the hungry people of Asia.

Many rice-growing countries have set up private and government-sponsored programs to improve and modernize the methods of growing rice — methods which had remained unchanged through the centuries. Probably no other country has launched its campaign in the face of as many obstacles as those confronting the embattled Republic of Vietnam.

At one time South Vietnam produced enough rice to export a million tons a year after feeding its own people. As recently as 1963, it was able to export 323,000 tons of

rice. But the war has left its mark, and South Vietnam now imports nearly 80 percent of its rice. These statistics of shortage are reflected in nearly every country of Asia.

In all countries the rice crop depends on the weather. In fields lacking irrigation, too little rain in the rainy season can deprive the rice of the flooded conditions best suited to its growth. Too much rain in the dry season, when the crop is threshed and harvested, can rot the rice before it can be stored or taken to market. With a growing season of seven to nine months, only one crop can be grown each year — there is no chance to make up the loss of a bad crop by quickly planting a new one.

#### Hazards to Rice

Weather is only one of the dangers facing rice farmers. Other include:

- Diseases, such as tungro virus, grassy stunt and bacterial leaf blight, often ruin a promising crop.



- Poor weed control, insufficient use of fertilizer, and inefficient farming methods produce low-yield crops.

- Rice stem borers, leaf hoppers and other insects (more than 100 different species, 15 of major significance) infest and feed upon plants from seedlings to maturity.

- Rats feast upon the rice in the paddies and in warehouses.

- In tropical Asian countries, insufficient sunlight — caused by low cloud cover — deprives the plants of solar energy needed for high-yield crops.

In addition to these hazards of nature, South Vietnam suffers the greater tragedy of two decades of war. Three-fourths of the country's rice paddies are in the Mekong Delta, an area under constant threat from the Viet Cong. In guerrilla warfare the economy is a major military target, and in the Mekong Delta, the economic target of the Viet Cong is rice.

Wherever they can, the Viet Cong seize a part of the rice crop to feed their own men, then tax whatever is left over for sale in

## Hybrid rice holds promise in struggle against famine

the market. This rich source of income helps to provide arms, drugs, medicine and clothing for the communists. In some areas where the tax is too high, farmers have simply planted less rice, growing only what their families can eat.

Wartime conditions make farming difficult and dangerous in the Delta and elsewhere in South Vietnam. Transporting the rice to market is equally hazardous. As a result, many rice farmers have abandoned their paddies and moved to the cities, where wartime jobs on construction projects are plentiful and well paid. These new city dwellers become rice eaters instead of rice producers. And as other food becomes more difficult and more expensive to buy, they eat more and more rice.

Still other rice farmers are serving in the armed forces. Their paddies lie abandoned and are

sometimes irreparably damaged by sea water seeping in through broken or unattended dikes.

Despite all these towering problems, the future prospects of rice production in South Vietnam have suddenly brightened. Similar confidence is spreading through many Asian countries. An important reason for the new optimism is the recent development of what has become known as «miracle rice.»

### Hybrid Seed

The efforts of hundreds of specialists working long hours in rice research institutes have finally produced a hybrid rice seed which may go a long way toward winning the race against famine. The first successful seed is known as IR-8. Its equally promising brother is IR-5.

IR-8 was developed in 1962 at the International Rice Research

# 'Than Nong' - rice of Agriculture God

Institute in Los Banos, 60 kilometers south of Manila. After countless unsuccessful experiments, a team headed by a 35-year-old American, Dr. Peter Jennings, found the right combination. Dr. T.T. Chang, a geneticist from Taiwan, chose the two parent plants after careful study of their genetic traits. An American plant breeder, Henry M. Beachell, actually performed the cross-breeding suggested by Dr. Chang.

Both parent plants are of the Indica variety and both are exceptionally fast growing. Yet each has inherent drawbacks that make its performance in the rice paddies disappointing — drawbacks not present in IR-8. *Peta*, a tall tropical plant from Indonesia, wastes too much effort on growing its long stem, leaving little energy to produce the kernels of rice. As the plant becomes heavy with grain, the slender, light-green leaves bend over, or «lodge,» screening the sunlight from its own kernels and those of neighboring plants. Weeding and fertilization sometimes only accelerate the lodging process, and much of the grain is lost in the mud.

To produce IR-8, *Peta* was wedded to a dwarf plant from Taiwan's temperate zone, an ancient Chinese variety with the exotic name *Dee-geo-woo-gen*, meaning brown-tipped, short-legged thing.

*Dee-geo-woo-gen's* short, stiff stem needs less energy to grow, allowing the sunlight absorbed by its dark-green leaves to be used for producing more grain. Its sturdy stem is less prone to lodging, and it matures in three months instead of *Peta's* four. Unfortunately, it is too sensitive to the amount of daylight it receives and can only be planted in certain seasons.

Hybrid IR-8, the «miracle rice,» has inherited the best features of both its parents. It is insensitive to

the number of daylight hours it receives, so it can be grown in any season. Seeds of IR-8 can be planted closer together and yet, because of the stiff, lodge-resistant stem, sunlight can penetrate to the bottom leaves. It grows in a wide temperature range, is more resistant to some diseases, and is easier to protect with insecticides.

Even more important is its remarkably short growing season — 120 days — which enables farmers to plant two or three crops a year instead of one. And one crop of IR-8 yields about three times more rice per hectare than the traditional varieties, so the maximum yield per year can be multiplied nine times.

## Resistance to Change

When the crop is properly planted and cared for, the results of IR-8 can be truly miraculous. But miracles are not easily believed or trusted. The strangeness of IR-8, its different taste and consistency, its peculiar growing habits — they were not accepted at first in many Asian countries to which the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) sent the experimental seeds. Change is regarded suspiciously in countries where water buffalo have pulled wooden plows for centuries over the same rice paddies. Insecticides and fertilizers, indispensable in the West, are only slowly catching on in most of Asia. Planting three crops a year disrupts the traditional rhythm of planting and harvesting and the corresponding festivals, often deeply rooted in custom or religion.

To get the most benefit from IR-8, the seeds must be planted carefully, weeded and sprayed frequently, and fertilized with nitrogen compounds. All this means more work for the farmer. And it risks angering the spirits who play such a large part in his life.

The very purpose of «miracle rice» — to increase production in order to feed the hungry masses — is hard for an Asian farmer to understand. Throughout his lifetime and that of his ancestors, one crop a year, barring disaster, produced enough rice to feed his family with enough left over to barter for other essentials. The needs of his family thus satisfied, he has always found his one rice crop sufficient. The concept of selling rice for cash — the concept of profit derived from more time spent in the fields doing harder work — is foreign to him.

In South Vietnam, the farmers turned out to be less tradition-bound than was feared. The major problem here was to prove to the farmer that he could get better crops with the new seed and to guarantee that he could sell the higher yields at a fair price. The resistance was on monetary grounds, not spiritual.

Offering proof of the «miracle» on a wide scale would have been almost impossible, however, if IR-8 seeds had not been planted for the first time almost by chance. In the region of Vo Dat, a village 110 kilometers northeast of Saigon, farmers at one time produced more than six percent of all South Vietnamese rice. Although the war has caused many residents to flee, about 10,000 courageous farmers have remained to plant the annual rice crop.

## Trouble Hits

In September, tragedy struck Vo Dat. Song La Nga, the life-giving river which nourishes the area, flooded 12,150 hectares of rice paddies, ruining half the year's crop. Threatened by famine, the Vo Dat villagers asked the government of South Vietnam for enough food to last until the next harvest.

This provided the opportunity that government experts had been waiting for. Refusing to provide



Farmers examine «Miracle Rice» which will be planted in 34 provinces under the government's Accelerated Rice Program, a project involving 16,000 farmers and 2,000 metric tons of seeds, 80 tons of which will come from Vo Dat and the rest from the Philippines. Specialists are being trained for the program.

direct relief, they suggested instead that the farmers plant IR-8 seeds. While traditional rice could not be planted before April or May, IR-8 could be planted immediately. Instead of a harvest in December, the farmer could harvest IR-8 in late February, only two months after the ruined crop would have been ripe.

The villagers of Vo Dat were not convinced. Planting rice in September was unheard of. They had no reason to believe their extra work would be rewarded. But the government experts were confident. The village elders agreed — provided the seed and fertilizer were donated by the government.

Again the government refused charity in favor of self-help. Since IR-8 would give higher yields, the seed would be loaned to the farmers. At harvest time they could repay the loaned rice, kilo for kilo, and still have enough to make up for the flooded crop.

The bargaining over, 17 tons of seed and plenty of fertilizer were ordered, and the first fields of IR-8 were scheduled to be planted on October 1. But other problems lay ahead. With the rainy season over, the farmers would have to irrigate the fields. Pumps would have to be found, installed and kept in working order.

Again help came from the government, whose stake in the Vo Dat project was as great as that of the villagers themselves. After a hurried search, 31 suitable pumps were found — enough to pump 11,000 gallons of water per minute.

#### Greatest Problem

The greatest problem, one which IR-8 would face time and time again in Vietnam and throughout Asia, was fear of the unknown. The religious leaders of Vo Dat preached the same sermon: It is sinful to abandon the ways of the ancestors.

What the religious leaders actually feared was not so much the anger of the spirits as the anger of the villagers if the crop should fail and the long hours in the paddies should be wasted. Yet the leaders were willing to be shown.

The religious leaders, the principal farmers and the hamlet chiefs agreed to fly on an inspection trip to the island of Hiep Hoa, near Saigon, where government, experts were growing test crops of IR-8. The visible advantages of the new rice convinced the leaders, and planting resumed.

Minor problems arose but were more easily solved. Broken pumps had to be repaired and villagers had to be persuaded to continue working during the holiday season that followed the traditional harvest time. Some farmers were fooled by the abundance of grain and wanted to harvest it long before it was ready. To discourage

this, the government warned it would refuse to buy any grain cut before the proper time.

By February 1968, the fields were ready for harvesting. Eagerly the villagers measured the yields — an average of 2.6 tons per hectare. Vo Dat's best paddies had previously yielded only 1.9 tons per hectare, and the yield for the flooded paddies was only 69 tons.

Eventually the IR-8 fields would produce up to five tons per hectare. But for the moment, all that counted was saving the village from starvation, and IR-8 had succeeded even under makeshift conditions. As a reward, the government agreed to give the villagers six tons of conventional rice in return for every five tons of IR-8 seed. The seed was used to start other villages on the road to IR-8 production.

The Vo Dat farmers were so pleased with the results that they gave the seed to relatives or sold it to farmers many kilometers away. And this spring they planted 1,000 hectares of IR-8.

### God's Grain

Appropriately, the Vietnamese have named the new IR-8 *Than Nong* — «the Rice of the Agriculture God.» A later development, IR-5, has the same name in Vietnamese, but it is a different rice. IR-5, produced from a cross between *Peta* and a Malaysian variety called *Tangkai Rotan*, is taller and matures later than IR-8. It can also be planted during any month, but growth varies by as much as 20 days, depending on the latitude. Its medium-sized grains cook well, as do IR-8 grains, but Asians seem to prefer the taste of IR-5. The maximum yield of IR-5 is considered to be lower than that of IR-8. Although IR-5 is more resistant to disease, it is also more susceptible to lodging.

Both IR-8 and IR-5 are now being planted throughout South Vietnam. In fact, South Vietnam is experiencing a rice revolution. In less than a year and a half, thousands of farmers have changed

their centuries-old agricultural outlook and methods. Following the successful tests at Hiep Hoa and Vo Dat, the government of South Vietnam has launched a large-scale program to encourage this revolution.

In addition to distributing seeds of IR-8 and IR-5, they have imported fertilizer and insecticides, set up training courses and begun constructing drying floors and warehouses needed for harvests during the rainy season.

Under the government's Accelerated Rice Program, 34 provinces have been selected for top-priority planting. In these provinces, the government hopes to plant 37,000 hectares with the new seed — a project involving about 16,000 farmers. The project will require 2,000 metric tons of seed, of which 80 tons have come from Vo Dat's February harvest, and the rest is being imported from the Philippines.

From 800 to 1,000 specialists are expected to be trained this year in the growing techniques of the new rice. Four South Vietnamese are among the 40 Asians attending an intensive six-month course at IRRI. They left for Manila on May 31. Other trainees are chosen by the Director of Agricultural Affairs to participate in two-week training courses in Saigon. These trainees, in classes of 30 to 35 students, attend lectures in a Saigon school and then apply what they have learned in demonstration rice paddies at the National Rice Production Training Center in Hiep Hoa. Graduates of the course then return to their provinces to teach their neighbors by planting demonstration paddies and by holding farmers' meetings in the hamlets.

### Rice Kits

In addition to the classes and meetings, farmers are being taught how to cultivate the improved rice through the distribution of *Than Nong* rice kits. Each kit contains four kilos of seed, 11 kilos of insecticides, 32 kilos of fertilizer and an instruction manual. The manual contains explicit directions for

everything from the size of the field to plant (one-tenth of a hectare, or 1,000 square meters) to drying and storage methods. The manual is divided into 140 days, with instructions for certain days: five days after transplanting, farmers should irrigate the paddy to a depth of two to five centimeters. Forty days after transplanting, 10 percent BHC insecticide should be broadcast evenly over the entire paddy. No step is overlooked, and each step is essential if the highest yield is to be obtained.

Of the 10,000 kits assembled, 5,000 have been distributed to the provinces. The other 5,000 will be sold to wholesale fertilizer and farm equipment dealers, to the Ministry of Social Welfare for use in refugee camps, and for other special education and research projects. In this way a large number of farmers will have access to the seed through many outlets.

Following the principle introduced at Vo Dat, none of the rice planting equipment is given free of charge. The *Than Nong* rice kits cost 750 piasters (US\$ 6.30), but they contain enough seed, fertilizer and insecticide to cultivate 1,000 square meters. In today's market, its yield should bring about 4,800 piasters (US\$ 40.00). Since production costs for the new rice are substantially higher than costs for conventional rice, the kits offer an inexpensive way for a farmer to discover that the benefits are worth the extra expense and work.

### Bank Loans

Farmers who do not have a chance to buy a kit, or who need irrigation and other farm equipment, are offered a low-interest loan by the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB). The loans, which have a 20,000 piaster (US\$ 169.00) limit, have greatly increased since IR-8 was introduced. In 1966, 28,000 loans were granted totaling 350,000,000 piasters (US\$ 2,966,000). In 1967, the number of loans increased almost threefold to 83,000 with a total value of 1,750,000,000\$ (US\$ 14,847,400). And in the first five months



of 1968 alone, the total amount loaned was 72 percent of the total 1967 figure, or 1,305,000,000 piasters (US\$ 11,059,000).

No ADB loans are made in cash. Instead, farmers are given cards which entitle them to certain amounts of equipment. A farmer receives rice seeds with a green card, insecticide with a yellow card and fertilizer with a pink card. This system guarantees that the loan will be applied to rice production only.

The rate of repayment is rapidly increasing — from 90 percent to 98 percent of loans are now repaid on time — in spite of the Viet Cong, who seem to be alarmed at the success of the new program. In areas where they have some measure of control, they allow farmers to accept loans but punish them for repayment.

This tactic has been slightly more successful than previous ones. Last year, the Viet Cong told hesitant farmers that the government was trying to ruin their crops. When they saw the astonishing results, they tried to spread the rumor that eating IR-8 rice caused leprosy.

But the Viet Cong are much

more of a threat to farmers transporting rice and other products to market. Under the present system, a farmer usually pays someone to take the rice to market. When the danger of Viet Cong harassment increases, the farmer's expense for transportation rises. Since the Tet offensive early this year, the market price for rice has risen but the farmer's price has fallen. The middleman makes the profit, in return for the increased danger he faces.

#### Dangers of War

Still, the dangers of war and the Viet Cong rank second to those nature provides. The «miracle rice» has created new problems which must be solved on a large scale if IR-8 would a real revolution. The greatest of these problems in South Vietnam, as well as in most nonindustrialized Asian countries, is irrigation. Some land is too difficult to irrigate, and the government advises owners of such land to grow only one IR-8 crop, in the rainy season. During the rest of the year, the farmer is encouraged to grow such secondary crops as corn, melons, soybeans and sorghum.

For farmers whose land can be

irrigated, two or three crops of IR-8 are possible. Most farmers cannot afford to level their land, install pipes or dig ditches, and buy pumps. In the new spirit of revolution, however, innovations are being accepted as never before. Hamlet farmers pool their money to buy small underwater machinery from Japan, and each contributing farmer is allowed to use the machine to prepare his land.

Machines are also being introduced to thresh and mill the rice more efficiently. The milling machines are particularly useful for IR-8 rice, which breaks more easily than the traditional varieties.

Drying and storing rice present other problems, both for traditional varieties and for IR-8. In South Vietnam, drying is made more difficult by the high humidity. Last year, 12 percent of all the rice produced was unusable because it had been improperly dried.

For long-term drying, humidity must be below 70 percent at its peak. Nowhere in South Vietnam is the humidity level ever as low as 70 percent. Traditional rice contains 22 to 24 percent moisture — IR-8 contains 26 to 27 percent. Al-

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though rice can be sun-dried until it contains only 17 percent, for long-term storage the moisture content must be no higher than 12 to 14 percent. Until recently, such a goal was impossible.

Again, machines are coming to the rescue. The cheapest, simplest, most adaptable mechanical dryer is called a rice sack dryer. This basic machine consists of a heat source, usually a kerosene burner, connected to two long pipes with holes along the top at regular intervals. A sack of rice is simply laid on the pipe for several days until it is dry. The process is necessarily slow, for rice cracks if it is dried too fast. Done properly, it is a never ending process. In as little time as 41 days, the rice has again absorbed 17 percent moisture and must be re-dried.

Drying machines, however, are not expensive and can also be used jointly by all the farmers in a hamlet. They are vital to IR-8 farmers who plant two or even three crops a year, because at least one crop must be harvested and dried during the rainy season, when normal drying methods are impossible.

Storage facilities, especially for harvests during the rainy season, are also inadequate. Most warehouses are huge, barn-like structures with only one door. The floor is covered with rice straw and burlap bags — described by farmers as «a perfect home for rats.» The single door encourages farmers to take rice sacks from the front first, and the rice in the back stays there for months, soaking up moisture and feeding rats. In some provinces the government is building better warehouses in preparation for the 1968 harvest.

### **Prosperous Province**

In the province of An Giang, for example, 1,500 hectares of new rice will be planted in 1968, most with IR-8 and some with IR-5. Some farmers will plant two IR-8 crops. Others will plant one IR-8 crop plus secondary crops such as melons and soybeans.

An Giang, one of the 34 provin-

ces chosen for the Accelerated Rice Program, is a relatively prosperous and peaceful region, ranking third highest in expected 1968 IR-8 production in all of South Vietnam. In view of the increased rice production expected this year, the government is building eight huge storage warehouses, 200 concrete drying floors measuring 10 meters square, and two mills.

Some of the earliest pioneers in the new program came from An Giang province. In 1966, 203 farmers accepted loans, planted experimental crops of melons, soybeans and vegetables. Today, more than 4,000 An Giang farmers are participating, most of them growing IR-8.

These villagers are being transformed from subsistence farmers feeding only their own families to commercial farmers helping to feed the urban population and creating products for export. For the farmer, the benefits can be counted in piasters. Most of them are experiencing for the first time the joys of profit, of extra cash for such luxuries as better homes and higher education for their children.

### **Results Staggering**

In terms of human lives, the agricultural revolution is heart-warning. In terms of national economies, the results could be staggering. Already the statistics are pouring in. In 1968, South Vietnam is expected to reduce rice imports to 600,000 tons, 16 percent less than in 1967. After a trip through South Vietnam's rice paddies in early July, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman predicted that if the revolution continues at its present pace, South Vietnam will be self-sufficient in rice production by 1970 and will even be able to export rice by 1971.

But the present momentum, as Secretary Freeman admits, may be difficult to maintain. It depends on many factors.

War, of course, is unpredictable. Further escalation, such as another Tet offensive, could upset the prediction. An equally difficult pro-

blem is price control. Although the government recently raised the price of rice in the market, enough profit does not reach the farmer to encourage production increases.

The price of rice doubled from 1965 to 1967 — from nine to 11 piasters a kilo in 1965 to 19 to 22 piasters a kilo in 1967. But the mid-1968 price has remained at about 22 to 23 piasters a kilo, while transportation costs have skyrocketed. Farmers are in danger of being unable to repay their loans if the price is not raised at the farm level.

In raising this point with farmers in the South Vietnamese provinces, Secretary Freeman's simple axiom summed up the problem: «You cannot get anyone, anywhere, to produce if he does not get paid for it.»

The Vietnamese government, while encouraging rice production, hesitates to raise the price in the cities because of the inflationary effect on the markets. Prices for imported food products are already inflated two or three times higher than rice prices. People in the cities who would otherwise go hungry are saved by the relatively low cost of rice.

### **No Turning Back**

In spite of the problems, Secretary Freeman's prediction may yet come true. Due to IR-8, the Philippines is self-sufficient in rice production for the first time since 1903. Yields of IRRI varieties in both East and West Pakistan are the highest ever achieved in any season of any year. In India, the yield of dry season crops increased from 1.5 tons to 10 tons per hectare in 1967. Farmers in Malaysia and Ceylon have doubled their yields to six tons per hectare.

Even if the South Vietnamese do not achieve self-sufficiency by 1970, they will have pioneered the agricultural industrialization of Southeast Asia, pushing forward the most successful agricultural reform program ever carried out in time of war. The rice revolution has begun and cannot be turned back.

# The elegance of the 'Ao-Dai'

The traditional Vietnamese woman's dress, the *ao-dai*, is considered by Westerners to be one of the most elegant and feminine national costumes in the world. Over the last thirty years or so the *ao-dai* has undergone many changes. French influence had contributed to its present uncluttered flowing charm. Unlike the tight-fitting Chinese *cheongsam*, which tends to restrict movement, the Vietnamese *ao-dai* with its close fitting bodice, free flowing front and back panels and long black or white silk trousers underneath, is a delicate and airy garment. Though these long flowing panels are something of a hazard when riding a bicycle or sitting side-saddle on a «Honda» motor scooter, Vietnamese women consider its advantages far outweigh its drawbacks — especially when it comes to hiding unshapely legs, thick ankles or nobbly knees !

The *ao-dai* is made up of two separate pieces reaching down to the heels. Though the left side is sewn down as far as the waist, the right side is lined with press studs, and depending on the cut of the neckline, which is generally mandarin-style, continues up along the right breast to meet the collar in the centre. Long close-fitting sleeves are also characteristic. Though the *ao-dai* may be any colour, pastel, dark, or floral, the long silk trousers are either black or white. Almost all over the world people are familiar with the *ao-dai*. Many Vietnamese girls who travel overseas to study wear their graceful dress while waves of VIP's, such as Mrs. Nguyen Van Thieu and Mrs. Nguyen Cao Ky always draw admiring glances on official visits. Though many European women have tried to wear the *ao-dai* it rarely does them justice. The frail pieces of streaming material seem unbecoming to them because in general they are taller and larger boned than the tiny, slender Vietnamese women.

Fashions have changed too. Some thirty odd years ago the dress, though still basically resembling

---

Graceful, flowing lines are the mark of the «ao-dai» which has undergone many transformations through the years. Girls in front of Le Van Duyet temple gate sport traditional collar and fast becoming popular collarless attire.



today's fashion, was loose fitting and reached only to below the knees. The back fell straight away from the neck while the front formed two separate pieces which tied at the waist, the left tie always being larger than the right. This left a gaping «V» across the chest which was covered by a bid-like piece of cloth which tied behind the neck. Some 15 years later the dress received several improvements. The gaping «V» was reduced to a more demure size, and instead of tying the two ends together these were allowed to fall freely while a long sash, usually two metres in length, was tied around the waist and knotted on the right side.

And so the evolution continued. The French eliminated the knots and belts and the bodice changed to the traditional Chinese style of press studs across the chest to the armpit and down one side as far as the waist. This tended to represent a fusion of Oriental and Western fashion. There was a stage when the shoulders were padded, but this soon passed. At least, as far as the collar is concerned, practicality has replaced fashion. For a time women raised their mandarin collars from two centimeters to eight, but they found that it was difficult to eat. Also their necks were held so stiffly that it was difficult even to talk. So for the sake of comfort collars were reduced to three centimeters. However today necklines vary according to individual tastes: round, square, or heart shaped, though the collarless line is favoured at the moment. The First Lady of the First Republic of South Vietnam, Madam Ngo Dinh Nhu, set a trend in necklines. She wore a plunging rounded neckline which was widely imitated.

Some modern Vietnamese women find a happy medium between traditional Vietnamese dress and Western dress though many prefer the *ao-dai*. One student pointed out: «I don't have any prejudice against western skirts



**Prints have made their way into the favor of Vietnamese girls although plain one-color gowns dominate. Schoolgirls are distinguished by their all-white *ao-dai*. Long, close-fitting sleeves stress uncluttered elegance.**

and dresses, but the *ao-dai* pleases me.» One female civil servant said confidentially: «I wear both western and Vietnamese. The Vietnamese dress is best in cool weather, but when it is hot western dress is more comfortable. Whenever I am invited to dinner I prefer to wear western dress so that I can eat my fill. If I eat too much I find that the *ao-dai* becomes too tight at the waist.» The young men believe the *ao-dai* is old fashioned

and representative of the days when girls and boys were not allowed to be too near each other. The older folk vary. Some say that western dress is «not serious enough — European clothes look provocative.» Others feel that the young women should dress as they please. «We cannot force them to adopt our ideas. The character of girls shows in their behaviour and upbringing, not in the way they dress.» (MF)

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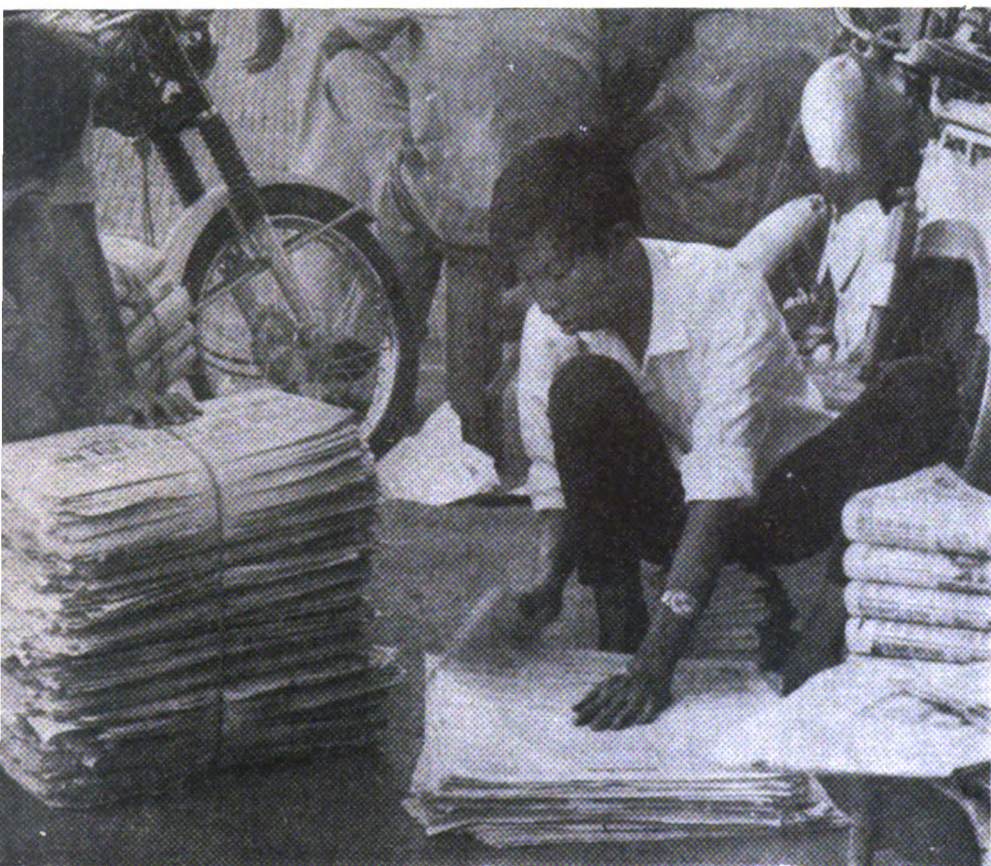


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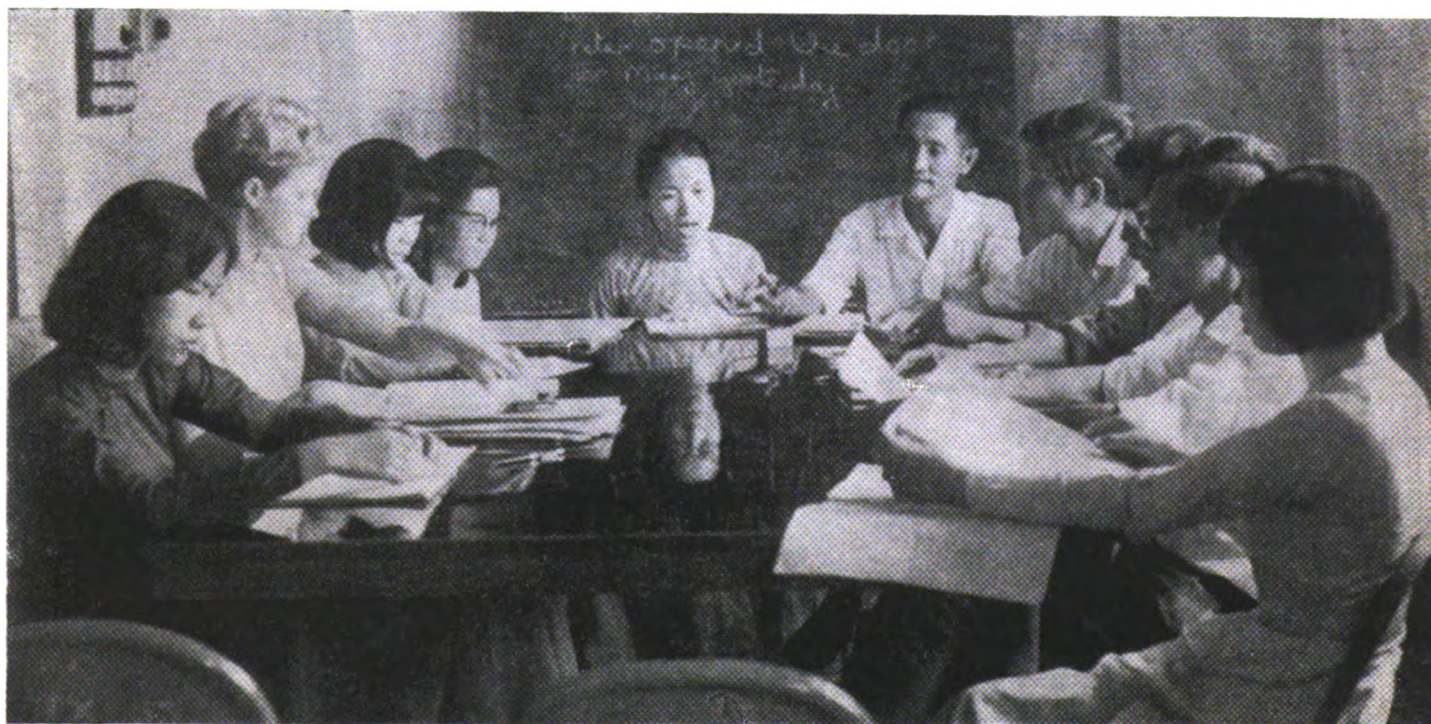
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# Multiple ills beset press in Vietnam



**Lie Telling.** In spite of their traditional claims of defending the poor and the humble and serving the lofty principles of human dignity and social justice, Vietnamese journalists more often than not are held in contempt by their compatriots, in whose eyes it is theirs the habit of «telling invented stories in return for good money.» (*lam bao noi lao an tien*)

Indeed, possibly nowhere else in the world are representatives of this most noble profession given so little consideration by the general public and government circles. There was a time, not very long ago, when newspapering was considered as one of the meanest occupations that could only enlist the service of those good at nothing except at telling lies.



Newsboys prepare newspapers for day's sale in Saigon (above), only Vietnamese city with enough dailies. Budding newsmen attend English class conducted by Vietnam Press' Angela Cobb, at left.

Present-day journalists, of course, have become more respectable figures. The Vietnamese press has grown into something the administration has to reckon with. But the time still seems quite far away when newspapermen and women may rid themselves of their often-undeserved notoriety of «money-eaters» and when they may be given their proper due by the common people.

**Difficult Beginnings.** This sorrowful state of affairs has its explanation in the humble beginnings of this imported profession. Until the arrival of the French in Cochinchina in the early sixties mass communications media had been practically non-existent. The first newspaper was only published in Vietnam in 1865. It was the *Gia Dinh Bao* or *Gia Dinh Journal*, edited by Truong Vinh Ky.

Ky's spiritual child was rather modest in its designs. Unlike its successors, which often proclaimed social justice, national independence, economic well-being and human dignity and other such lofty notions as their guiding principles, *Gia Dinh Bao* only wanted to record some of the most important events that marked the first years of French domination in Vietnam.

But even this small ambition was not to be fully satisfied. In the particular political conditions of Indochina, the paper soon found itself submerged by literary creations of all kinds. Unable to inform its readers on current developments and providing them with comments on the news, journalists on the staff of *Gia Dinh Bao* turned their paper into a literary gazette.

Although until the final years of the twentieth century, *Gia Dinh Bao* still served as some kind of official gazette for the colonial administration, the style and content of the press in Vietnam was thus definitely set. The characteristics of Ky's paper — little news and much fiction — were to remain the essential features of the local press for nearly a century.

**Confused Development.** For the next hundred years after the first

Vietnamese newspaper came into being, the press expanded rapidly but its development was a most tumultuous one. There were quite a few attempts at publishing genuine newspapers — Diep Van Ky's *Than Chung* (The Morning Bell) in Saigon and Hoang Tich Chu's *Dong Tay* (East-West) in Hanoi — but they were rather short-lived undertakings.

On the whole, until the Second World War broke out, Vietnamese newspapers were either colorless sheets with little news and even less comment or mouthpieces for political groupings with definitely set ideas on anything that may happen. There were also too many of them and the limited readership they had to share among themselves forced such «mass circulation» dailies as the *Dong Phap* (French Indochina) to live on a mere five or six thousand copies daily.

This situation can be said to be true throughout the two decades following the end of World War II. Even the authoritarian regime of Ngo Dinh Diem (1954-1963) and the continuous upheavals that marked the immediate post-Diem era did not result in any betterment of the press. Vietnamese papers, on the whole, remain unprofessional sheets with an average sale of 5,000 per day.

### ENCOURAGING SIGNS

**Exceptions.** Of course, there are more than one exception to the rule but they rather confirm than deny it. As things are now, the vernacular press can point to such dailies as the *Chinh Luan* (Right Opinion), the *Quyét Tien* (Determination To Go Forward), the *Cong Luan* (Public Opinion), and the *Tien Tuyen* (Frontline) as serious undertakings to improve the standards of the local press.

Besides these newspapers, which can claim a circulation of 25,000 to 50,000 copies per day, such dailies as the *Chanh Dao* (Right Way) and the *Xay Dung* (To Construct) are definitely identified with Buddhist and Catholic interests, and such other journals as the *Tia Sang*

(Ray of Light), the *Trang Den* (Black and White), the *Saigon Moi* (News Saigon), and the *Tieng Chuong* (Bell Sounds) nurture no other ambitions than selling as many copies as possible.

Among these are some of the most affluent journals, the staffs of which are so very well paid that good writers and educated youths with a promising future ahead of them have begun to shed their *amour propre* and tried to seek a career in journalism. If the trend should be maintained — an editor with *Chinh Luan* earns VN\$ 40,000 a month — the time may soon come when talented persons will not shun the prospects of working in an editorial office.

**Basic Shortcomings.** But the basic shortcomings of the Vietnamese press are still too many and, thus, have the compounded effect of preventing its expansion on the lines recorded in more advanced countries. Heading this list of deficiencies is the apparent inability of capital owners to invest enough money in newspapering ventures to put them on a sound financial and economic basis.

As things are now, anybody with a publishing licence and a couple of millions of piasters (US\$ 20,000) to spare, can launch a daily newspaper. Of course, with so little capital, the venture cannot be very different from Ky's *Gia Dinh Bao*. More often than not, with an editorial staff limited to five or six persons and printing facilities confined to two or four hand-fed Yoda presses, the product it puts out cannot even claim to be a newspaper worth its name.

Of the three score dailies distributed in Saigon, too, none rolls out of the more modern Rotary presses. Types are set by hand, and monotypes or lynotypes continue to be unheard of in most editorial offices. For dailies with circulation reaching over 10,000 copies per day, the case is not rare of the paper being printed in four different printing houses. Some of the more prosperous papers have been working on that arrangement for years.

The single exception in this respect is or rather was Mr. Nguyen Ky Nam's *Than Chung*. Closed down by Government decree last year, *Than Chung* was the only publishing venture that had the mechanical facilities to help put out a decent journal. Nam still awaits the day when he can put his money and talent at the service of the Fourth Estate.

**Prospects.** What has been termed by the late Tu-chung Vu Nhat Huy — one of the best journalists ever produced by Vietnam, who was murdered by the Viet Cong in 1906 — as «the handicraft state of the Vietnamese press» has not gone unlamented by many of the more enlightened publishers and editors of this land. And they are trying to do something to exploit the limits in which they have to work.

Dr. Dang Van Sung, the publisher of *Chinh-Luan*, and Chu-tu Chu Van Binh, the owner of the erstwhile *Song* (Life), for example, have been reported to have gone abroad more than once to look for semi-automatic rotary presses that may be operated by unskilled Vietnamese workers. And at least two printing houses in Saigon have at present all the facilities needed to put out good-looking dailies.

If competition should grow fiercer in the days to come, publishers may sometime find out that their best chance to remain in the field is to modernize their printing equipment, re-organize their staff, hire trained journalists, improve their coverage of world and local events. As all these steps involve more money, the trend must point to an «industrialization» of the trade if it should some day deserve the name of Fourth Estate.

### SOUNDER CONCEPT

**Editorial Deficiencies.** But even should the profession be put some day on a sounder financial and organizational basis, deficiencies of a different kind will bar the press in Vietnam from growing speedily into what it has always desired to be: a healthy force be-

hind a discriminating public opinion.

This can be said to be long to come as it will involve a complete mental metamorphosis of those directly concerned with it and a change of approach by information workers. So long as journalists of Vietnam think of themselves as artists and/or politicians, they are perforce prejudiced and their writings — even on the merest topics — are tainted by their subjective views of the world around them.

Of course, such a deficiency can only be remedied by the emergence of a new generation of press workers trained for the profession but it will take time for cub reporters to be entrusted with higher responsibilities. And the shortcoming is too deeprooted to be done away with speedily.

**Sounder Concept.** A sounder concept, however, has begun to emerge from the conflicting undercurrents of the Vietnamese press. Serious publications now only have one or two serialized novels instead of the five or six such circulation boosters of yore. *Chinh-luan* for example, makes it a rule to publish only one such story, and *Cong-luan* and *Tien-tuyen* have inside pages whose material may constitute food for thought for any serious reader.

Of course, the great majority of the vernacular papers still devote too much space for fiction and too little for news and comments. And most of the time, their features are articles translated from English or French newspapers. But a genuine effort is being made by the more serious publications to limit their fictional components and to encourage original writings among their staff members. In this undertaking, they are being helped by the emergence of more than a feature syndicate and ever growing number of outside contributors.

For the student of the local press, another encouraging sign is to be found in the treatment of news by reporters. Instead of the erstwhile dominant habit of writing stories in a chronological order,

one finds that more and more importance is being given the lead paragraph. News writing is no longer the domain of whoever may read and write passably well. It has become something would-be journalists must learn before entering the profession.

**School of Journalism.** The new concept is also being helped by the organization of training courses for would-be journalists at such institutions as the semi-official *Vietnam Press Agency*, the radio system, the Psywar Department. And at least one institution of higher learning, the University of Dalat, has a full-fledged Department of Journalism with a teaching faculty grouping the best names in the Vietnamese press.

If the time can be said to be still far away when journalists may no longer be called «lie-tellers» and the like, it has dawned on the general public and the journalistic world that newspapering is not a temporary occupation for whoever may be out of work. The many jobs presently held by graduates from journalism courses organized in the past few years, constitute the most eloquent proofs indicating that amateurism is no longer a characteristic of Vietnamese journalism.

The many trips made abroad by working journalists also have resulted in bringing some fresh air into local editorial offices. Nguyen Nam Phong, after seeing the facilities put at the disposal of correspondents covering the Manila summit in 1966, accepted to lecture for a Vietnam Press-sponsored journalism course. And *Inquirer*man Tran Nha vowed to work to death «if necessary» to improve his two publications after a visit to the *Asahi Shimbun* and the *Mainichi Shimbun* of Tokyo.

### STILL A LONG WAY

**Other Difficulties.** Besides difficulties mentioned earlier, many other obstacles remain in the way to a better Fourth Estate. Of these, the most important is the problem of distribution of an estimated 500,000 copies of Saigon-based newspapers.



*Inquirer* readers are more or less familiar with problems confronting us, which also are those faced by our colleagues. In the two critical first months of our life, we were victims of a distribution racket which forced us to seek survival in stopping street sales. And sixteen weeks after our maiden issue reached your hands, distribution of the *Inquirer* in the provinces remains insignificant. Continued publication of this newsmagazine, even to us, appears something tantamount to a miracle.

In the present distributing arrangement, Saigon is the only city with enough papers for the reading public. In all other cities, even those linked with the Capital by daily air connections, newspapers more often than not are on sale one or two days late. In Danang, Hue, Cantho, Nhatrang, the case is not rare of news blackouts lasting for days. And in smaller provincial and district towns and in the countryside, newspapers are practically nonexistent with the evident effect of depriving them of a great many potential customers.

One needs not go very far to be convinced of the seriousness of the situation. For whoever has been to villages and hamlets just outside Saigon and wants to buy a newspaper, may have much more to do than going to the village shop. This state of affairs is so very prevalent throughout the country that a disgusted journalist said not long ago that «newspapers simply do not get out of Saigon.»

So long as such difficulties remain unsolved. Vietnamese newspapers may find it impossible to break away from their present economic deadlock and it can be safely assumed that they are still a long way from what they want to be: a source of enlightenment in the present stage of nation-building that should make them equal to their self-appointed role as the nation's Fourth Estate. — Reprinted from *The Vietnam Inquirer*.

# The fundamental law of Communist legality

In a broadcast to the Cuban people on August 23 Fidel Castro provided what was perhaps the most cynical, and most revealing analysis of the Russian invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia yet. Castro came out squarely in support of the flimsy pretexts given by the Russians to justify the move.

In fact, he stated emphatically that the invasion was illegal and a violation of Czechoslovakia's sovereignty — but he curtly dismissed this fact as an irrelevancy. For anyone having any doubts concerning the real motivations for the Russian invasion, here are a few excerpts from the Castro speech:

«... the essential thing whether we accept it or not, is whether the Socialist Bloc could permit the development of a political situation which would lead to the breakdown of a Socialist country and its fall into the arms of Imperialism. From our viewpoint it is not permissible and the Socialist Bloc has the right to prevent it, one way or another... what is not appropriate here is to say that the sovereignty of the Czechoslovak state was not violated. That would be fiction and a lie.

«The violation was flagrant... From the legal standpoint it cannot be justified, this is quite clear. In our judgment the decision on Czechoslovakia can be explained only from the political viewpoint, and not from the legal viewpoint. Frankly it has absolutely no legality... it is necessary to admit it — even though it violates rights such as the right of sovereignty — our judgment considers as more important the struggle against Imperialism... We must learn to analyze these realities in order to avoid taking romantic and idealistic positions that do not fit in with these realities. We are against all those bourgeois liberal reforms within Czechoslovakia, but we also are

against liberal economic reforms that were taking place in other Socialist Camp countries.»

Thus Castro made it clear, no doubt to the embarrassment of Russian, East German, Polish, Hungarian and Bulgarian leaders, that the Communist movement does not permit the development of Communist countries other than along lines to be decided by a handful of Russian Communist leaders. This fundamental law of Communist legality is nothing more than political expediency determined in Moscow.

While Czechoslovakia is far away, and Vietnamese know little about her, we are all too familiar with this fundamental law of Communist legality. The Hanoi regime was the first Communist state to support the Russian aggression in Czechoslovakia. This is not surprising since we have all too often seen the fundamental Communist law of political expediency used by the Communist leaders in Hanoi — when they turned over Vietnamese nationalist leaders to the French colonialists, when they assassinated thousands of nationalists following World War II when they invaded South Vietnam, when they conduct terror against civilians, just to mention a few instances.

When politicians and others speak about nationalist elements in the National Liberation Front and the Viet Cong, they should remind themselves of this basic law of Communism which is common to all Communist states, including Czechoslovakia, which is at this moment being forced to adhere to that law by thousands of foreign troops.

PHI-LAN in the  
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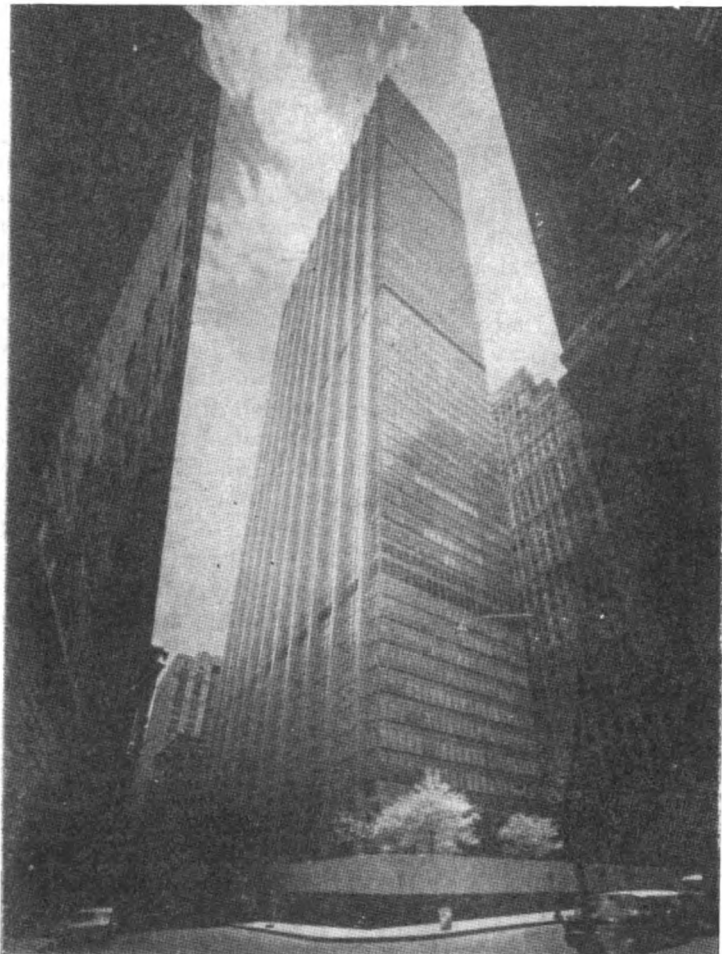
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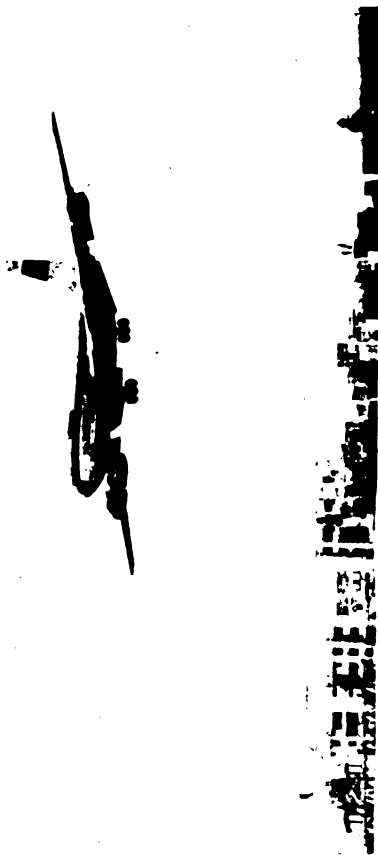
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