

**THE FIGHT AGAINST  
THE SUBVERSIVE COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES  
IN VIETNAM**

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# THE FIGHT AGAINST THE SUBVERSIVE COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES IN VIETNAM

**Its origins, its aims, its significance**

On July 20th 1954, the main european powers, indifferent to the protestation of Viet-Nam, signed the ill-fated agreement of Geneva. After some petty bargaining, the negotiators agreed upon the position of the fatal line which put an end to the national unity which had been wrought through a historical past which is four thousand years old. Dealing liberally with what did not belong to them, they assigned to some communist leaders, who had been wrongly labelled for the occasion with the name of the government of a so-called « democratic republic », a vast and rich territory peopled by some twelve million inhabitants ; as for the people, they had not troubled to ask them their opinion.

Even in the greatest evil there is always some good. This iniquitous act at least consecrated the final denouement of France as a colonializing power. Upon its curtailed territory Viet-Nam was at last, completely, irrevocably independent. As for its destinies, the Occident washed its hands of it.

It belonged to President Ngo-Dinh-Diem who acceded to the prime ministry at this critical hour, to put together again what others had so badly emasculated. All Vietnamese patriots without exception wished to put an end to the partitioning of their country, decided upon in Geneva, and to restore the unity of the nation ; seeing this to be the aspiration of the whole country, President Ngo-Dinh-Diem set this goal as the paramount and imperative task of his government.

But unity must be achieved in an orderly and free way, without threats. In the South, the newly regained independence was the victory of democracy ; unity would be nothing but illusion if it was achieved under the mask of communist Viet-Minh which would hasten to offer it as a present to its masters in Peking and Moscow. Thus can be explained the violence of the fight put up by the government of free

Viet-Nam. It was not merely as some might think, an idle ideological squabble between rival parties ; the victory of freedom from tyranny is a matter of life and death for Viet-Nam.

The fight against the subversive activities of international communism is a cardinal episode of this fight. Yet it is but an episode. If it is deemed useful to define its aims and its aspects, it is because too often incomplete or false interpretations, not to mention purely fanciful ones were given.

## **Origins and aims of the Campaign**

The Geneva agreements gave more than a fair share to the communists. Never had even the most ambitious of the Viet-Minh leaders hoped for such success. It was enough to whet still more their voracity ; with such an easy victory behind them they soon pictured themselves the rulers of the entire country. Were not the negotiators encouraging them by pushing into their hands a weapon with which handling they were familiar. And regarding elections ? To tell the truth, this proviso concerning the elections was not an explicitly stipulated obligation, as some have claimed, in a treatise which, by the way, Free Viet-Nam had never signed. But some wily quibbling jurists insisted upon interpreting the text in that manner. Such an opportunity was not overlooked by the communists. Indeed, in the euphoria created by an un hoped for success, everything seemed to be child's play. Two years are but a little thing in the life of a nation but it is a sufficient lapse of time to expect decisive results from a cleverly conducted propaganda. Viet-Minh people are well-experienced in these matters, having been trained in such techniques by their Russian and Chinese communist masters for over 25 years.

Without delay, Ho-Chi-Minh and his team set to work. Their task was to prepare the famed « 1956 elections » so as to secure victory through them. In order to reach their ends, they left in all parts of the country which had not been put under their control by the treatise, a real intelligence army composed of carefully selected cadres specially trained as propaganda agents and organisers. It is only fair to say that up to that time South Viet-Nam had been abandoned to an anarchical condition and plundered by the powerful feudal chiefs. Disorganised, torn between rival factions, looted by covetous and ambitious gang leaders, it may have appeared as an easy prey.

President Ngo-Dinh-Diem's government had first to dedicate itself to the reestablishment of order and unity upon the privileges enjoyed by the great barons who defied governmental authority. Once this indispensable task was carried out it remained to free the country from a no less deadly plague — the subversive action of innumerable

communist agents left on the spot by the Viet-Minh to stalemate all efforts towards recovery. It meant the waging of a new civil war, which was entirely different in its form from the previous one, but was equally important.

The legal government had openly staked its own military power in the field of battle against the armed forces at the disposal of the rebel sects. But the secret army of Viet-Minh propaganda had to be defeated upon a different field. This was the origin of a widespread national campaign destined to render ineffectual the efforts of this communist propaganda, as well as to unmask the agents who were in charge of the direction of the communist campaign of subversion.

The fight against subversive communist activities began on July 20th 1955. Its objective was threefold :

- 1) To show to the people the true face of communism, point out the lies in its propaganda, fill the Vietnamese people with a healthy hatred of doctrines alien to the national character as well as to the most ancient traditions of the country ;
- 2) To weed out of the national community its dubious and subversive elements, and to strive to win over to the national cause the upright minds which had been misled by the fallacious promises of Viet-Minh communists ;
- 3) To unite the people of free Viet-Nam around a national doctrine based upon principles of freedom, justice and fraternity, with a view to consolidating a prosperous, peaceful and democratic state.

### **The Plan of the Campaign**

For this new kind of war just as for one that would require « shooting », the whole nation had to be mobilized. A plan had to be drawn out too, troops had to be given assignments, officers and instructors found and trained to lead the struggle.

The directors of the fight against the subversive communist activities were too realistic and too conversant with the methods of the adversary to conceal to themselves the difficulties of their enterprise. In Moscow or Peking, the Viet-Minh leaders had been given good schooling. In 40 years' time, the communist staff, full of the experience of two generations, has had time to perfect a real strategy for ideological warfare. One cannot expect to defeat such an adversary, upon a ground on which he is a past master, without some severe preparation.

The high command of this campaign applied itself to the elaboration of tactics corresponding to a new form of warfare. At the same

time, it perfected a carefully planned organization. The campaign was to be stretched over a succession of periods which had each its particular objectives and its appropriate methods.

The first period began on July 20th 1955 and ended on May 20th 1956. It included three successive stages : from July 20th to August 31st 1955 ; from September 1st to October 20th ; from October 21st 1955 to May 20th 1956. It was a preparatory stage aimed at awakening the conscience of the nation, spreading and strengthening anti-communist feeling, and forming the cadres and staffs which would be called upon in the next periods to play an important part.

The first stage was one of adjustment : creation of organisms responsible at all levels for the fight against communism, the formation of cadres, the organization of the first meetings, the discussion of the plans that would have to be worked out during the next stages, and of the methods to be adopted.

During the second stage, while anti-subversion committees and units were organized in the army and among the civilian population, political courses ensured the formation of the leaders who would, in their turn, be used as local trainers, in order to spread over the whole country a perfect doctrinal unity as to the goals of the campaign and the methods used in it.

The third stage of this first period was to check first the results of the two previous ones and to complete the preparation for the next. While each of the first two stages had lasted six weeks, this one was extended over a period of seven months. Its length was justified by its importance. Indeed, its aim was nothing less than the mobilization of the whole nation against the communist enemy. It was during the last part of the first period that the country, under the guidance of trained leaders who were confident in the greatness of their task, was to become aware of its responsibilities, to learn to know communism under a true light, to unite around the national doctrine embodied by President Ngo-Dinh-Diem, and through its massive and unreserved backing of the legal government, to prepare itself for the next periods, those of action.

After those preparations the second period started on May 20th 1956, after the National Congress For The Fight Against Subversive Communist Activities. This second period is still in progress. The first phase of it came to an end on the day when the Republican Constitution was solemnly proclaimed, i.e. on October 26th 1956. The second phase has begun and will end when the results obtained will justify the passage to the next phase.

The fight against the subversive propoganda of communist Viet-Minh has really begun with this second period. The main aim is to destroy the whole network secretly woven by the adversary which covers the whole of free Viet-Nam.

It is too early as yet to appreciate the results. It cannot be done before the end of the second period. If any figures were given today, they would be out-of-date by to-morrow, for everyday more Viet-Minh leaders rally to the government, either because pressed by a hostile population they give up the mission which they can no longer carry through, or because impressed in their turn by the national doctrine, which they had been directed to combat but the truth of which they have to admit, they realize and recant their error.

## The treasons of Viet-Cong

The Campaign against subversive communist activities is, as previously stated, based upon two essential actions :

- The revelation of the true faces of Viet-Minh communists ;
- The diffusion and teaching of the national doctrine of Viet-Nam, a free, independent and democratic country.

We are now going to deal in turn with these two tenets. To cast a light upon Viet-Minh first requires the recalling of its treasons against the country and the people. To do so, we must go back to the origins of the movement since from its first it was conceived upon its first breach of honour.

In the thick of World War II while Viet-Nam was put under the double yoke of French administration and of the Japanese military occupation, Ho-Chi-Minh, the old communist leader who had fled to China under the protection of the Kuomintang, pushed the red flag into his pocket and raised the banner of pure nationalism to constitute his Viet-Minh, to which he ostensibly assigned as its sole aim the liberation of the country, but which he infiltrated carefully with his most faithful lieutenants who were all hardshell marxists. The new and deceiving label which the disciple of Moscow had stuck upon himself did not long deceive the Chinese Nationalist authorities who promptly dispatched him to jail for his communist zeal. But in those days China had more pressing concerns and probably paid little attention to an as yet only budding movement. When he was set free, Ho-Chi-Minh was able to renew his apostolate. Making the best of the Japanese collapse and of the absence of the French, he hastened in Hanoi, the communist staff pompously celebrated « Independence Day ». A crowd of 500.000 people were invited to swear :

- to accept no negotiation with France,
- to refuse to serve in the French expeditionary corps,
- to refuse to serve as guides to the invaders,
- to fight to death rather than to let the country relapse into slavery.

These fine resolutions were soon melt as fast as snow in the sun. Less than six months later, the same Ho Chi Minh government welcomed General Leclerc's troops back into Hanoi.

The treason was glaring, when on 6th March 1946 Viet-Minh plenipotentiaries signed with the French representative an agreement, under cover of which the French troops were able to settle in Haiphong, Hanoi and Langson without any trouble, and to bring in their tanks and planes, and thus to put North Viet-Nam once more under military occupation, they were not only traitors to the country they had sworn to defend, but to the people whose hopes they had shamefully abused. For the people had been sincere when they had sworn to die to preserve national independence. They were not communists, those who on 2nd September 1945 had unanimously sworn to live only in freedom. In the eyes of this people the new masters who then strutted upon the lofty platform from which they called their countrymen to arms were not the puppets of a party but the long waited-for liberators. They proclaimed themselves as such, there was no cause for disbelief. Indeed, disbelief was unconceivable in the exaltation of this great moment of history when a wind of patriotism blew without any petty partisan back-thought.

All hopes were encouraged in the upsurge of patriotic feeling of a whole people; the most daring enterprise seemed possible. By the agreement of 6th March 1946, a whole people nerved for sacrifice and with an undaunted spirit of resistance was put at the mercy of the French expeditionary corps, completely tied up and reduced to impotence by the cowardice of unworthy chiefs. For the first time in its history, Viet-Nam surrendered without fight, without the slightest gesture of defence.

Aware of the people's indignation, Hô-Chi-Minh, on the day after his disavowal, tried to justify himself: « If we carried on with our fight, » he admitted, « we could finally win that is to say conquer our unity and independence; but that would be the cost in human lives! » Rather an unexpected argument in the mouth of a man for whom the life of his fellowmen is negligible, and who, concurrently, used armistice with the French to conduct a bloody purge of all nationalist leaders who were not Viet-Minh. Viet-Minh leaders only loathe the thought of spilling Vietnamese blood when the defence of the independence of the country is at stake. They spare it much less when they want to preserve their regime against any non-communist truly nationalist infiltration.

Six more months were to elapse before a second capitulation: a « modus vivendi » was signed with the French in September 1946. It was obtained after much truckling by a trembling Ho Chi Minh, at

the door of French Minister Marius Moutet's. During those six months, tens of thousands of patriots who belonged to legitimate nationalist parties were arrested, deported, tortured and slaughtered by the Hô-Chi-Minh government in order to establish its awful tyranny.

This flash-back upon the conditions of the establishment of Viet-Minh authority upon the people it had deceived was necessary to make a new treason be easily understood ; one that was no less glaring and that has weighed upon Viet-Nam to the present day. We are alluding to the agreements signed in Geneva on 20 th July 1954. It has been pointed out at the beginning of this study that the Government of free Viet-Nam had refused to sign the documents which implied the amputation of the national territory. But the Viet-Minh delegates signed the same texts without a flicker of hesitation.

It must be understood that Viet-Nam can consider only as traitors those among its sons who forgetting their birth, rejecting their family and their motherland, accepted the treatise which cut into two hostile parts the national territory which had been patiently put together by a long series of generations. Was it to reach such a poor conclusion that Viet-Minh propaganda had for nearly a decade preached a holy war against colonialism and multiplied solemn promises ?.. That the country was ruined, its fields abandoned, its villages destroyed by fire ? Was it for such a thing that the finest youth in the country had been decimated, and that in every Vietnamese family women mourned over a son, a husband, a brother or a fiancé ?

The unbiased observer cannot help establishing a comparison between the attitude of the Government of Free Viet-Nam and that of the Viet-Minh leaders. Here, the dignified complaint, the noble protestation of sincere patriots, aroused by the iniquity of a treatise that went against the elementary laws of humanity, There, the pious mirth of fanatical partisans, who without a thought for their stricken country, thought only of celebrating the unexpected triumph of their doctrine based on lies and hatred.

One may object that by signing the Geneva agreements the Viet-Minh leaders did not contemplate their application — Undoubtedly, for like their Chinese and Russian masters, they make a rule of ignoring all promises. It is not because of this that they may be excused or found more honourable. It is obvious than one perjury more or less means nothing to them. Yet this new and striking infamy does not make them appear as patriots ; far from it. Having betrayed their people, having betrayed their country, they betray mankind and trample the most sacred laws of international ethics. This is not in the least surprising. This treason comes after many others, but does not blot them out.



## Violations of the pledged word

One more, we must repeat again and again that the Geneva agreements were endorsed by Viet-Minh delegates, not by the representatives of Free Viet-Nam. It is a point upon which too much stress cannot be laid. Even so, from what has taken place since July 1954, it is the opposite which might appear more plausible. Paradoxically, it is the Republic of Viet-Nam which scrupulously respects all the provisions of a text which does not bear its signature, while one records daily violations of the same provisions by the Viet-Minh, who signed and benefited by these agreements.

A mere enumeration of the known violations would require a much more exhaustive work than this study. We shall only recall a few of the most striking ones, among those which could be proved in the most unquestionable manner. Few among the clauses were constantly respected by the Viet-Minh, besides those which were exclusively to their own advantage. The most frequent violations one should write the most constant and glaring concern the stipulation about : the interdiction of making reprisals ; the freedom of choice of residence ; the interdiction of hostile acts, of destructions, of sabotage ; the respect of the lives and properties of the population ; the interdiction of meddling with the local civil administration. Let us limit ourselves to some definite and typical examples.

### Interdiction of making reprisals :

Chapter 14 in the armistice agreement lays down that « each party binds itself to make no reprisals nor discrimination against the individuals and organizations, because of their activities during the hostilities, and to guarantee democratic liberties ». How did the Viet-Minh respect this unequivocal clause ? After the census of the population, they divided it into four categories of persons. To the first privileged category, belong the « Citizens » or Công-Dân, who enjoy full rights. Needless to say that the Công-Dân are, of necessity, authentic communist, who had stood the test, and whose orthodoxy is beyond suspicion. The second category is that of the « New Citizens » or Tân-Dân, who are, so to speak, candidates to the first category, but who can only reach it when they have proved their loyalism.

The third category is that of the « slaves » or Nô-Dân. Among them, can be found the former workers or civil servants of the national government or of the French. The Nô-Dân are grouped in « instruction » camps where they undergo severe « brainwashing ».

In the last and lowest category, the traitors, or « Phan Quốc », are grouped together with the « reactionnary minded » or « Phan Dân Tộc ». It is for their use that the Việt-Minh invented Tô-Khô or public denunciation. During these sessions which have always filled the wit-

nesses with intense distaste, men, women, and old people, usually selected among landowners, are exposed to the basest reactions of public contumely. For days on end, they are exposed to the rain and the sun, compelled to hear the most fanciful accusations, submitted to all kinds of vexations, humiliations, and tortures. Such is the way such words as « Neither reprisal nor vexation » are understood in the Viêt-Minh regime.

## Freedom of choice

It is one of the fundamental clauses in the armistice compact in Geneva. It is formulated as follows, in article 14-d: « As soon as the present agreement begins to take effect, until the conclusion of the troops' transfer, if civilians residing in a zone controlled by a party, wish to go and live in the zone attributed to the other party, the authorities of the former region must authorize and help this change ». This paragraph was a light in the darkness, a ray of hope in the heart of despair. These who had lived before under communist rule and knew its merciless ferocity saw there a way to escape. The prodigious dash of a whole population resolved to flee away from tyranny and to go towards freedom was for the world more eloquently revealing than any commentary. The Viet-Cong authorities felt the threat. To let all that wished to go away, was to show too clearly how unpopular was the so-called « popular » regime. Swept off their feet and frightened by the extent of the movement, which in spite of Viet-Minh obstruction reached 800,000 souls, the Viet-Minh leaders hastened to take adequate measures to make paragraph 14-d practically ineffectual. All means were used to reach such an end.

The Viet-Minh authorities first imagined an intricate system of administrative formalities fitted to put off the leats determined wills. But it was not enough. In order to dissuade the village-people from abandoning their land they became persuasive, then threatening, and eventually used the most cruel repressive measures. This is not the place to depict the long protracted martyrdom of the refugees who dared to stand against the sternness of the regime and succeeded in escaping at the cost of incredible difficulties. At least, the murders of Ba-Làng, Luu-My, Tho-Ninh and Trung-Nghia have not been forgotten. A report from F. 32, the mobile I.C.C. international team... in charge of the inquest in Ba-Làng on January 1953, mentions the names of several people who were sentenced to severe penalties, for the mere asking for the freedom of choice provided in paragraph 14-d which has just been quoted. During the few days covering that period, one finds in one small village alone, two sentences to 10 years hard labour, two to 20 years' hard-labour — including a woman — and three to life-imprisonment.

In Luu-My, the investigating commission of the International Commission interviewed witnesses whom the Viêt-Minh had beaten into giving up their plans of departure. One of them, M. Nhuê, still wears the visible marks left by the ropes which bound his wrists and rubbed their skin off. Here is a sufficiently tell-tale extract from the investigation report written by the I.C.C. team :

« The team has established with precision that the stipulations of articles 14-d and 15-d of the Geneva agreements were not brought to the knowledge of the inhabitants of Luu-My before December 1954 and that until February 17th 1955 the local authorities had taken no measures to carry out the recommendations of the I.C.C. concerning the freedom of movement ».

To stall the exodus, the Viêt-Công authorities had found a system which was as simple as it was brutal. Who ever expressed the wish to benefit by the stipulations of paragraph 14-d was arrested, jailed and tried under the pretext that he was a « foreign agent and a member of secret illegal organizations ». This glaring fact is more especially signaled in letter n° 4798/CMC from the French Mission of Liaison to the Commandant of the Viêt-Minh Army. The wretched persons were accused, were imprisoned without any trial, sent to concentration camps or sometimes summarily tried and sentenced to heavy hard-labour penalties. In May 1955 a spectacular trial took place in Hanoi for the judging of five young schoolboys who had been accused of spreading propaganda for evacuation.

At the same time, the Viêt-Công government created a special organism which avowed intention was to oppose the execution of paragraph 14-4. This organism, labelled : « Educational organism for the balking of the intrigues of the propagandists for the Southward exodus », enjoyed extensive means of action. It had numerous branches in all provinces. Here are some of the methods used to carry out its mission :

- Interdiction of buying all chattels and real property sold by migrants ;
- Denunciation which was naturally followed by arbitrary arrests of all the inhabitants who were suspected of wanting to claim the application of article 14-D.
- The strict interdiction to the population to help, in any way, the people who left (crossing of ferries road or river transports, hospitality, etc...)
- Breaking up of all meetings intended for a contact of citizens with the mobile teams of the International Control Commission.
- Multiplication of red-tape hindrances and refusal of delivery of safe-conduct travel permits under the most idle pretexts.

obstruction which reigned in the Viet-Minh-controlled zones, they also stressed the fact that the Viet-Minh authorities had tried to prevent the mobile teams of the Commission to check the veracity of facts which had been pointed out during their inquests.

« However, despite all obstructive manoeuvres and all imaginable difficulties, 888,127 departures for the South were recorded. According to the I.C.C., the Government of free Viet-Nam has given leave to, and helped all those who wanted to go to the North. But 2,598 people only did it ».

#### Interdiction of acts of hostility :

Paragraph 15-D of the Geneva agreements is worded as follows : « The two parties admit no destruction or sabotage of public property and no endangering of the lives and properties of the civilians ». In fact, in all the regions which they had to evacuate and to hand over to the legal authorities, the Viet-Minh destroyed most bridges, schools, public buildings and other public properties. After the departure of their regular forces, they left teams behind which were to carry on with sabotage or destructions.

We have already said how the refugees were robbed of all their possessions. Those who remained did not get better treatment. As soon as they entered Hanoi, the Viet-Minh leaders started by scooping up all the current piastres and the rate was arbitrarily fixed at 30 Ho-Chi-Minh piastres for one piastre from the Bank of Issue of the « Etats Associés ». At the same time, crushing taxes fell upon mercantile stocks, which sometimes were superior to 100 % of their value. Tradesmen were ruined or overburdened with unconscionable taxes and had to give up one after the other... to let the State possess itself of all commerce. The country people were not spared. One gives instances of landowners who were compelled to pay a tax of 85 measures of paddy, while their yearly crop does not exceed 65 measures.

All the impediments were put by Viet-Minh to religious freedom, and to the freedom of circulation and expression. One knows how matters stand ; the Viet-Minh regime does not differ from the so-called « people's » governments of Russia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria or China.

Devoted to the imperatives of atheistic communism, Viet-Minh strives hard to uproot all religious feelings. The Catholics, in particular, are aimed at : the teaching of catechism is forbidden, priests are not allowed to conduct divine service and the congregations are prevented from attending church. But buddhism does not get a fairer deal ; under colour of making room for cultural halls, pagodas are razed. Elsewhere statues of Buddha have been cast into the river.

Bonzes and bonzesses, regardless of their sacred character, are tied down to the hardest chores and are compelled to marry by Viet-Minh, a constraint which has deeply shocked the faithful.

Freedom of circulation is practically unexisting. The intricacy of formalities for the authorization to go from a village to another, deters any desire to travel. Freedom of political belief and expression is likewise flouted. In every village courses of political formation are organized, and woe betide those who would dare to emit a criticism or an idea that would not be in conformity with communist orthodoxy. Such daring is immediately qualified as « reactionary » and it is easy to imagine the implications of such a label.

Respect for the local administration :

The same paragraph 15-D stipulated that the two parties « admit no interference in local civil administrations. » As it is, the National Government has collected an impressive amount of irrefutable proofs, establishing that numberless political agents and guerillas were left behind in the South with the mission to sabotage by all means fair or foul, the enterprise of recovery of the National Government. Documents which were seized upon in numerous places define the missions of these leaders who must stop short of nothing, including murder, rape and torture, in order to maintain the hold of the Viet-Cong on the population and to defeat the activities of the civil servants of the legal Government of free Viet-Nam. Under the name of « Movement for the Defence of Peace », the Viet-Minh have built up an organization which aims at nothing less than the overthrow of the National Government by violent means. Only between October 1954 and May 1955, that is prior to the launching of the campaign against subversive communist activities, 57 caches of arms, among which some were very important, were discovered. Apart from the propaganda agents and the political leaders, numerous officers belonging to the regular Viet-Minh forces remained in the Free Zone after its evacuation by the Viet-Minh. In September 1954 the investigation department of Tourane proceeded to the examination of a man named Bui-Luu who confessed to being the commander of n° 325 Viet-Cong battalion and to having stayed there as the head of the espionage network in the Bui-Tri-Thieu district.

Release of the prisoners :

Before we put an end to the enumeration of Viet-Minh violations of the clauses of the Geneva agreement, it is necessary to mention dispositions concerning the liberation of war prisoners and of civil detenus. According to chapter 21 of the agreements :

1) All war prisoners and civil remands of Vietnamese, french or other nationalities captured since the beginning of the hostilities in Viet-Nam will be released within 30 days of the date of the effective cease-fire on all theatres of operation ;

2) The release is performed through the handing over of all prisoners of war and civil detainees by one of the parties to the competent authorities of the other party, which will help them by all the means at their disposal to return to their native country, their usual residence, or the zone of their choice.

Deliberately violating the text, the Viet-Minh are detaining to this day numerous Vietnamese soldiers and civilians whom they consider as political enemies.

One year after the cease-fire, the National Government has received no reply to their enquiries concerning 7,495 prisoners, or when in some cases they had received a reply, they were so evasive that they only gave a new proof of the ill-will and ill-faith of the Viet-Minh leaders. The latter alleged, without making the slightest pretence of precision or justification, that some of the others had come round to the Viet-Cong doctrine.

On June 14th 1955, 100 Vietnamese officers who according to the Viet-Minh have already been released, were set free after many months spent in internment camps where they had submitted to an intensive system of doctrinal instruction. Six of them who were contacted by the I.C.C. in Hanoi, exposed the inhuman conditions of their imprisonment. They said that 62 of their fellowsoldiers were still in forced detention, while 32 others had been taken away by the Viet-Minh to an unknown destination because they had expressed the desire to go back to the South. Before their release in June 1955, these officers had to sign post-dated declarations stating that they had been released in June 1954. These cases, among a number of others, have been formally and officially acknowledged by the I.C.C. This exempt us from insisting upon their veracity.

### **The true face of Viet-Minh**

We have already explained that the words Viet-Cong, Viet-Minh and communist, are synonyms. We use them here indifferently and we shall not dwell upon a demonstration that it not even necessary any longer. Indeed, after endeavouring to delude the people by successive and numerous changes of names, the Viet-Minh chameleon, is not even troubling to disavow its masters and its gospel nowadays. In each ceremony the pictures of the Kremlin and Peking masters stand near that of Ho-Chi-Minh ; the Russian, Chinese and Viet-Minh flags are flown together. The three anthems are played one after another. As for the doctrine taught in political formation and education courses, it is strictly conformant with the marxist orthodoxy.

But it is not so much through the principles of this doctrine, that we intend to show the true face of Viet-Minh, as through its actions and the results it has obtained. It is of little importance, on the whole

that the provisional masters of North Viet-Nam openly claim the communist theories as their own, or that on the contrary, they only read their marxist bible on the sly. What is important in our eyes, is that they have unconditionally surrendered their country to the cues from Peking and Moscow ; and that they put into practice, ways and methods of ruling which are the exact replica of those which had been already lengthily tried by the Russian and Chinese initiators.

With the help of a few facts, we are soon going to see how the Viet-Minh understand the different data of the programme they claim to bring into play : the national independence and union, the democratic liberties, a happy condition for the people, justice and morals.

#### The independence :

One has already recalled how the Viet-Minh leaders who had sworn to die for their independence in September 1945 had hastened to open the gates of North Viet-Nam to the French expeditionary corps in March 1946. This in itself showed how cheap they held a solemn oath and how little they cared for national independence. But in December of the same year they officially accepted to rule under the flag of the French. Why ? While the Philippines, India, Indonesia and Burma easily obtained their independence, why did France stubbornly hold to its domination ? The answer is an easy one. In the four above mentioned countries, the old colonizing powers had given in to the irresistible pressure of a nation-wide movement. It would have been the same with Viet-Nam if the Viet-Minh leaders had resolutely led a patriotic upsurge instead of deceiving the people and breaking their oath. There is little doubt that the people would have enthusiastically followed their leadership. On its own, the French expeditionary corps would have been unable to resist the upsurge of a nation of 23 million inhabitants. Besides, the double pressure of public opinion and of free nations would have soon compelled the French government to give up the fight. But it carried on with it, with the powerful help of governments which could hardly be labelled as imperialistic. Indeed, it was only too obviously that the adversary for the French was not the Vietnamese people, but a strongly biased minority which dreamt of nothing but the extension of Russian domination. Thus, while other countries reached independence, Viet-Nam remained a prey to slavery and to war.

The Geneva agreement parcelled out Vietnamese territory but did not give it independence. The South quickly and unreservedly obtained it. The North under Viet-Minh government, presented their Chinese and Russian masters with their sovereignty. When the French flag was hauled down in Hanoi, it was replaced by the red hammer and sickle flag of U.S.S.R. They had changed their masters, but they were not free.

A small but highly significant fact will help to understand how independence is conceived in Hanoi these days. The words of great Vietnamese poets have vanished from the public libraries, and the national heroes are unknown. History books ignore the names of Doan-Thi-Diem or Nguyen-Du. But they have to quote long extracts from Mao-Tse-Toung's books. Viet-Minh has disavowed the ancient national culture and know nothing outside the thought of the modern apostles of the communist credo.

#### National union :

There is no word that means less to the Viet-Minh. They constantly ridicule it, but still use it as one of their favourite slogans and as a constant theme for their propaganda, « the national union. »

We have already shown how in 1946, Ho-Chi-Minh methodically and relentlessly exterminated all the patriots who claimed to belong to nationalist parties. Union through complete crushing of opposition is the formula which has been applied by Viet-Minh for the last ten years. Such a union is that of the executioner with the victim, of the prisoner with his jailer. Like Stalin and Mao-Tse-Toung, Ho-Chi-Minh gets rid of his adversary the easiest, quickest way. We only have to evoke the name of Nguyen-Binh, who was abandoned to a wretched plight after he had been the soul of resistance in the South ; of Huynh-Thuc-Khang who was murdered by the communists and then was given state funerals by them. The tale of the communist domination in North-Viet-Nam is written with the blood of thousands of patriots. It is essentially a long martyrdom in which the names of political leaders, the intelligentsia, landowners, tradesmen and workers have been thrown together. Such is the only union that Viet-Minh ever succeeded to achieve, union in death and in martyrdom.

#### Democratic liberties :

The word « Freedom » is written at the head of the constitution which was written by the communist chiefs of Viet-Minh ; it shines in gold letters on the front of public buildings ; it is the theme of all speeches. But it is a far cry from reality.

In the communist Eden in North Viet-Nam one is not free to go from one village to another ; an authorization must be procured which involves a lengthy interrogation, for all moves appear suspicious. One is not free to worship, to have political ideas which differ even slightly from the official doctrine which is, once and for all, thought by everyone. One is not even free to dress as one likes, and to wear a pressed shirt is an unforgivable offense to the working classes, which is naturally not entitled to the wearing of decent clothes. The most secret sentiments, the most intimate feeling cannot escape the control of the party which creeps in everywhere, and even aims



at inspecting human minds. It is impossible to like the men and women who are proclaimed worthy of being loved by the Viêt Minh government in its unflinching wisdom.

But it will be objected — how could the government know what is buried deepest in men's hearts, how could it read the thoughts of every one? It does it through other people. Under Viet-Minh law, the son must spy upon his father, the mother must denounce her daughter, the husband must hand his wife over to the law. A closely woven network of suspicion, of informers of envy and vengeance is wrought upon the whole country. Upon this infamous canvas, the Viet-Minh government, like a hideous lurking spider, waits for its prey and at the same time watches itself, for among themselves Viet-Minh leaders set the example of a universal hatred.

#### The happiness of the people :

One knows that happiness is among the objectives proposed by the Viet-Minh motto to its adepts. Several travellers have painted a vivid picture of what is the happiness of the people in that Viet-Minh paradise. In the long history of Viet-Nam, one would vainly look for a time in which the people was more miserable than it is now in the northern provinces.

When we talk about the people, we only mean those who belong to the working classes, since it is the only one with which the Viet-Minh regime is concerned. At least, that is what they say and they have not thought of hushing the misery to which the rich and middle classes were reduced by them. Landlords, industrialists, tradesmen, writers, artists, teachers, have been included in the same reprobation and submitted to the same hardships. Middle class people, accused of all crimes, were openly ruined, decimated, utterly destroyed.

What of the peasants? the workers? At least, they may be happy? Let it suffice that we refer you to what has been said regarding the most commonly accepted human liberties. Workers, like everyone else, have to account for all they do, all they think, all they feel, before a finicky, ill-disposed authority. They are allowed to cry over it. Let them be satisfied with it. As for the rest, they are not left a thing. Their work has to be dedicated to the state: unpaid labour, taxes, double crops all the year round, for the finance of government development works. Yet, they are left a patch of land to till. But when time comes for them to enjoy the products of their work, they have give them to the state.

The enormous taxes which weigh down agriculture and commerce are thought insufficient. Periodically, there is a « gold week », a « copper week », or a « rice collection week », during which the poor peasants lose what little had been left to them. But what importance? One is happy since one is compelled to be so and to proclaim it. But

above all one must not complain and think that one is not perfectly happy. It is the most serious offence to the regime and it is punished accordingly.

The communist hypocrisy does not appear anywhere more odious than in the way justice is rendered or at least what the Viet-Minh call so. This chapter alone would require a long study. Let us merely indicate one of the most obvious particularities. The system called «denunciation followed by tortures». This barbarous process aims at the same time at covering the worst atrocities under a pretence of popular justice — atrocities which are mostly dictated by political rivalries — and at exciting the hatred of workers against the upper classes.

Long before the day of this kind of «popular trial,» Viet-Minh agents mix with the crowd and kindle their their anger. The list of people to be denounced is established by a few peasants who belong to the party and by the communist leaders who act as their «advisors». There are three forms of denunciation of which the «denunciation followed by tortures» is the most barbarous. After having been the judges, the crowd becomes the executioner of the accused who are immediately exposed to its ire and cursed, beaten and tortured to death — The «denunciation before popular tribunals» is little different from the first one. The «denunciation in front of the regular tribunals» which invests the trials with vain pretence of legality and fairness. In fact, the magistrates would never refuse to obey the instructions of the party and it is always the latter which judges in the end, or rather who condemns.

#### Ethics :

From the proceeding facts one can already infer the essentials of the communist ethics which are those of the Viet-Minh regime. It will be enough to sum it up in these three negations: no family, no country, no religion.

According to communist law, the Viet-Minh have been long striving to destroy family, which for Viet-Nam is the traditional basic cell of society. The regime has replaced the holy ties of marriage by the system of the free union, which puts human beings on a plane with animals. The good communist must have no love save for his Party; parents, wife, children, nothing must count any longer for him. How could it other wise pitch the members of the same family against one another, who are compelled under pain of the most cruel tortures, to spy upon and denounce one another?

The «father land also vanishes from the Viet-Minh credo which only addresses its litanies to the great Chinese and Russian «comrades».

As for religion, whatever creed it is the communist doctrine holds it an obnoxious form of human imagination which corrupts the world

and lessens our energy which must all be devoted to the service of the State, i.e. of the party. It has been shown earlier how the Viet-Minh regime dealt with the Buddhist priests and followers as with the Christian ones.

### **The time of justice will come**

We must come to a conclusion. There is no better way of doing it than by opposing the negative attitude of Viet-Minh to that of the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam.

The latter, we must stress it yet once more, did not sign the Geneva agreements, which are daily violated by the Viet-Minh who approved of them. And yet the Government of Viet-Nam stuck to all the clauses without exception.

Indeed, the legal government is not dedicated to a Party but to Viet-Nam ; for a peaceful but strong, independent, unified, prosperous Viet-Nam. Unwillingly this government had to resort to violence to establish a stability without which it is impossible to undertake anything. Nevertheless, it ardently desires to live in peace provided that it must not pay the price of shame for it... it must be peace based upon others respect for the integrity of the nation.

Its standpoint regarding the Geneva agreements was often defined by the most authoritative voices. As early as July 1954 in Geneva, the Chief of the Vietnamese delegation declared :

« The delegation of the State of Viet-Nam solemnly protests against the fact that the French High Command has taken upon itself, without any previous agreement of the delegation of the State of Viet-Nam, to fix the date of the forthcoming elections while this disposition obviously has a political character. Therefore, the Government of the State of Viet-Nam demands that a note be made of its solemn protest against the way the armistice was concluded, and that it reserves an entire freedom of action to safeguard the sacred right of the vietnamese people to territorial unity, national independence and of freedom ».

It will be agreed that this simple, proud and dignified language is in sharp contrast with the hypocritical boasting of Viet-Minh.

Many times eminent jurists have found vices of form and order in the texts of Geneva. We shall not dwell upon them. But there is a point in these agreements which requires particular attention. We mean the general elections which some people wanted to take place in July 1956. On this subject, we shall one more quote the opinion of Mr. Thomas Norman in the « Manchester Guardian » :

« Recent declarations from Peking, Moscow, Hanoi, » he wrote in April 1956, « requested the signatory powers of the armistice, particularly France and Great Britain, to carry out the stipulations of

armistice. However, the Geneva agreements contained no stipulation concerning a political settlement or for general elections in Viet-Nam.

« The latter stipulations were only expressed under the form of a pious wish in the closing declaration of the conference, which, at that time, was rejected by the Vietnamese government.

« Nevertheless it was declared by some that the fact of signing the convention of armistice implied the legal obligation to carry out the stipulations of the final declarations. But even if that was true, no signatory power of an international agreement is compelled either legally or morally to carry it out when the other party has violated itself those stipulations ».

Thus it appears that from a strictly legal viewpoint, nothing can compel the Vietnamese government to hold general elections. Does this mean that we reject its principle? Not at all. The achievement of national unity remains our essential aim and to reach it, we will accept elections if they appear to be a just and decently arrived-at solution. But such elections must be entirely free and sincere. The sovereign will of the people must be decisive and not the will of an ambitious gang which will stop short of no dishonest action to satisfy their ambitions. Unity, President Ngo-Dinh-Diem said, can only be achieved in freedom, but not in bondage.

The position of Free Viet-Nam remains the same today as it was on the first day towards general elections. Here it is and it will be our conclusion. As President Ngo-Dinh-Diem defined it himself, in a broadcast speech on 16th July 1955 :

« Our policy is one of peace. But no maneuvers, whatever their origins, will make us turn from our goal : the unity of our country. But a unity based on freedom and not on bondage. Fighting for the national cause, we are labouring more than ever towards territorial reunification.

« We do not cast aside the principle of elections as a democratic and pacific way of achieving this unity. However if these elections form one the bases of true democracy, they will only be justified if they are absolutely free.

« But before the oppressive regime maintained by Viet-Minh, we remain sceptical as to the possibility of ensuring freedom of vote in the North.

« We shall neglect no opportunity of unifying our land in freedom. But it is out of the question that we examine any proposition from the Viet-Minh if it is not proved that it sets the superior interests of the national community above that of communism, and if it does not give up the use of terrorism and the use of totalitarian methods.

« It is for us, Nationalists, to assume the mission of rebuilding the unity of our country under the most democratic and effective conditions in order to guarantee our independence ».