

WOMEN SUPPORTING THE DELEGATION OF VIETNAMESE WOMEN TO AUSTRALIA

MARCH 1975

IN SOLIDARITY FOR PEACE

BACKGROUND

Over recent years the Women's Federation of Vietnam has received many invitations to visit Australia from a variety of womens and peace organisations. They now wish to send a delegation to Australia in March 1975, and have asked AICD-CICD to arrange the visit with the participation of all interested women. They also hope that following their visit a group of Australian women would visit Vietnam.

In response to their proposal for a joint delegation of the Vietnam Womens Union and the Union of Liberation Women of South Vietnam, women from the AICD and AIS in Sydney, and CICD in Melbourne, have set up the group called Women in Solidarity for Peace.

WOMEN IN SOLIDARITY FOR PEACE

This is a project group open to all women who wish to participate. The Vietnamese women will be here for a period of three weeks in 1975, United Nations International Women's Year, and will celebrate March 8, International Women's Day, with us.

The project will provide an opportunity for the womens and peace movements to pay tribute to the part played by the women of Vietnam in the struggle to liberate their country. It should assist in activity for the full implementation of the Paris Agreements, in particular for Australian recognition of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam and for Australian assistance to secure the release of the many thousands of political prisoners in Thieu's jails and for a further development of aid to help reconstruct Vietnam. It will provide an opportunity to discuss the role of women and the position of feminism within the Vietnamese revolution. Through face to face contact we can all learn something of each others lives and develop solidarity.

Any woman wishing to support the visit should sign the attached form and return it with a donation of \$5 (if possible) to:

WOMEN IN SOLIDARITY FOR PEACE
 c/o AICD, 232 Castlereagh St. Sydney NSW 2000
 or c/o CICD, 208 Little Lonsdale St. Melbourne, Vic 3000

I wish to join the group "Women in Solidarity for Peace" to assist the visit of women from Vietnam to Australia in March 1975.

I enclose (\$5... \$50... \$500... \$50000... ?).....

I am/am not able to join the group "Women in Solidarity for Peace"
 I am/am not able to take an active part in the preparations

Finance so raised will be used to pay the fares and expenses of the delegation, which will consist of three or four women. A few thousand dollars will be needed for air fares alone.

In October we will hold meetings in each centre to discuss and plan the visit and, later in 1974, a national meeting, to finalise an itinerary. Later, support will be sought from women's organisations and also from individual men, peace organisations and trade unions. But the actual project will be the responsibility of individual women.

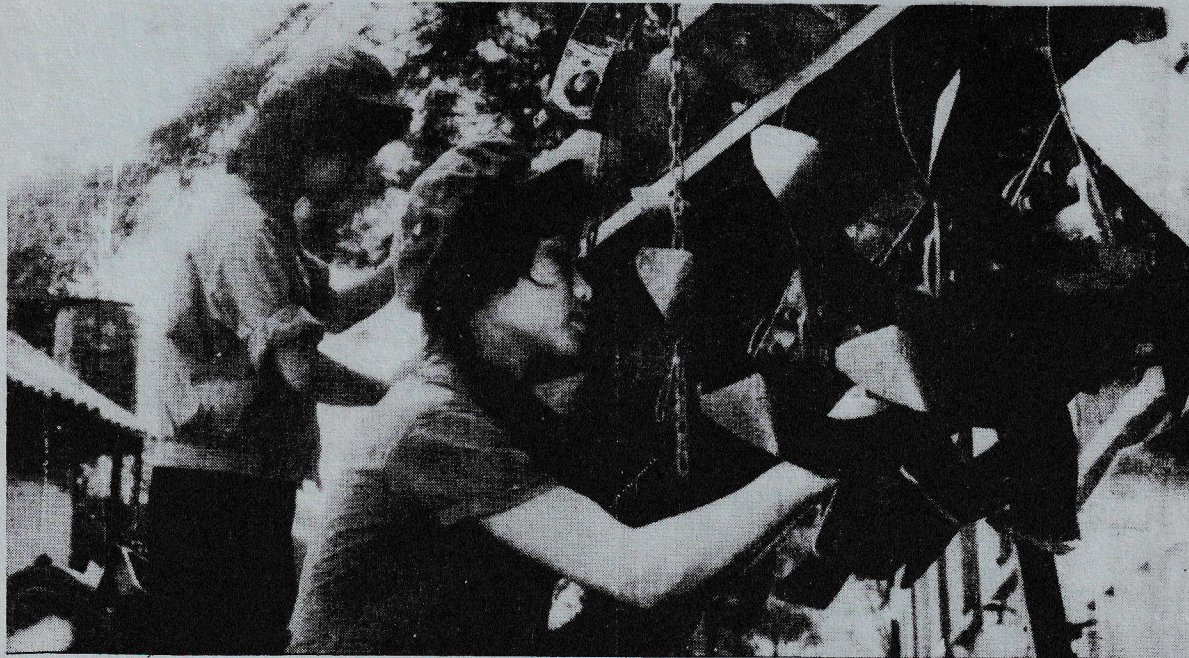
Experience of other delegations from Vietnam suggest that it may be more fruitful for us to limit the itinerary to a few cities. This would not exclude the participation of women and supporters from other areas. The project should include various activities, e.g. it has been suggested that a conference be held in Melbourne to discuss the different positions of women in over-developed/under-developed countries, and our different approaches to our liberation. Such a conference would provide a greater opportunity for women from areas not included in the itinerary to participate and meet the Vietnamese women.

Authorised by Delia, Glenda, Joan, Kim, Margaret, Mavis
232 Castlereagh St. Sydney, NSW 2000



THE UNITED NATIONS SYMBOL FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMENS YEAR, 1975.

WOMEN FROM VIETNAM



MARCH '75

The women will visit Australia in March 1975, International Women's Year. They will come from the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and from the liberated areas of South Vietnam, representing the Vietnamese Women's Union (North Vietnam) and the Union of Liberation Women of South Vietnam.

The visit will promote solidarity with Vietnam, discussion around the position of women and the role of feminism, and provide a comparison of our different struggles. The women will be here for a number of weeks and will celebrate International Women's Day (March 8th) with us.

On October 23rd a meeting of all interested women will be held at the Boilermaker's Hall, 232 Castlereagh St., City, at 7.30pm, to discuss and plan the visit.

CONTACT:

WOMEN in SOLIDARITY for PEACE

GPO BOX 161, Sydney 2001. PHONE Margaret Hooks or Kim Loughlin, 261701.

Authorised by Kim and Margaret, 232 Castlereagh Street, Sydney .2000.

OCTOBER MEETING

for women



Areas for discussion:

- .itinerary
- .programme
- .publicity
- .funding

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 23, 7.30pm.

AICD, 232 CASTLEREAGH ST, SYDNEY.

Our ideas generated at this meeting will be discussed at a national meeting in November. So all ideas for organising and planning activities should be discussed, e.g., a conference, workshops, film nights, picnics...?

INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION
AND SUPPORT ARE NEEDED NOW.



WOMEN OF VIETNAM



IN AUSTRALIA

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

1975

1975 is International Women's Year. A major function of this year should be to assist Australians to be more aware of the position of women in various societies, increase the solidarity of women in their various struggles and contribute to a wider understanding of the problems faced by women in their different situations. The visit of women from both North and South Vietnam in March 1975 will ensure that this is at least partly realised.

For a long time, many Australian women have expressed the desire for Vietnamese women to visit our country. A variety of women's and peace organisations have issued invitations at various times, among them several organisations of the Women's Liberation Movement, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Save our Sons, Union of Australian Women, the Communist Women's Collective, AICD and CICD.

Some months ago, the women's movements of North and South Vietnam indicated that they could visit Australia in March 1975 at the invitation of all interested women, rather than under the sponsorship of any one women's or peace organisation. A project has therefore been established, known as WOMEN IN SOLIDARITY FOR PEACE. This project group, open to all interested women, will arrange the visit of women from both the Women's Union of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and the Union of Women for the Liberation of South Vietnam.

Out of our experience, WOMEN IN SOLIDARITY FOR PEACE may become a permanent expression of the women's and peace movements. If it does, it would be a permanent gain beyond International Women's Year.

There have been several delegations from Vietnam to Australia since the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement: a trade union delegation from the DRVN, a peace delegation from both the DRVN and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, a delegation from the Vietnam Workers' Party, and a student delegation from the PRG. All these delegations have been composed of men.

In 1975, women from Vietnam will celebrate International Women's Day - March 8 - in Australia. They will stay in Australia for four weeks.

WOMEN IN SOLIDARITY FOR PEACE will seek support from trade unions, political parties, peace organisations, as well as direct support from women and their organisations, in the same sense that backing from both men and women has been given to all previous delegations. We are sure it will be forthcoming and that the visit of women from Vietnam will be an expression of our growing confidence as well as an expression of our solidarity with women who are an example of courage and determination, and victory over the most powerful military force in history.

A dream, formerly unrealisable, was now coming true. With the revolution, we women lived, in fact, a new life. We had an organisation of our own.

Le Thi Xuyen, a vice president of
the Vietnam Women's Union.

If the women of Vietnam are free to work, fight for their country, and grow, it is because they have power. This power is written into law. But centuries of sexism will not give way because a law was signed. Equality must be internalised by women as well as men, laws must be enforced. This is the work of the Vietnam Women's Union.

The Vietnam Women's Union descended from the Women's Union for National Salvation founded in 1930, now has 5 million members. In 1961 a separate organisation was formed in the South called the Union of Women for the Liberation of South Vietnam. This union has several million members and functions in the zones controlled by the PRG and clandestinely in the cities controlled by Saigon.

It is the Women's Union which is responsible for defending women's rights, for raising the political, technical and cultural level of women and for acting as arbitrator in disputes between women and men.

The Fourth National Congress of Vietnamese Women, attended by 600 delegates representing 5 million women, met for the first time in 12 years in Hanoi, March 4-7, 1974. The assessment of the growth and achievements of the women's movement since the last Congress, and the projection of a program for the future, were its major tasks.

Achievements of women in the 12 years can be seen in the increased numbers participating in public life, production, and various trades and social services. The number of women participating as members of the National Assembly, the DRVN's highest legislative body, increased from 53 (11.6 per cent) in 1961 to 125 (29.7 per cent) in 1972. Women participating in state management rose from 20 per cent to 38.5 per cent in the same period.

Bearing in mind that almost all Vietnamese women, until only recently, were illiterate and had no legal status whatsoever, their leap forward to roles as their country's producers, learning and using technology, participating in every level of government is truly phenomenal. Important, too, is the crucial role women played in their country's defence. Fortyone per cent of all militia and self-defence forces were composed of women. They shot down planes, repaired machinery kept roads open and protected their villages.

The Vietnamese people often speak of the women as having borne the heaviest burdens of the war, and of being the strongest symbols of the resistance to foreign domination.

In the areas of South Vietnam governed by the Provisional Revolutionary Government, and in North Vietnam, women have been building a vast movement for their liberation. They know, however, they will never be able to gain total liberation until their country has achieved peace and independence.

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