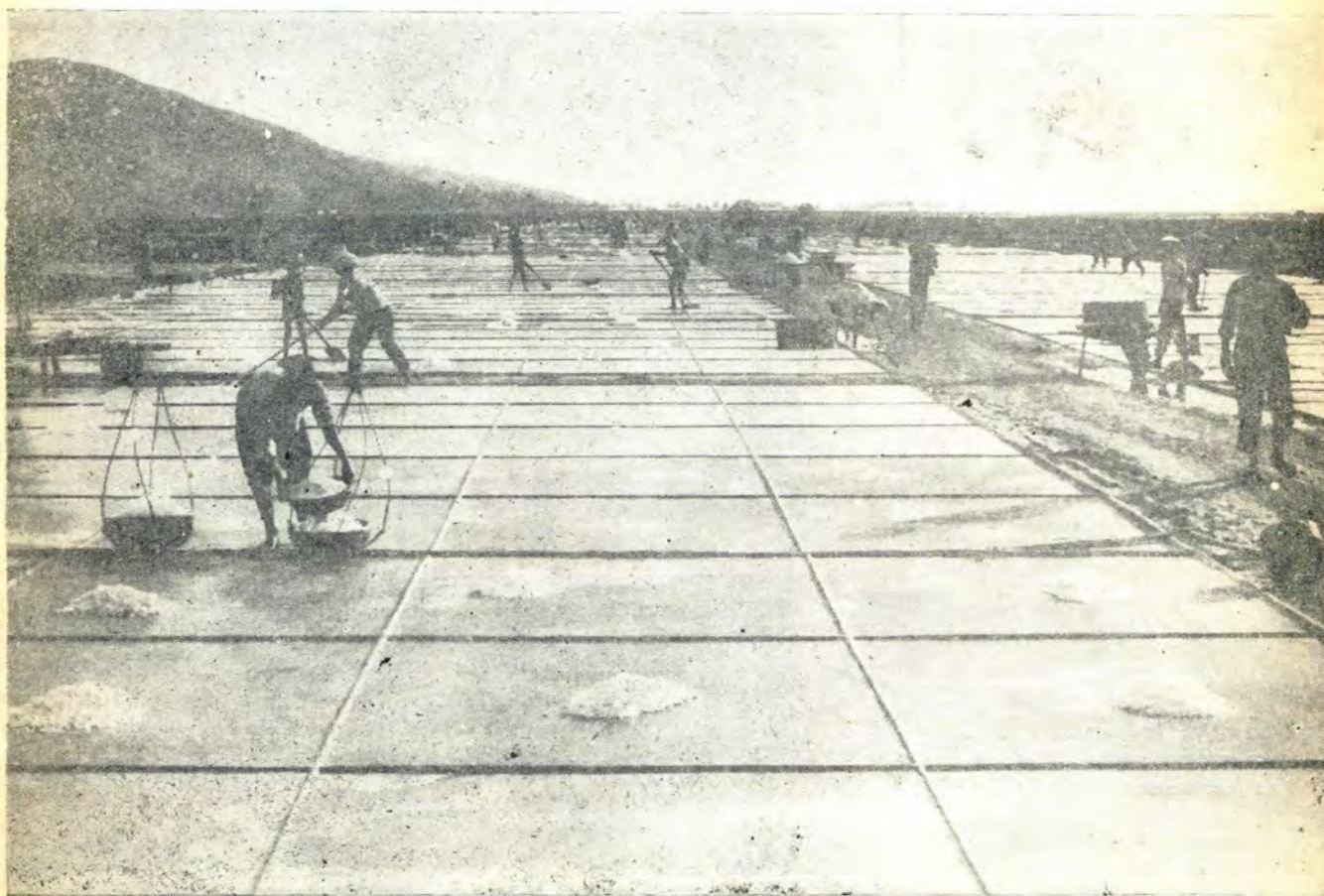


Vietnam courier



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THE WINTER—SPRING RICE CROP (1982—1983): RECORD YIELDS

Throughout the country our farmers harvested a winter-spring rice crop averaging 29.1 quintals of paddy per hectare, 1.2 quintals more per hectare compared with last year.

Delivering paddy to the State
in Vung Liem district, Cuu Long
province.



Drying newly harvested paddy
in Huong Dien district, Binh
Tri Thien province.

Harvesting high-yield rice in the
new economic zone of Easup, Dac
Lac province.



Photos : VNA

THE FOURTH PLENUM OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE PARTY

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Front Cover: Salt-making in Hau Loc district, Thanh Hoa province.

Photo: BUI TUONG

**Vietnam
COURIER**

8-1983

The Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam met from 18 to 24 June to discuss urgent problems in the ideological and organizational fields with a view to fulfilling immediate economic and social objectives.

The Plenum notes the positive changes and progress recorded since the Fifth Party Congress and reaffirms that the Party line, as charted by the Fourth and Fifth Party Congresses and the Third Plenum of the Central Committee, is wholly correct.

It conducts an in-depth analysis of the difficulties and weaknesses in the economic and social fields on the ideological and organizational planes, and adopt measures to cope with them and bring about changes for the better.

The Plenum holds that the struggle between the socialist and the capitalist paths is a fierce, complex and uncompromising one. This struggle is all the more arduous since the Chinese expansionists, acting in collusion with the American imperialists and other reactionary forces, are opposing and sabotaging us in a demented way. Together with a multifarm war of sabotage, they are making preparations for laying their hands on the three countries of Indochina. Our Party, our people, and our army are determined to defeat this multifarm war of sabotage and are stepping up measures to safeguard our political security and social order.

In order to secure victory for socialism, the State of the dictatorship of the proletariat must promote the working people's right to collective mastery, simultaneously carry out the triple revolution, combine socialist transformation with socialist construction, make the most of our potentials in manpower, land and material and technical bases, fulfil our socio-economic programme, and create conditions for a vigorous advance in our work of building socialism.

For the immediate future, the key task is to restore order on the front of goods distribution and circulation, and stabilize the living conditions of workers, government employees and members of the armed forces. The State must be the master in production, circulation and distribution, hold full control over goods and money, and enforce the policy of distribution according to "the work done by each."

The Plenum stresses that the various branches and regions must correctly and seriously implement the principle of democratic centralism in economic and social management, and heighten their sense of responsibility and discipline. Cadres, Party members, and government employees, including cadres of high and middle ranks at the centre and in the provinces and cities, must maintain their revolutionary virtues, set good examples in their work and daily life, and struggle against all manifestations of rightism, lack of vigilance, bureaucratism, and an insufficient sense of organization and discipline.

In order to ensure the fulfilment of the immediate economic and social tasks, the Plenum holds that political education must be strengthened within the Party, the State organs, the mass organizations and the people at large; that serious criticism and self-criticism must be conducted at all levels and in all branches; that the working people's right of collective mastery must be promoted; and that a strong impulse must be given to the revolutionary mass movement for the complete implementation of the measures recommended by the Plenum with a view to improving our work and fulfilling all our tasks.

In an editorial accompanying the information on the Fourth Plenum of the Party Central Committee, the Nhan Dan newspaper of 27 June explains that "correct ideological views and good organizational measures are necessary" if we are to seriously implement the Party's line and policies, the policies and laws of the State, and bring about a positive change in the socio-economic situation.

Commenting on the assessment made by the Plenum of the present situation, Nhan Dan writes:

"Our country's industrial and agricultural production continues to develop. In 1982 in particular, we were able to satisfy in the main our food requirements throughout the country. The winter 1982—spring 1983 rice cultivation campaign has been a success. Our people, inspired by the spirit of self-reliance, are fully capable, through our selfless efforts, of solving our food problem and bringing about all-round agricultural development so as to stabilize and improve the people's life and assist the progress of industry. In the economic, cultural and social fields, our country has recorded positive changes and new progress in a steady advance. We firmly defend our motherland and maintain political security in face of the extremely wicked hostile plots

and actions of the Chinese expansionists acting in collusion with the US imperialists and other reactionary forces. We have fulfilled and are fulfilling our internationalist obligations to brotherly Laos and Kampuchea. The strength and posture of our country and of all three countries of Indochina show greater solidity than ever."

Looking into the reasons for the present difficulties and weaknesses in our economic and social situation, Nhan Dan writes:

"The slackening over a certain period of time of the socialist transformation of private capitalist industry and trade, small industry, handicrafts and small trade; the delays in the readjustment of land holdings and agricultural collectivization in Nam Bo; the relaxation shown in the consolidation and perfection of the new production relations in the farming cooperatives of the North and in the State sector of the economy—all this has given rise to many difficulties in the socio-economic situation.

"An acute and burning problem is that of the distribution and circulation of goods. On this front, erroneous ideas and viewpoints and organizational mistakes have appeared in all their seriousness, creating many difficulties in production and daily life and causing the degeneration of not a few cadres, Party members and government employees. It is also on this front that the enemies of our people are concentrating their frenzied attempts at sabotage and that the bourgeoisie, both new and old, is seeking to counter socialism by every means.

This situation is due not to the strength of our enemies or any lingering power of the bourgeoisie, but mainly to the fact that we have failed to grasp and seriously execute the resolutions of the Party; that we have been guilty of rightism and have slackened in the enforcement of the dictatorship of the proletariat in many respects; that we have shown insufficient vigilance in the face of enemy sabotage; that we have slackened in the struggle between the two paths (the socialist and the capitalist), in the observance of Party discipline and the rules of economic management, and in the enforcement of State laws; that we have failed to respect and apply correctly the principle of democratic centralism; that we have drifted with the trends of the market, pursued profit pure and simple, and sought local and personal interests (as opposed to the general interest). Party discipline, socialist legality, State laws, the principle of democratic centralism in Party life and in the management of the State, that of society in particular—all this has been neglected. Resolute and timely punishment has not been meted out to cadres and employees who have retrogressed and degenerated, stolen State property, accepted bribes and lent a helping hand to speculators and smugglers."

SUPPORT FOR THE JOINT STATEMENT OF THE SUMMIT MEETING OF THE WARSAW TREATY MEMBER STATES

Statement of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the Council of State and the Council of Ministers of Vietnam (July 2, 1983)

Faced with the growth of the forces of revolution and peace, the US imperialists and the other warlike forces are stepping up the arms race, conducting propaganda campaigns against the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, interfering in and threatening the independence and security of nations, causing crises of an explosive character in various regions, and critically straining the world situation. Particularly serious is the fact that the Reagan Administration, under the false pretext of a threat by the Soviet Union, is intensively forcing and prodding its allies into implementing the plan for the deployment of new US medium-range missiles in Europe, while deadlocking all negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on the limitation and reduction of strategic weapons. In fact, the United States is trying by every means to reverse the present balance of strategic forces, gain military superiority over the Soviet Union, and undermine the military détente which has been formed in Europe since the mid 70's in an attempt to change the political situation in Europe to the advantage of the United States. Obviously, this is a dangerous trend which is visibly increasing the danger of nuclear confrontation in Europe and could bring about a nuclear

catastrophe that might exterminate the whole of mankind and destroy our planet.

Europe has been the hotbed of two world wars. To struggle against the arms race, for disarmament, against nuclear war, and to prevent the deployment of US medium-range missiles in West European countries is an urgent task of primary importance closely associated with the struggle of all nations for peace, national independence and social progress.

That is why the world today is witnessing a powerful movement for peace which is developing on an unprecedentedly large scale in all continents, particularly in Europe and right in the United States. This movement is drawing hundreds of millions of people of all nationalities, political affiliations, religious convictions and skin colours in a resolute struggle against the danger of a nuclear war and for disarmament, particularly against the deployment of US medium-range missiles in West European countries.

The growing strength of the Soviet Union and the socialist system is a strong support for the peace movement and a guarantee for world peace.

The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries are persistently pursuing their principled policy of peace while unceasingly heighten-

ing vigilance, determined to foil all schemes to alter the present balance of forces, and at the same time repeatedly putting forward peace initiatives of great importance aimed at reducing tension, preventing the danger of nuclear confrontation, solving international disputes through negotiations and achieving peaceful co-existence. Reaffirming their programme of action set forth in the Prague Political Statement on January 5, 1983, the Statement of the State and Party leaders of the member countries of the Warsaw Treaty on June 28 once again reflects the resolute stand, the high sense of responsibility and the goodwill of the Soviet Union and of the other socialist countries. These statements meet the profound aspirations and vital interests of all nations. They have gone and are going deep into the hearts of thousands of millions of people and strongly encourage the struggle of the world's people for peace and life, against nuclear war.

We firmly believe that today all nations and progressive mankind have enough strength and will to prevent the danger of a nuclear war. The important thing is that the whole of mankind must act with determination to defend civilization and their own existence.

Having undergone decades of war, and still having to cope with

a multi-faceted war of sabotage conducted by the Beijing expansionists and hegemonists in collusion with the US imperialists, the Vietnamese people are strongly attached to peace and are unrelentingly struggling for a stable and durable peace in Southeast Asia and the rest of the world.

The people, the Communist Party and the Government of Vietnam warmly welcome and fully support the proposals of the Moscow Meeting of Party and State leaders of the member countries of the Warsaw Treaty aimed at quickly ending the arms race and eventually realizing disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and in the immediate future at reaching agreement on the cancellation of the deployment of US medium-range missiles in Western Europe, reducing the number of the existing medium-range missiles and ensuring nuclear balance on a lower level on the basis of equal and equitable security acceptable to both sides.

Holding high the banner of peace, national independence and socialism, side by side with the fraternal Lao and Kampuchean peoples, closely uniting with the Soviet Union, the other countries in the socialist community, the revolutionary and peace forces throughout the world, the Vietnamese people are determined to struggle and foil the policy of the reactionaries within the Beijing ruling circles who are acting in collusion with the US imperialists and creating tension in Southeast Asia, and to strive for a peaceful, stable, cooperative and friendly Southeast Asia, thus making a worthy contribution to peace in Asia and the rest of the world.

COMMUNIQUE OF THE SEVENTH CONFERENCE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF LAOS, KAMPUCHEA AND VIETNAM

(PHNOM PENH, 19—20 JULY, 1983)

The Seventh Conference of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was held in Phnom Penh on July 19 and 20, 1983.

1. Reviewing the struggle of the three peoples of Indochina over the last six months the Conference notes with satisfaction that the situation has been developing favourably for their respective national reconstruction and defence, thereby contributing to the cause of peace, friendship and cooperation in Southeast Asia. The peoples of Laos, Kampuchea and Vietnam, standing shoulder to shoulder and acting in close cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other fraternal socialist countries, and in solidarity with the non-aligned countries and with friends throughout the world, have weathered the most difficult period. In the light of the February 1983 Summit Conference of the three countries of Indochina, the three peoples are advancing steadily. In particular, the Conference rejoices at the great successes in all fields—economic, military, political, and diplomatic—recorded by the People's Republic of Kampuchea, which has repeatedly defeated the perfidious designs of the expansionist, imperialist and reactionary forces who are attempting to reverse the process of the Kampuchean people's rebirth. Thanks to its unceasing growth and increasing stability, the People's Republic of Kampuchea's international prestige has grown with each passing day. Peace—and justice-loving peoples all over the world have clearly seen that the People's Republic of Kampuchea is the sole

genuine and legitimate representative of the Kampuchean people. The so-called "coalition government of Democratic Kampuchea" is nothing but a mask used to cover up the Pol Pot clique's genocidal nature, which has been condemned by the Kampuchean people and the whole of mankind; it cannot in any way change the situation in Kampuchea.

The decision taken by the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on the annual withdrawals of Vietnamese volunteer troops from Kampuchea and the two partial withdrawals effected in 1982 and 1983 demonstrate both the growth and strength of the People's Republic of Kampuchea and Vietnam's consistent policy of respect for the Kampuchean people's independence and right to self-determination. This is a demonstration of the three Indochinese peoples' goodwill not only in words but also in deeds. The just position and acts of goodwill of the three countries of Indochina have been warmly welcomed by world public opinion. Only the Chinese leaders, the American imperialists, and the reactionaries within the Thai ruling circles oppose this trend as they want to maintain tension in Southeast Asia and poison the world political atmosphere, thus jeopardizing international peace and security.

2. On the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Conference warmly welcomes the great successes of the Laos—Vietnam friendship as shown in each

country's socialist construction and national defence. It holds that the Laos — Vietnam Treaty is a major contribution to the consolidation and strengthening of the special friendship and militant solidarity between the three countries of Indochina and an important factor for peace and stability in South-east Asia.

3. The Conference has been informed of a certain number of diplomatic activities carried out by the three countries of Indochina since the Extraordinary Conference of the Foreign Ministers of the three countries on April 12, 1983. It highly appreciates the results of Minister Nguyen Co Thach's visit to the Republic of the Philippines and the constructive attitude of the latter toward the promotion of dialogue between ASEAN and Indochina with a view to restoring peace and stability in Southeast Asia. It takes note of the positive results obtained in the talks held on June 9, 1983 by the Foreign Ministers of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and of the Kingdom of Thailand. The Conference welcomes the foreign policy of peace, independence, friendship and co-operation of the Labour Government of Australia and the great efforts made by Foreign Minister Bill Hayden aimed at restoring peace and stability in Southeast Asia. The Conference also welcomes the personal efforts made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in promoting dialogue among the countries of the region and in easing tension in Southeast Asia.

4. The Conference unanimously hold that the Chinese leaders' hostile policy toward the three Indochinese countries has not changed in the least. The Conference once again severely condemns this policy of the Chinese leaders who, in collusion with the American imperialists and the other reactionary forces, are frantically opposing and waging a multi-faceted war of sabotage against the three Indochinese countries using extremely perfidious and cunning schemes, while pursuing their design of conquering the three Indochinese countries. The Conference utterly rejects the big-nation chauvinist approach of the Chinese leaders embodied in their five-point pro-

posal on the Kampuchea issue made public on March 1, 1983. It condemns China for demanding that Vietnam withdraw its troops from Kampuchea while keeping its own freedom of action — political, economic, and military — against the independence and security of the three countries of Indochina. These Chinese actions constitute the root cause of tension and instability in Southeast Asia at present. The People's Republic of Kampuchea and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam have effected annual withdrawals of Vietnamese volunteer troops from Kampuchea and publicly declared that the Vietnamese volunteer troops would all be withdrawn once the Chinese threat is removed. World public opinion demands that China end all threats so that conditions can be created for the withdrawal of all Vietnamese volunteer troops from Kampuchea.

Now as ever before, the three countries of Indochina set great store by their long standing ties of solidarity and friendship with the Chinese people and strive continuously to restore relations of friendship and good neighbourliness with China on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. They consider these relations to be an extremely significant contribution to peace and stability in Southeast Asia.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic and the People's Republic of Kampuchea fully support the proposal made by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam concerning the resumption of Sino-Vietnamese talks on all matters of mutual concern with a view to normalizing relations between the two countries. In the immediate future, consultations between the two countries should be held at any level and in any place so as to prepare the ground for the resumption of the talks. The two parties would take the proposals put forward by each of them as basis for the talks.

The Conference wholly supports the proposal of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam concerning urgent measures aimed at reducing tension along the Sino-Vietnamese border, a proposal that has so far received no answer from the Chinese side.

5. The Conference takes note of the ASEAN countries' expressed willingness to promote dialogue with the countries of Indochina without pre-conditions in order to settle differences between the two groups of countries. However, the Conference deplores the fact that while the countries of Indochina have put forward many constructive proposals and taken many initiatives, the ASEAN countries have rejected all of them. The latest instance of this is the failure by the ASEAN countries to respond to the peace initiatives and acts of goodwill of the Indochinese countries, especially to the annual withdrawals of Vietnamese volunteer troops from Kampuchea. On the other hand, the ASEAN countries have put forward new absurd demands, particularly that Vietnam withdraw its troops 30km away from the Thai-Kampuchean border as a pre-condition for dialogue. These actions clearly show that the ASEAN countries have blocked all roads to dialogue under pressure from the Chinese leaders and the US imperialists.

The Conference categorically rejects the slanderous allegation of China, the United States and a number of reactionary circles within the ASEAN countries to the effect that Vietnam is sending Vietnamese nationals to Kampuchea with the aim of altering the latter's demographic composition. This is but a contemptible propaganda ploy used to conceal the failure of their attempt to falsely accuse Vietnam of having invaded and occupied Kampuchea, in face of the fact that the Vietnamese volunteer troops are being gradually withdrawn from Kampuchea. Experience over the last forty years and especially the past four years proves that all their illusory hopes of weakening and dividing the countries of Indochina and all their attempts to slander them, have failed pitifully.

The three countries of Indochina also take note of the fact that there exist differences between the countries of Indochina and those of ASEAN, including the so-called Kampuchea problem, which, in reality, is but the result of the policy of aggression and intervention carried out by Chinese expansionism. Therefore, the three countries of Indochina

once again reiterate their proposals as follows:

a) To open dialogues without pre-conditions between the two groups, the Indochinese and the ASEAN countries. The People's Republic of Kampuchea reaffirms its goodwill, and its willingness not to let the question of its participation be an obstacle to the opening of dialogue between the two groups of countries. All formulas regarding the composition of each participant party and the agendas of the dialogues will be seriously examined by way of constructive consultations.

The three Indochinese countries note with satisfaction that the two groups of countries of Southeast Asia, ASEAN and Indochina, including countries within and those outside the Movement of Non-aligned Countries, both accept the resolutions of the Seventh Summit Conference of Non-aligned Countries on the situation in Southeast Asia. Therefore, the three countries propose that the resolutions of the Seventh Summit Conference of Non-aligned Countries be taken as a basis for dialogue between ASEAN and Indochina.

The three countries of Indochina are also prepared to take the proposal of the ASEAN countries for a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality (ZOPFAN) as a basis for discussion between Indochina and ASEAN on turning Southeast Asia into a zone of peace and stability. Once again, they categorically reject the erroneous resolutions of the United Nations and of the so-called International Conference of the United Nations on Kampuchea because these resolutions still recognize the genocidal Pol Pot regime denounced by world public opinion and attempt to reimpose this regime in opposition to the Kampuchean people's rebirth.

The destiny of peace in Southeast Asia rests with the governments of the countries of Indochina and ASEAN, which are the two main groups of countries in the region. That is why the Conference earnestly calls on the ASEAN countries not to spare any efforts, in the common interests of the Southeast Asian peoples and together with the Indochinese

countries, in order to reduce tension between the two groups of countries and start bilateral or multilateral dialogue aimed at increasing mutual understanding and gradually settling differences between the two groups of countries.

The three Indochinese countries also call on the governments of all countries in the world to contribute to the reduction of tension and the promotion of dialogue in Southeast Asia for the sake of the noble cause of peace in Southeast Asia and the world.

b) The three countries of Indochina once again reaffirm the stand of the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on annual partial withdrawals of Vietnamese volunteers from Kampuchea on the basis of the state of security and stability in Kampuchea, particularly along the Kampuchea — Thailand border. The Vietnamese volunteer troops will all be withdrawn as soon as China puts an end to its threat. The three Indochinese countries welcome all efforts which may be undertaken by the ASEAN countries in order to contribute to bringing the Chinese threat to an end so that the Vietnamese volunteer troops can be withdrawn from Kampuchea.

c) The Conference reviews the state of security along the border between Kampuchea and Thailand and reiterates its view that any proposal aimed at reducing tension along the Kampuchea — Thailand border must stem from the principle of ensuring equal security for both sides. It expresses its full support to the constructive proposals made by the People's Republic of Kampuchea on this question in the Communiqué of the Extraordinary Conference of the Foreign Ministers of Laos, Kampuchea and Vietnam on April 12, 1983, and declares its readiness to examine any proposal from Thailand concerning the situation and security along the Kampuchea — Thailand border. It unanimously holds that for the immediate future urgent measures should be taken to reduce tension along that border so as to ward off any danger of escalation into a major conflict and gradually create mutual trust.

Such measures were put forward at the talks between the Foreign Ministers of Vietnam and of Thailand in Bangkok on June 9, 1983.

d) Recently, the Thai authorities have attempted to exploit for their own benefit the problem of Kampuchean refugees, thus violating the sovereignty of the People's Republic of Kampuchea and aggravating tension along the Kampuchea — Thailand border.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam wholly support the suggestion put forward by the People's Republic of Kampuchea that the Red Cross Societies of Kampuchea and Thailand examine either directly or through some intermediary their respective proposals regarding humane treatment to Kampuchean refugees along the Kampuchea — Thailand border on the basis of respect for both Kampuchea's and Thailand's independence, sovereignty and security.

6. The three countries of Indochina resolutely support the world's peoples in their struggle for peace, national independence and social progress, against the aggressive policy of imperialism and international reaction. The three Indochinese countries reaffirm the statements of the Parties and Governments of the three countries warmly welcoming the initiative of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty member States, in particular the June 28, 1983 Joint Statement of the Summit Meeting of Warsaw Treaty member States. This Statement demonstrates the firm position, noble responsibility and goodwill for peace of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries in the struggle for peace and the easing of international tension. The three countries of Indochina warmly welcome the success of the World Assembly for Peace held in Prague in June 1983 and consider it to be a very important contribution to the struggle of the world's peoples against nuclear war, for peace and life on earth. The three countries of Indochina pledge to do their utmost to contribute to the common cause of peace of mankind.

Phnom Penh, July 20, 1983

THE LAW ON THE ORGANIZATION OF PEOPLE'S COUNCILS AND PEOPLE'S COMMITTEES

In implementation of the new Constitution, at its first session held in early July 1981, the Seventh National Assembly approved four laws on the organization of the National Assembly and the State Council; the Council of Ministers; the People's Courts; and the People's Prosecutor's Offices. At its fifth session on 30 June 1983, it passed the Law on the organization of People's Councils and People's Committees. It has thus completed the promulgation of legislation on the organization of the organs of State power from the central to the local level, thereby creating conditions for these organs to play their roles to the full and carry out their obligations, enhancing the managerial effectiveness of the State and contributing to the putting into effect of this principle: the Party leads, the people are the masters, the State manages.

Compared with the Law on the Organization of People's Councils and Administrative Committees at all levels of 17 October 1962, the new legislation marks a new advance in many fields. Formalism is surmounted in the functioning of the People's Councils at all levels, which will fully play their role as organs of State power in their respective regions and decide on important matters in the building of these regions. In this spirit, the new Law defines the nature and position of the People's Council and the People's Committee and the organic relationship between them: the People's

Council is "the organ of State power in the region", while the People's Committee, elected by the People's Council, is the "executive organ of the People's Council and the administrative organ of the State in the region."

The new Law concretizes an important provision of the Constitution: "The People's Council and the People's Committee are organized and operate in accordance with the principle of democratic centralism." At the same time it contains clearly-laid down rules which ensure unified administration by the Centre while promoting regional initiative: The People's Council is responsible not only to the local people but also to the superior echelon of State power. With regard to the People's Committee, on the one hand it is responsible to the People's Council, to which it reports, on the other it is under the leadership of the superior echelon of State power and the unified leadership of the Council of Ministers.

The new Law contains concrete provisions on the duties and powers of People's Councils at all levels in every field: economic, scientific-technical, cultural, social, the people's life, security, national defence, socialist legality, organization and personnel. Other provisions make it possible for the People's Council to function effectively: People's Councils at all levels meet once every three months; they appoint special commissions

sessions must be carefully prepared, and the Council's special commissions will cooperate with the People's Committee to this end; the duties and powers of members of People's Councils are defined in a concrete and practical fashion; members of the People's Committees must be members of the People's Councils; the People's Committee will be of such size that it can meet and operate conveniently.

A chapter in the new law is entitled: "Guarantees for the fulfilment of the duties and powers of the People's Councils". It contains the following provisions: the State Council supervises and guides the activities of People's Councils at all levels. It is the responsibility of the Council of Ministers to provide guarantees for People's Councils at all levels to fulfil their duties and powers; members of People's Councils, in the performance of their duties, are provided with all necessary conditions, material and moral, to be determined by the Council of Ministers; People's Committees at all levels, State organs and employees in the regions, within the limits of their duties and powers, have the responsibility to create all favourable conditions for the activities of members of People's Councils and their special commissions; Committees of the Vietnam Fatherland Front and mass organizations within the Front shall assist members of People's Councils of the same level in the performance of their duties...

«THE DRAGON OF ANNAM» or the history distorted by Bao Dai

Editor's Note: A book written by Ex-Emperor Bao Dai entitled *The Dragon of Annam*, was published in Paris in 1980¹. Bao Dai was the last king of the Nguyen dynasty which was abolished by the Revolution. In August 1945, under pressure of political upheavals, Bao Dai had to abdicate and transfer power to the revolutionary forces. Thanks to the revolutionary government's lenient policy Bao Dai was allowed to stay on as Supreme Adviser. But after a short period of time he defected to China to return later to Vietnam as a puppet of the French. After the French had been evicted from South Vietnam by the Americans he went to France where he has been leading the life of an exile.

The *Dragon of Annam* contains many crude distortions of historical facts. Mr Pham Khac Hoe, former Director of the Emperor's Office, who witnessed or took part in those events, has written an article which we hope will shed some light on them.

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The *Nhan Dan* daily in its issue of 19 August 1982 carried an article entitled "The Fallen Beam and a Turning Point in Bao Dai's Life" in which the author refers to Bao Dai's memoirs—*The Dragon of Annam*. Shortly after the article was published, friends came to see me and asked me a lot of questions about Bao Dai's book.

I feel, therefore, that I have the duty to write a brief account of the events which I either took part in or witnessed, and which were distorted by Bao Dai. His book consists of five parts, but for reason of space, I shall omit Part 1, "VIETNAM—PAST AND PRESENT", and deal only with the others.

In PART II: "THE EMPEROR OF ANNAM", two major events are distorted: "Japan granted independence to Vietnam" and "Bao Dai's Abdication".

1. Japan Granted Independence to Vietnam

About this event Bao Dai writes in substance:

On 11 March 1945, at 11 a.m., a Japanese who spoke French fluently asked for an audience with the emperor. He was Ambassador Yokoyama, the Japanese Emperor's special envoy. He came to tell Bao Dai that the day before Japanese forces had overthrown French rule in this country and that it was now his mission to hand over independence to Vietnam.

Bao Dai was surprised and refused the offer because for many years the Japanese had considered Cuong De as the authentic representative of the throne of Annam. As for him, Bao Dai was "attached to the people and not to the throne". But the Japanese Ambassador said that Bao Dai alone "represented both tradition and the hopes of Vietnamese youth" and

"would be able to manage the independence of Vietnam". That was why the Japanese Government wished that the emperor would affirm that independence by official action. With these works, Yokoyama handed to Bao Dai a note and took leave of him. Bao Dai who was certain that the Japanese would be defeated and the Allies would win the war, thought the matter over in the afternoon. He weighed the pros and cons then decided to summon all the members of the Privy Council—composed of the most influential personages at Court: princes and ministers—to discuss the matter and come to a consensus. The meeting resulted in a Declaration of Independence signed by Bao Dai and the six ministers. The next morning, 12 March, Bao Dai summoned the Japanese Ambassador and handed him the Declaration of Independence and discussed with him how to carry it into effect. Later Pham Quynh reported to Bao

Dai on the reaction of the Privy Council, as well as the worries and fears of some people who were close to the emperor. Bao Dai told Pham Quynh, "Tell them to end their machinations and intrigues. I am the Emperor. They must not forget it. If one day I should leave, there would be no more Annam."

On 19 March, when Bao Dai told Pham Quynh about his decision to assume the responsibility of running the country, Pham Quynh immediately tendered the resignation of all the Council of Ministers.

Through the above-mentioned account, Bao Dai attempts to fool the readers into believing that he always placed the interests of the people above all, that he never wanted to act as a puppet emperor, and was determined to take the initiative in everything, which was to bring about the results he boasts of in the following parts of his book.

What was the truth then?

First, the "Declaration of Independence" session on 11 March 1945 was attended only by Bao Dai, the six ministers and myself. The meeting was dominated by Pham Quynh, who had convened the session and presented the draft declaration of independence. He was the only man who laughed and spoke and made long speeches. The emperor and the ministers only nodded consent or praised him.

The next day, 12 March, Bao Dai instructed me to draft an edict appointing Pham Quynh to be the representative of independent Vietnam in any contact with the Japanese Supreme Adviser and other Japanese authorities. I advised Bao Dai not to have recourse to Pham Quynh's services if he really wanted to serve the people and the State and told him why. Our conversation lasted half an hour. Finally Bao Dai said, "Let us use Pham Quynh for the moment to maintain contact with the Japanese. We'll see later what we must do."

So I drafted an edict temporarily appointing Pham Quynh to be the provisional representative of the Vietnamese Government in any future relations with the Japanese authorities. Bao Dai signed the edict.

On 14 March, I met Ton Quang Phiet² to discuss events of the day. He approved of my idea of working for Pham Quynh's dismissal and persuading good people to form a new government.

On the morning of 15 March I went to see the two most influential ministers in the Privy Council Bui Bang Doan³ and Ung Uy. They

advised me to try to open the emperor's eyes to the insidious and dangerous nature of Pham Quynh and promised to persuade all the other members of the Privy Council to resign.

On the afternoon of 15 March, with the agreement of Bao Dai, I invited Huynh Thuc Khang⁴ to come and see the emperor to discuss military affairs, but Huynh Thuc Khang declined the invitation.

On the morning of 16 March, I reported to Bao Dai on the above-mentioned meetings, drawing his attention to Huynh Thuc Khang's refusal in particular. I told Bao Dai that he should prove by concrete action that he was truly working for the interests of the people, and that only by so doing would he be able to rally men of talent behind him. After a moment's reflexion Bao Dai said, "Tomorrow we shall discuss the matter."

On the morning of 17, when I entered his office Bao Dai was already at his desk. As I approached him I saw a sheet of paper with his handwriting in large letters. He gave it to me and said, "Please draft an edict based on these ideas."

As I read the sheet of paper Bao Dai gave me I was increasingly surprised. Here is what he had written: "As from today the emperor will take all power into his own hands, and the political system will be based on this principle: 'The People Above All'."

My surprise was quite understandable. To my knowledge Bao Dai was incapable of composing a sentence in the Vietnamese language. Any observations he wrote on documents presented to him had been written before hand on a piece of paper by the Director of the Emperor's Office. If he agreed (which he nearly always did) he would merely copy them down and sign, and the paper would be burnt there and then. It was considered a State secret!

Because I knew that sad truth, I could not help asking myself, "Who was Bao Dai's prompter? Why should he want to take all power into his own hands? Who advised him to proclaim the principle 'The People Above All'? Only when Tran Trong Kim had revealed himself as a henchman of the Japanese fascists did I find the answers to my questions: It was Yokoyama who had prompted Bao Dai, knowing as he did that Confucianism had been an excellent instrument to subjugate the minds of the Vietnamese people for many generations." But at the moment I

only thought that "I had led Bao Dai into the right path" and it was with great enthusiasm that I drafted Edict No. 1 on 17 March 1945 which consisted of the four following points:

1. The emperor himself assumes all power;
2. The new political system is based on the principle "The People Above All";
3. All talented persons worthy of the Motherland are to be asked to serve;
4. Policies conformable to the people's aspirations are to be promulgated.

After the edict had been issued Bui Bang Doan and Ung Uy tried by every means to persuade all members of the Privy Council to resign. On 19 March all six ministers came to submit their resignation, which led to the formation of the Tran Trong Kim Cabinet on 17 April 1945. But barely one month later all the hopes I had pinned on the principle "The People Above All" were dashed.

1. On the question of the emperor taking all power into his own hands: Only three weeks after he became Prime Minister, Tran Trong Kim appointed "the Emperor's close friend", Nguyen Duy Quang, Bao Dai's chamberlain. Nguyen Duy Quang was a notorious playboy and debauchee. He was the son of one of the richest men in all Vietnam and had a very beautiful wife. In his company, Bao Dai soon returned to his favourite vices: gambling, debauchery and hunting. As for State affairs, they were to be run by the Cabinet under the control of the Japanese.

2. On the principle "The People Above All": on 26 May 1945, when I drew Tran Trong Kim's attention to an article published in the *Vietnam Tan Bao* newspaper (26 May) entitled "The People are unimportant" which criticized embezzlement by some village officials on the occasion of distribution of rice to victims of famine, he gave me a lesson on how to understand the words: "The People Above All": this principle enunciated by Mencius must be interpreted, he said, in the spirit of Confucianism, according to which "the people are to obey, but should not know."

3. On rallying people of talent: After three months in office several ministers resigned, which led to the resignation of the whole cabinet. Tran Trong Kim, who was given the task of forming a new government, sent urgent telegrams to many personages throughout the country, but no one, even those

who were at the time in Hue, deigned to answer his call.

4. On the promulgation of policies conformable to the aspirations of the people: Even after the unconditional reddition of the German fascists, Tran Trong Kim asserted: "This defeat does not weaken our determination to help Japan carry on the war until total victory (and rebuild Southeast Asia...)"

Those were the facts. And yet Bao Dai shamelessly blows his trumpet. Yokoyama, he says, told him, "His Majesty the Emperor of Japan has ordered the cease-fire and from now on Nam Ky (Cochinchina) is placed under your authority." About this Bao Dai writes: "I was deeply moved as I thought that I had achieved what my ancestors had failed to do." The fact was that only after their defeat did the Japanese stage the farce of "handing over Nam Ky to the Court of Annam", with a view to deceiving our people.

II. Bao Dai's Abdication:

In *The Dragon of Annam* Bao Dai's abdication is described as having taken place under the following circumstances:

On the night of 22 August Bao Dai received from Hanoi a message sent by a so-called "Committee of Patriots Representing All Political Parties and All Strata of the People" asking him: to resign.

On the morning of 23 August, sitting all alone in his room, Bao Dai recalled the story of the fallen beam (see below) which Tu Cung, the Queen Mother, had considered as an omen heralding a turning point in his life. He pondered over the information about the Viet Minh Front Ta Quang Buu had given him. He said to himself, "The history of all the peoples in the world shows that under the present circumstances there is only one way out: to step down." But to whom should he send the answer? Bao Dai says he "sent his cousin Vinh Can and Pham Khac Hoe, the Director of the Emperor's Office, to town to inquire. But both returned empty-handed." Therefore he had to "send a message into the vacuum the way one throws a bottle into the sea." So he sent a message to the so-called "Committee of Patriots" to the effect that he was ready to abdicate and asked the leaders of the Committee to come to Hue for the handing over of power.

That night he prepared his abdication edict. On the morning of 25 August two representatives

of the Viet Minh — Tran Huy Lieu and Cu Huy Can — called on him and showed him credentials bearing an illegible signature. The two representatives said they were the envoys of Ho Chi Minh, Chairman of the Liberation Committee, entrusted by him with the task of taking over power from the emperor. When Bao Dai showed them the abdication edict they fully approved of it and proposed that an abdication ceremony be organized. That very afternoon, at the Southern Gate, Bao Dai in his ceremonial dress, read his abdication statement before a few thousand people. When he ended his reading "everyone was greatly surprised. Men and women were shocked and stunned by the statement which came to them like a bolt from the blue."

That was how Bao Dai described the people's reaction to his abdication. He writes: "My mind was at ease and I had no regret."

However, Bao Dai's account utterly conflicts with the historical truth. It would take at least 40 pages to relate all the details. For lack of space I can only give a brief summary which may help the readers follow Bao Dai's real trend of thoughts.

On 8 August 1945 Ton Quang Phiet told me that I was entrusted by the revolutionary committee with the task of persuading the emperor to abdicate. I accepted this assignment with great pleasure and pride. I spent three days pondering over Bao Dai's mental nature and summing up my own experience with him. Still I was at a loss how to tackle the problem.

On Sunday, 12 August 1945, Tran Trong Kim called on me. As I met him at the doorstep he said:

"The situation is very critical. I have sent messages to many people asking them to come to the capital for consultations on the formation of a new government. But seven days have passed and there has been no answer yet. So in a recent audience with His Majesty I asked him to name the old cabinet a caretaker one. His Majesty agreed and asked you to draft an edict to this effect."

The attitude of the Confucian scholar-prime minister amused me a great deal. I was also glad about the opportunity of meeting Bao Dai and starting my persuasion drive. At three o'clock I presented myself before Bao Dai with the draft edict. I took the opportunity to probe his feelings.

"Nobody has responded to Mr Tran Trong Kim's appeal," I said. "I wonder why. Has Mr Kim made a full report to Your Majesty?"

"According to Kim, all those people he tried to contact are revolutionary and leftist-minded. The Japanese are not happy with them. Perhaps they have intercepted all the cables."

"Sire, even the two men who are in Hue at present, Ton Quang Phiet and Bui Cong Trung, have not accepted Kim's invitation."

"Did Mr Phiet say why he refused?"

"Sire, Mr Phiet said that Japan's defeat is imminent, and that in our country the revolutionary tide is rising. The revolution will break out soon."

Bao Dai's face changed colour. I reminded him of the French Revolution of 1789 and the tragic end of King Louis XVI. Then I added softly, "I hope Your Majesty will act before it is too late!"

"The Japanese army can't possibly stand idly by and let the people do as they please," Bao Dai said with a spiteful smile.

Thus Bao Dai still pinned his hopes on the Japanese army. I recalled the daily meetings between Bao Dai and the Yokoyama couple and I said to myself that I should be on my guard and not indulge in self-complacency.

Two days later, on the afternoon of 15 August 1945, the news was announced of Japan's unconditional surrender. Bao Dai was stunned. Tran Trong Kim was so depressed that he pretended to be ill and remained upstairs at his home. Tran Van Chuong and Pham Quynh went to the Kien Trung Palace to meet Bao Dai and Nguyen Duy Quang, probably to make preparations for returning to the service of the French colonialists.

That night I met the Minister of the Interior, Tran Dinh Nam, and told him what had happened. Tran Dinh Nam suggested that a cabinet session should be convened to be presided over by the emperor. At this session, Tran Dinh Nam said, he would raise the question of the emperor's abdication and the resignation of the whole cabinet and the transfer of power to the Viet Minh. He said I should draft an appeal by the emperor to the nation.

On the morning of 17 August a session of the Cabinet presided over by Bao Dai was held at the Emperor's Office. Attending the session were Tran Trong Kim, Tran Van Chuong, Tran Dinh Nam, Ho

Ta Khanh, Vu Van Hien, Phan Anh, Trinh Dinh Thao and Nguyen Huu Thi.

Referring to the home situation Tran Dinh Nam said, "The most important problem in internal affairs is to strengthen the people's unity round the strongest, most active organisation at present, the Viet Minh Front, so that the colonialists and imperialists will not be able to resort to their 'divide-and-rule' policy. I therefore propose that we should retire and transfer power to the Viet Minh. In my opinion the emperor should abdicate, too."

At this, Tran Trong Kim jumped and harshly criticized him for daring to ask the emperor to resign. A heated discussion followed. Finally the Cabinet unanimously approved this proposal of the "lawyer-ministers": to ask the Viet Minh to form a government with all effective powers but to preserve the monarchy, so that when the Allies arrived they would find a government with full legitimacy and would have no reason to help the French stage a comeback.

This solution pleased Bao Dai a great deal for he would then be able to preserve the throne while having to do nothing. He asked me to prepare the necessary documents. Ten minutes later an edict inviting the Viet Minh to form a government was signed and Phan Anh was sent to the North to put it into effect.

"Is there any other problem?" Bao Dai asked.

"We propose," Tran Dinh Nam said, "that His Majesty call on the entire people to show their determination to preserve the country's independence. Yesterday we asked the Director of the Emperor's Office to make a draft statement..."

So Bao Dai asked me to read the draft statement, and those attending the session to give their opinions. Tran Trong Kim proposed some amendments to the passage praising the emperor's spirit of sacrifice, for he thought it was too binding on Bao Dai. He suggested a more moderate wording. Kim's suggestion gave rise to a heated discussion. Some agreed with him while others praised the passage and wanted to leave it as it was.

At the emperor's bidding I read the passage, once again, — every sentence, every word of it:

"As it is my wish to consolidate the country's independence and safeguard the people's interests, I am ready to make sacrifices in every respect. I place the happiness of the Vietnamese people above my throne. I prefer to be a citizen of

an independent country rather than the emperor of an enslaved State. I am certain that the people throughout the country share my feelings and are ready to make all necessary sacrifices."

When I finished reading Bao Dai gave his approval and ordered the text to be typed out for signature.

Thus, I had made a great step forward in persuading him to abdicate. And I was sure of the final success. I felt quite happy. However, Bao Dai was still wondering who the leader of the Viet Minh was and whether he would agree to preserve the monarchy. On 19 August he summoned me four times in the day to ask whether I had learnt who the Viet Minh leader was.

On the morning of 20 August I went downtown trying to find out whether it was true that copies of a letter by the revolutionary Nguyen Ai Quoc calling on the people to rise up in a general insurrection had been pasted up in the streets of Hue, as had been rumoured. When I was certain that they had indeed appeared I returned and reported it to Bao Dai, then added, "Judging from the wording of the letter I am sure that that famous revolutionary is the leader of the Viet Minh." I told him about a prophecy that had been widely circulated in Nghe An and Ha Tinh provinces. It ran as follows:

"When Mount Dun splits and the Bo Dai stream falls silent, then a saint will be born in Nam Dan."⁵ I explained to Bao Dai the meaning of this prophecy with full conviction in its accuracy. In my opinion, the birth of "Saint Nguyen Ai Quoc" had been accurately predicted by Trang Trinh⁶ 400 years before.

Bao Dai listened to me with great attention, then he reminded me of another prophecy by Trang Trinh "*Hoanh Son nhât dai, van dai dung than*"⁷. He asked me whether I had learnt of a strange happening in the Royal Palace two months before. Without waiting for my answer he proudly related the following incident.

"It was National Day.⁸ I was walking along the corridors from the Kien Trung Palace to the Can Chanh Palace where I was to be taken to Thai Hoa Palace in a palanquin to attend the celebrations. As soon as I got into the palanquin, a huge beam crashed down and fell on the place I had just left. If it had fallen five seconds earlier, I would have been killed. The Queen Mother also witnessed

the incident. She thought that this was Buddha's warning that a great turning point would soon occur in my life but that I would come out of it safe and sound. What do you think of it?"

"Sire, I believe that the Queen Mother's interpretation was correct. But I wish to elaborate it a little: the fall of the huge beam means the collapse of the French colonial rule. From now on the French will no longer stand by Your Majesty's side to keep watch on National Day celebrations. And Your Majesty will really be safe, thanks to the protection of the Revolution."

"Do you really think I should abdicate and transfer power to the Viet Minh?"

"I certainly do, Sire." I answered.

"If the Viet Minh leader is Saint Nguyen Ai Quoc I am ready to abdicate."

I clasped my hands, bowed to him and left...

From that moment I concentrated on the drafting of the abdication declaration.

The following two days, 21 and 22 August, with the draft declaration in my pocket, I looked for Ton Quang Phiet, but to no avail.

On the morning of 23 August, Bao Dai, looking sad and angry, complained to me about an incident: On the night of 22 August some Viet Minh people had pulled down the emperor's yellow flag from the Flag Tower and hoisted the Viet Minh's golden-starred red flag. Bao Dai asked me to contact a Viet Minh representative and arrange for the flag to be flown again. That morning I again tried to find Ton Quang Phiet, but in vain.

At about noon I returned to Bao Dai's office and saw him sitting at his desk. Nguyen Duy Quang and Nguyen Xuan Duong, the head clerk of the Minister of the Interior, were standing beside him. As soon as he saw me, Bao Dai said, "Here's the Director, let him read the letter!" Nguyen Duy Quang handed me a sheet of paper he said Nguyen Xuan Duong had just brought in. It was an ultimatum from the Viet Minh demanding the transfer of power to the people. The Viet Minh promised safety to the lives and properties of all members of the Royal family on the following conditions:

1. The Emperor shall transfer to the revolutionary power the Royal Guard with all weapons and ammunition.

2. The Emperor shall inform the Japanese of the transfer of power

by the Court to the revolutionary authorities.

3. The Emperor shall send cables to all province chiefs ordering them to hand over power to the revolutionary forces, i.e. the Viet Minh.

Finally, a deadline was set for an answer from the emperor: 13.30 hours on the 23 of August 1945. It was mentioned in the ultimatum that I was to act as a liaison officer between the emperor and the revolutionary forces. The letter bore a seal with the words "Viet Minh Committee of Nguyen Tri Phuong Province" but no signature.

After reading the letter I suggested that Bao Dai convene immediately a Cabinet session to discuss two questions: first, to answer the ultimatum before the 13.30 hours deadline; second, to discuss the draft abdication declaration. Bao Dai agreed. At 12.15, a Cabinet session was held, presided over by Bao Dai and attended by Tran Trong Kim, Tran Van Chuong, Tran Dinh Nam, Trinh Dinh Thao, Vu Van Hien and Nguyen Huu Thi. The Cabinet session unanimously accepted the conditions posed by the Viet Minh. On the second question, the Cabinet approved the draft declaration with some minor amendments. After the meeting I went at once to the city's stadium (where a mass meeting was to be held by the Viet Minh) to give the answer before the deadline expired. But the stadium had already turned into a sea of people bristling with signs, banners and golden-starred red flags. I had to wait until 16.30 hours before I was able to meet the Chairman of the Insurrectional Committee (I later learnt that he was the poet To Huu).

After listening to my report on the acceptance by Bao Dai and the Cabinet of the conditions set by the revolution and the unanimous approval by the Cabinet of the abdication declaration, the Chairman of the Insurrectional Committee said, "Very well, we guarantee the safety of the Royal family. Don't worry."

On the morning of 24 March, Bao Dai showed me a cable he had received the night before from the Bac Bo Revolutionary People's Committee. The message read: "A Provisional People's Revolutionary Government headed by Ho Chi Minh has been set up. We demand that the emperor abdicate immediately with a view to the consolidation of our national independence and unification." (reported in

the *Cuu Quoc* daily No. 32, 27 August 1945).

Bao Dai was disappointed: the prophecy about the saint in Nam Dan was not borne out. Who was Ho Chi Minh? Nobody in Hue ever heard of his name. I told Bao Dai that Ho Chi Minh and Nguyen Ai Quoc were perhaps one and the same person. Then I went to see several people to inquire about Ho Chi Minh's identity. Finally, I was told by Vu Van Hien who had just been back from Hanoi that Ho Chi Minh was none other than the famous revolutionary and patriot Nguyen Ai Quoc.

Overjoyed I drove home to tell Bao Dai. He said in French, "*Ça vaut bien le coup alors.*"⁹

I sent a message to the Bac Bo Revolutionary People's Committee. The full text of the message read as follows:

"On behalf of His Majesty the Emperor, I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of the telegram No. 6DT sent by the Committee and beg to inform it of the following:

"His Majesty the Emperor is willing to abdicate at once and has had the necessary arrangements made for the abdication ceremony. But conscious of his responsibility before history and the whole nation and hoping that his abdication will benefit the Motherland and that the new Government will officially and solemnly appear before the whole nation, His Majesty wishes for an early arrival of the President of the Provisional People's Revolutionary Government in Thuan Hoa for the transfer of power. His Majesty wished to be informed of the date of the ceremony." (*Cuu Quoc* daily, 27 August 1945).

On the afternoon of 25 August we received this message from the Provisional Government:

"We welcome the Emperor's democratic spirit and concern for the cohesion and unification of the nation. His Majesty the Emperor is kindly requested to issue an edict on his abdication to put the people's minds at peace. A delegation of the Provisional Government will arrive in Thuan Hoa soon." (*Cuu Quoc* daily, 30 August 1945). I immediately had the abdication edict and the proclamation to the Royal Family pasted up on the walls of the Phu Van Lau (Literature Pavillion).

On the morning of 29 August, around ten o'clock, the delegation of the Provisional Government

arrived from Hanoi. They went straight to the city's stadium to attend a rally held by the Hue population to welcome them. Tran Huy Lieu, head of the delegation, Nguyen Luong Bang and Cu Huy Can, members, held discussions with me while the participants were marching past the rostrum.

In the afternoon I again met the delegation at Trung Bo Phu (Headquarters of the People's Committee for Central Vietnam) to arrange for the abdication ceremony.

The next day, 30 August, at 4 p.m. the abdication ceremony was solemnly held at the Southern Gate before a cheering crowd of about 50,000 people from Hue and its suburbs.

At the end of the ceremony, at the request of Bao Dai, Nguyen Luong Bang pinned a golden-starred red button on the coat of Bao Dai who henceforward became citizen Nguyen Vinh Thuy of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

I have related facts that show that it had taken a long and complex process with many hurdles to persuade Bao Dai to abdicate.

I had accepted my assignment with great enthusiasm. I had put all my heart and soul in the drafting of the three edicts and the messages that the Emperor's Office had sent to various people and organizations in the name of the emperor. That is why when the Provisional Revolutionary Government invited Bao Dai to assume the post of Supreme Adviser I prided myself on having brought Bao Dai a great honour and privilege.

PART III: THE GOVERNMENT'S SUPREME ADVISER

In this part Bao Dai thoroughly distorts many historical facts. But here I shall deal with only one episode: Bao Dai's trip to China, which he refers to as "my exile" in his book.

According to Bao Dai, this is how it happened:

One day President Ho Chi Minh asked him to lead a delegation to China. Bao Dai refused. So President Ho Chi Minh decided to send a delegation to China without him. The next day as Bao Dai came out of his villa he met a Chinese general who was living next door. The general asked him point blank "Why didn't you go to China? It's a great pity! You should have

seized the opportunity to pay a visit to my country." This casual question left him wondering. Perhaps the meeting with the Chinese general was not accidental. It could be a disguised invitation from Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek). So the next day Bao Dai called on President Ho Chi Minh and asked him for permission to go to China as a tourist. President Ho Chi Minh readily agreed.

Thus on 16 March 1946 Bao Dai flew from Hanoi to China with a government delegation composed of six men he did not know. The plane landed at Gunming (Kunming). He and the delegation had to stay there for a week before they could fly on to Chongqing (Chungking). During his stay in Chongqing Bao Dai was given an extremely warm reception, whereas the Vietnamese delegation was completely ignored by the Chinese nationalists. Only after many days of waiting and thanks to the intervention of Bao Dai, were they at last received by Jiang Jieshi in a brief unofficial meeting at an ancient pagoda on the outskirts of the city. Bao Dai also boasts that he had the opportunity of having a long talk with American general George Marshall.

On 15 April Bao Dai and the delegation flew back to Vietnam via Gunming. This time they were luckier. As they arrived at Gunming airport a Hanoi-bound plane was about to take off. However, as he was about to board this plane, he received a short note from President Ho Chi Minh asking him to stay on until further instructions.

Even if the facts he relates above were true, there would be no reason for Bao Dai to say that he had been "exiled" to China.

But here is what actually happened:

About 11 p.m. on 15 March 1946, one of Bao Dai's aides came to my place and woke me up. He said, "You are kindly requested to come to see His Excellency the Supreme Adviser for an urgent matter tomorrow morning, at six o'clock."

On 16 March, at 6 a.m. sharp I arrived at his villa. Bao Dai told me that he would leave for China in an hour and asked me to go to Hue after his departure and make arrangements for his wife and children to come to Hanoi. He said that this had been approved by President Ho Chi Minh.

I saw from the expression on his face that he was feeling uneasy and not a little embarrassed. So I said goodbye to him and went

straight to the Presidential Palace. I asked for an audience with Uncle Ho, who told me that the Supreme Adviser had wished to go to China, and that the Chinese authorities in Hanoi had also suggested that he should visit China. Moreover, as a Vietnamese delegation was going to Chongqing, Bao Dai's presence would be useful. Therefore, the Government had agreed to let him go to Chongqing with the Vietnamese delegation.

As I was coming out of the President's office I saw the Supreme Adviser and three other people who were coming to pay their respects to the President before leaving for China. They were Nghiem Ke To (Nationalist Party), Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nguyen Cong Truyen (Viet Minh) and Ha The Hanh (Democratic Party).

After Vinh Thuy and the delegation had left for Gia Lam airport I returned to the Supreme Adviser's villa. Here is what one of Bao Dai's aides told me: "Last night Mr Nghiem Ke To called on the Supreme Adviser. He stayed a while, then they went together to the Chinese general's house next door. There they conferred with a number of people until 11 p.m. When the Supreme Adviser came back he sent his aide over to ask you to come and see him early this morning." This meeting was later confirmed by Nghiem Ke To in his memoirs. He writes: "That night I (Nghiem Ke To, Ed.) went to the private residence of the ex-emperor, then the two of us went to the house next door to meet Vu Hong Khanh and Nguyen Tuong Tam. Having weighed the pros and cons we advised the ex-emperor to go abroad in his capacity as an ex-emperor and a tourist. Bao Dai readily agreed." (Nghiem Ke To, *Viet Nam Mau Lua* (Vietnam in Blood and Fire), Mai Linh Pub. Saigon 1954, p. 95).

Thus Bao Dai went to China of his own free will, and his trip was part of the dark scheme of the Jiang Jieshi clique and their henchmen in Vietnam.

About his prolonged sojourn in China, Nghiem Ke To's book gives the lie to Bao Dai's allegations. Nghiem Ke To writes: "After a month, the ex-emperor still remained in Chongqing. Only the Nghiem Ke To delegation left for home. This has been tacitly agreed." (*Op. cit.*, p. 97).

Some time after the nation-wide resistance to the French had broken out, President Ho Chi Minh sent an envoy, Dr Pham Ngoc

Thach, to Hong Kong to ask Bao Dai to return home to take part in the resistance. But Bao Dai refused.

In November 1947 I was about to be sent to Hong Kong to persuade Bao Dai to come home. But at the last minute it was reported that he had renewed contact with his former masters, and my trip was cancelled.

That was what actually happened. But Bao Dai writes in his book: "President Ho Chi Minh did not want me to return home. As a matter of fact my presence had become an obstacle, a disadvantage. The people's sympathy for me, their continued cult for the emperor, was an obstacle he wanted to remove... That was the only reason why I had been quarantined at Sam Son and later sent into exile in China." This is a most cynical distortion of historical facts.

During his first days in Hanoi as Supreme Adviser, Vinh Thuy came to realize that he had been truly brought back to life by the revolution. He knew President Ho Chi Minh was trying to help him return to the side of the Motherland and the people. That is why he felt great admiration and love for the President. In one of his letters to his mother in Hue he wrote: "I am looked upon by President Ho Chi Minh as his own son." However, birds of the same feather flock together. Vinh Thuy soon got into contact with the Chinese Guomintang (Kuomintang) and their henchmen and left for China. And when in China he entered into close relationship with Cousseau, a French half-caste and an administrator specialized in security affairs, a man notorious for his cruelty and cunning. Eventually, he was to return to Vietnam as "head of state" — once again a puppet of his former masters, the French colonialists.

PART IV: "HEAD OF STATE 1949-1955"

In this part Bao Dai boasts about his "talent" in political, military and diplomatic matters... and what he achieved for the good of the people and the nation.

Of that blood-stained self-advertisement the most salient features are his anti-communism and his crimes against the communists.

About his anti-communist ideology, Bao Dai boasts in his book that he was so anti-communist that he managed to impart his convictions to a pack of domestic elephants, the most typical of which was one he named Buon Com, an animal so intelligent that it understood orders given it in the minority dialect, Vietnamese and even French. According to him, when Quang Tri was occupied by the communists in 1945 Buon Com refused to cooperate with the communists. Then, moved perhaps by political conviction, the elephant fled into the jungle and stayed there during Bao Dai's absence. In 1949 Buon Com returned to Bao Dai's private tract of forest. The animal did not return alone! Other elephants came with it. Maybe, they did not want to work for the communists either.

As for his anti-communist record, Bao Dai boasts that he was once offered a gun by the fascist general Franco "as a token of friendship and gratitude for my anti-communist achievements".

However, Bao Dai took the greatest pride in two achievements which were highly praised by the French colonialists: first, he had led "the Catholics—who accounted for one-fifth of the population of North Vietnam—to arm themselves and start a Holy war", and had been praised by the French National Assembly's Commission on Overseas Territories as having "greatly contributed to splitting the Vietnamese Catholics away from the Viet Minh". Second, he had "built a Vietnamese nationalist army for fighting Communism" and had been praised by Marshal Juin, General Inspector of the French Armed Forces, in these words, "Your army has fought well. It has suffered many casualties because it has not been fully tempered in war."

Bragging about his achievements in the building of a nationalist army Bao Dai writes: When General De Lattre de Tassigny, the French High Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief, was on his way to New York to ask for more US aid Bao Dai sent him a cable in which he said among other things: "The measures I have taken to mobilize the forces of the country have been welcomed by the entire population. They are very proud to be placed under your supreme command... Therefore, the Vietnamese army will do their best to fight alongside the other forces of the French Union until final victory and are ready gradually to replace them depending on the means they are to be supplied with."

When putting his above two achievements on the record Bao Dai perhaps failed to realize that they were irrefragable evidence of his crimes against the Vietnamese people.

PART V: VIETNAM TODAY AND TOMORROW

In this part, having related the defeats of the Americans, from the Diem—Nhu period to the Thieu—Ky period, and sought to please the Beijing expansionists by slanderously accusing "Viet Minh" of "nurturing the dream of building a Greater Viet (Dai Viet) which would include not only Laos and Kampuchea but also former Lao provinces in Thailand", Bao Dai affirms that "the French experiment had failed, so had the American experiment and Vietnam will certainly witness the failure of the communist experiment."

"Will Vietnam deserve to enjoy peace again?"

In answer to the question he himself poses, Bao Dai reiterates his view of the "necessary and sacred relationship between Heaven, the king and the people," a question he has repeatedly stressed in the preceding parts. And he sums it up as follows: "The old Vietnamese society concentrated all social structures into the person of the king. Through the king everything was solemnly done, from the central administration to the villages. However, the king only gave it all a holy and sacred character through giving orders or conducting supervision, but did not actually do anything himself. The ideal of Vietnam is that the king should be enlightened enough to reign without governing. When this factor was ignored, as in 1945, everything was seriously threatened. But a holy atmosphere is pervading the country and the predominant impression is that it is time to restore the old order in a new form."

In the following passage Bao Dai praises the great, noble and extraordinary sacrifices made by the Vietnamese people. However, he describes those immense sacrifices as a message to all countries, a message that is no longer an appeal as it used to be, but "a challenge", that is, a demand that those who are thus challenged should answer and act upon.

That demand has been expounded by Bao Dai in the above passage. Bao Dai demands that all imperialists and colonialists, and all their satellites, large or small, should

use all modern lethal means at their disposal to wipe communism from the earth and bring him back to Vietnam and help him regain his throne and realize his ideal—to reign but not govern—so that everyday he would again be able to revel, gamble, and hunt wild animals and unfortunate girls. All he would have to do to bring happiness to the people of Vietnam is to worship once every three years at the Nam Giao Temple¹⁰ after a night of *trai gioi*.¹¹

Whenever I think of that playboy-driven insane by his own debauchery I am filled with sorrow and regrets. For I had helped him separate himself from Pham Quynh, that arch-traitor, and had put into his mouth words that other traitors have since used to picture him as "the Number One Patriot of Vietnam" (Nghiêm Ke To, op. cit., p. 96).

In fact I was then only trying my best to act upon the watchword "Unity is life, division is death". In relating the above-mentioned events my only purpose is to shed some light on some historical facts.

PHAM KHAC HOE

1. S.M. Bao Dai: *Le Dragon d'Annam*, Plon, Paris, 1980.

2. A friend of mine, who had been imprisoned by the French for his revolutionary activities, then a teacher at a private school in Hue. Later he became a member of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

3. Later Chairman of the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

4. Later Minister of the Interior of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

5. Native district of President Ho Chi Minh.

6. Alias of Nguyen Binh Khiem (1491-1585), a scholar and poet of the 16th century with the reputation of a prophet.

7. The Hoanh Son range will shelter the Nguyen dynasty for ten thousand generations.

8. Anniversary of the day when Gia Long, the founder of the dynasty, mounted the throne.

9. It's worth it then, meaning his abdication.

10. A temple erected in the southern suburbs of Hue, the imperial capital, where the emperor comes to offer sacrifices to gods.

11. Abstaining from meat, wine, sex, etc. (before offering sacrifices to gods).

A Major Economic Policy:

TAKING AGRICULTURE ONE STEP FORWARD TOWARD LARGE-SCALE SOCIALIST PRODUCTION

To take agriculture to large-scale socialist production is not an entirely new problem? It has been the concern of the Communist Party of Vietnam for many years, but only during the process of application of this policy have the trend and form of this problem appeared more and more clearly. The Fifth Party Congress (March 1982) confirmed that taking agriculture to large-scale socialist production is a matter having a close relationship with the main questions of socialist industrialization in the period ahead. The Congress pointed out that it is necessary to devote our efforts to developing agriculture, bringing it one step forward toward large-scale socialist production in a structure in which there will exist close and rational coordination between agriculture, light industry (for the production of consumer goods) and heavy industry. This is a socio-economic policy of paramount importance which should be given priority in the initial stage of building socialism in our country.

The Need for a Correct Definition

The definition of large-scale socialist agricultural production is as follows: it is an agriculture in which the socialist relations of production hold absolute superiority; with regard to the forces of production, this agriculture should be supplied with machines, electricity and chemicals; with regard to its structure, there should be harmonious development of food

crops and industrial crops, crop cultivation and animal rearing, agriculture and forestry; it is a specialized and cooperativized agriculture which is correctly distributed so as to make the best use of manpower, land and other resources in the whole country and in each region; with regard to economic efficiency, this agriculture should attain high yields and high product quality.

However, to apply these principles in each period is no simple matter. There was a time when the opinion prevailed that a large-scale socialist agriculture means working on a big scale and that small cooperatives should be merged into big ones. Then there was the view that we should reorganize our agricultural production along the line of industrial production. This reorganization is necessary, but what form should it take? It is no simple matter to create many specialized teams in a cooperative having 500 hectares of land and 6,000—7,000 inhabitants and to direct all business from a centre. What steps to take in the mechanization of agriculture is another problem. Experiments conducted in this respect in many districts have brought out many difficulties. Besides, what is to be the role of the family economy (orchard, fish pond, animal rearing) in the process of taking our agriculture to large-scale socialist production. This is no simple problem either. Even in some developed socialist countries, great

attention has been paid to this economy in the last few years. So it is necessary for us to adopt a suitable form in each period.

Basing itself on the concrete conditions of our country and the experience gained in the past, the Fifth Party Congress charted the line for taking our agriculture to large-scale production in the eighties.

Planning

First of all, it is necessary to organize agricultural production in such a way that production and distribution can be carried out everywhere according to an overall national plan.

This is the primary condition for bringing our agriculture to large-scale production. We know that our agriculture faces great requirements: to produce enough food for society, to supply agricultural products to the consumer goods industry and to turn out products for export. All this requires the reorganization of agriculture on a national scale. This task must be performed in every production unit, every locality and throughout the country. In this way, not only the initiative and creative spirit of each production unit or locality but also the superiority of socialism, i.e. the concentration of efforts on a national scale can be brought into full play. Plans must be made for every locality to carry out production and distribution according to the national plan. This constitutes a condition for a division of labour and reorganization of agricultural production on a national scale, the acceleration of the socialization of agriculture and also an increase in agricultural productivity and output. For instance, we can grow large quantities of soya, but if this is not done according to a plan common to the whole country, only low efficiency would be attained.

To carry out production and distribution according to a national plan is to develop the strong points of socialism, i.e. planning and unified direction. It does not mean

having bureaucratic centralization and checking the initiative of the localities or grassroots units.

To conduct production and distribution according to the national plan means to engage in intensive cultivation, specialization of crops and comprehensive enterprise in order to develop crop cultivation, animal husbandry, product processing, and other occupations in the countryside.

It is necessary to achieve a rational division of labour in each grassroots unit and locality in order to carry out intensive cultivation and multiplication of crops; meanwhile we must redeploy the country's work force in order to expand the area of farmland. We must act with a high resolve, provide close guidance, work out definite plans and turn to account the experience gained formerly in the clearing of virgin land and recently in the building of new economic zones. Efforts should be made so that, after three five-year plans, we shall be able to make good use of 10 million hectares of agricultural land and 15 million hectares of forestland, and bring in an average of two harvests per year. Without a national plan to utilize cropland and forestland, without a proper division of labour in each grassroots unit, each locality and in the whole country, it will not be possible to take our agriculture to large-scale socialist production.

To organize agricultural production according to a national plan is to raise plants and animals and arrange occupations so that agricultural land and forestland can be used in a rational way, the environment is protected, land utilization is efficient, and all occupations will bring in substantial revenues.

This will bring out the superiority of our regime of socialist collective mastery, our control over manpower and land, and our ability to take agriculture forward to large-scale socialist production.

The Role of Science and Technology

The second point in taking our agriculture to large-scale socialist production is to push forward the scientific and technical revolution, establish the material and technical bases of agriculture and modernize farming.

Without the benefit of science and technology our agriculture cannot develop vigorously. But by basing ourselves on the actual conditions of our country, we must give a concrete content to our scientific and technical revolution for it to play an effective role in the advance of our agriculture. This work should be done actively, but in a practical way. We must avoid formalism and inefficiency. We must give proper priority to each scientific and technical measure, as pointed out by the Party Congress:

— To accelerate water conservation work with due attention to both irrigation and drainage. The main material basis of agriculture is land. The effective use of land to grow the suitable kinds of plants will result in a large volume of production and low costs. Water conservation is the principal measure to obtain this result. It exerts a great influence on crop yields, area expansion, soil improvement and field arrangement.

— Widespread application of the achievements of biology to farming. This is possible even now when farm work is still done mainly by hand. Biological measures applied to plants and animals (selection of breeds and strains, elimination of pests...) will help them develop vigorously. Agricultural production is the result of biological measures combined with economic and technical measures. This way to proceed is important and is possible in the present conditions. The experience gained in the last few years show that the use of good strains will raise yields by 10 to 20% or even more.

— Spreading the use of chemicals. Our main difficulty springs from

the lack of nitrogenous fertilizer. We must make the most of organic fertilizers while trying to get more chemical fertilizer by producing more phosphates and importing nitrogenous fertilizer. We must also protect plants and animals against pests, diseases, and epidemics.

— Gradual mechanization. Large-scale agricultural production requires the use of machines. But we must advance step by step. In the eighties we will only proceed slowly and in accordance with actual conditions in each region. There must be good coordination of mechanization with semi-mechanization and rudimentary means, and high economic efficiency should be our aim.

— Development of product processing, preservation and transport. This is an important point in our scientific and technical revolution. Its neglect will cause great losses and have bad effects on production.

This scientific and technical revolution calls for the mobilization of the material and mental potentials of our nation, particularly those of heavy industry. Meanwhile, we must step up export in order to cover our import of technical equipment which we are not yet in a position to produce.

Socialist Transformation

The third point is to complete the socialist transformation of agriculture in appropriate forms and stages. In the fulfilment of this task, the following points are to be noted:

— To continue to develop State farms in suitable regions. These farms should raise the proper crops and animals and perform certain agricultural tasks; they must set good examples in production and management.

— To complete agricultural cooperation by speeding up this work in the Nam Bo provinces. To this end, we must work out the appropriate forms of cooperation in order to win the peasants over to collective farming; we must carry

out the readjustment of land holdings in the countryside to pave the way for agricultural cooperation.

— To consolidate the cooperatives and production collectives; to raise the quality of the collective economic sector; to encourage the family economy (including orchards, fish ponds, animal husbandry, sideline occupations) which should develop in the right direction. The important point is to sum up the experience of vanguard units in three fields (ownership, management, distribution of products) and popularize it. The system of product-based contracts signed with workers and workers' groups is related to ownership, management, and distribution of products; it has been recognized as an appropriate form of organization and division of labour and distribution of products and has had a good effect on the development of farm production in the recent period; it must be perfected and broadly applied; meanwhile the negative phenomena which have surfaced must be overcome.

— To establish and broaden direct economic relations between the State and the cooperatives, the production collectives, and individual farmers; between industry and agriculture; between town and countryside; through State plans and economic contracts, through the purchase of agricultural goods and sale of industrial goods by the State, and through various forms of joint production and joint enterprise.

Importance of the District

The fourth point is to use the district as the main place in which to carry out the above three points.

The district should be built up into an economic structure. The various economic branches and production bases within the district should form a unified economic structure operating harmoniously. In the building of socialism in our country, the formation of district into an economic structure is an objective necessity. The various production units cannot work in-

dependently and in isolation. Between the agricultural co-operatives on the one hand, and the State-run industrial enterprises, transport and communication units, machines stations and stores in the district on the other, there exists an organic relationship. Moreover, there is division of labour not only between the various sections of a cooperative for the production of a given commodity, but also between various agricultural branches, between agriculture and industry, etc. It takes place not only in each production unit, but also in each region and in the whole country. Therefore, it is necessary to build the district up by combining agriculture and industry (or forestry, agriculture, and industry; or fishery, agriculture, and industry, according to the situation in each district). In other words, we shall take the district as a geographical unit in which to carry out division of labour; reorganization of production; use of manpower and land, forest, sea; carry out intensive farming and specialization of crops; develop crop cultivation and animal husbandry; ensure co-ordination between the agricultural cooperatives and the handicraft and other production units set up by them on the one hand, and the State-run production bases, technical stations, and shops (for buying agricultural products and selling consumer goods) on the other. The district is a most suitable geographical unit for conducting the division of labour. In the present conditions, when the division of labour and organization of production are only beginning, the coordination of production units in the district must be carried out in a gradual way and in appropriate forms. For instance, exchange of products through economic contracts, joint investment of capital... Step by step, we can use higher forms of coordination between the various production units in the district.

By taking the district as basis for division of labour and reorgani-

zation of production, we shall be able to overcome the shortcomings of individual production units and make a better use of manpower, land and the various occupations in the district.

The economic structure of the district, formed in the economic conditions of each district, oriented toward specialized production and comprehensive enterprise, and stemming from the requirements and possibilities of the cooperatives and production collectives in the district—this structure must be related to the plans of the province, and the whole country.

That is why, to build the economic structure of the district is not merely to establish a number of industrial bases in it, but to set up production units on the basis of a plan worked out by the district, and help the cooperatives to develop; conduct a rational division of labour; make the best possible use of the land; and turn out the largest possible volume of products. The enlargement of production in the cooperatives requires effective help from the district. The latter must bear this in mind when setting up industrial bases, machine stations, and other facilities. Each step in the development of the production units and farming cooperatives will pose new problems to the district regarding the development of the coordination between the various production bases. That is the process of building the agricultural-industrial structure of the district and carrying out division of labour in each production base and in the whole district.

In the building of the economic structure of the district we must avoid the tendency to focus solely on the building of a managerial apparatus or a number of enterprises and to neglect the requirements of the production units, and the building and development of the farming cooperatives. We must also avoid the error which consists in concentrating on the building

and development of individual production units or cooperatives while neglecting their coordination, which should assume appropriate forms.

The building of the district must aim at satisfying the needs of the district population, developing export and contributing to the national construction. Parallel to the building of the economy, we must develop education, public-health work, physical education and sports..., organize the material and cultural life of the people, build a new countryside, coordinate economic activities with national defence and turn each district into a stronghold to defend the country.

The building of the district as mentioned above must be the concern of the State, the economic and cultural bases in the district and the district inhabitants. In this work, we must act upon the motto: "Let the State and the people pool their efforts." The contribution of the population in physical labour, intelligence and talent, and in materials and capital is of paramount importance. We must review our work after the completion of each step; we must elaborate plans to build all the district while focusing efforts on those lying in the main regions producing food and industrial crops and those accounting for large quantities of marketable goods, particularly export goods. Attention should be paid to training cadres for the district.

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* *

The above is the gist of the endeavour to take agriculture gradually to large-scale socialist production. We must know how to apply the Party's viewpoint to take the raising of each crop and each animal, and to each economic sector, each region. We must find for each of them appropriate forms of production. If we fail to grasp this viewpoint, to study the concrete situation and to pay attention to the experience of the masses and if we are fettered by outdated viewpoints, we shall be unable to perform the task of bringing our agriculture to large-scale socialist production.

DAO DUY TUNG

THE SOLIDARITY-FOR-PRODUCTION TEAM IN AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVIZATION IN NAM BO

Several years ago in the movement for agricultural cooperativization in Nam Bo many production collectives and agricultural cooperatives established a good record, but no few units showed bad performance and eventually disbanded in some places.

This was due mainly to non-observance of Lenin's principle of gradual advance to higher levels of organization.

Of late the resolution and directives of the Communist Party of Vietnam's Political Bureau and Secretariat on the transformation of agriculture have criticized undue haste and stressed the need for a gradual and steady advance through transitional stages toward the collectivization of production.¹

The Objective Need for Transitional Stages

Following the readjustment of land holdings many places in Nam Bo set up production collectives or cooperatives composed of former poor and landless peasants without going through a transitional stage. Difficulties soon cropped up as material and technical bases were almost non-existent, and the per capita land holding very small. There was no field re-arrangement, no irrigation, no facilities, etc., thus leaving production at the mercy of nature. Worse still, the shortage of draught power and working implements, both rudimentary and mechanized, hampered tilling, irrigation and drainage and, to top it all, available capital was insignificant or inexistent.

Besides, the peasants were not acquainted with collective work. That is why the above-mentioned units showed only changes in ownership relations but none in production relations and management. As a matter of fact, they only grew rice and made no attempt to advance toward specialized or diversified farming and to promote stockbreeding, small industry or handicrafts. They neither applied new cultivation techniques nor used new strains. Managerial cadres were not conversant with the managerial principles of socialist collective production. Most of the collective units had not worked out the necessary economic-technical norms nor did they apply correctly the principle of distribution according to labour. Hence the low labour productivity and incomes.

Take for instance the cooperative of Giong Rieng district, Kien Giang province: established in November 1978 after a land readjustment, with a total area of 505 hectares (4,545 square metres per capita), and with poor peasants and lower-middle peasants accounting for 91% and upper-middle peasants for 9% of membership, it had neither tractors nor cultivators but only 4 threshing machines, 62 buffaloes and oxen, which were not yet cooperativized for lack of fund, and a very small fixed capital: 82.9 dong per farmer in 1980 (while a good cooperative in Ninh Binh, Cho Gao district, had 265 dong).

This poor material base did not help the cooperative develop its production. The soil was not culti-

vated on schedule and with appropriate techniques. Owing to defective management, two years after its founding (1980) it still had not established the necessary economic-technical norms, nor a system of rewards and sanctions for the management of labour. Every year a part of its land was left untilled. Its rice yield was only 1,362 kg per hectare as against 2,500 kg per hectare harvested by individual peasants. The share of the collective economy in the income of a co-op member's family keeps on decreasing:

1979: 72.3%; 1980: 56.3%; 1981: 46.6%.

As accumulation did not increase, stockbreeding, small industry and handicrafts did not develop.

On the other hand, some production collectives which had gone through a transitional form managed to build adequate material, technical and psychological bases and develop their production.

Thus transitional stages are necessary in agricultural cooperativization; one of these transitional forms is the solidarity-for-production team which has itself to be suited to the conditions prevailing in the Mekong delta at present.

It is necessary to go through transitional stages when progressing from small individual production to collective economic organization at a high level of socialization (high-level cooperative in the North). Each transitional stage calls for an appropriate form of production organization in which production relations and productive forces constantly evolve. Take for instance the change in ownership relations:

Step 1: Before collectivizing the means of production (land² and implements), there is no change in ownership relations and distribution relations as yet. There are only initial changes in labour relations and in the building of some common material and technical bases.

Step 2: Progressing from the partial to the complete collectivization of the means of production of individual peasants, socialist principles begin to be applied: production according to plan, initial specialization of labour, application of scientific and technical achievements, irrigation, mechanization, initial distribution according to labour.

Corresponding to these steps the following forms of organization have appeared in Vietnam:

In the South	In the North
Stage 1: Solidarity-for-production team	Labour exchange team
Stage 2: Production collective Cooperative	Low-level cooperative High-level cooperative

The solidarity-for-production team dealt with in this article is a name common to many transitional forms in step 1: irrigation team, plant-protection team, new-strain team... Although their level of socialization differs, they all aim at preparing material, economic, technical and psychological conditions for the building of production collectives corresponding to low-level cooperatives in the North.

The Transitional Character of Solidarity-for-production Team

In many places it is viewed as a preparatory step for collectivization, a psychological preparation to acquaint the peasants with collective life through simple collective activities. Production is still individual in character. The solidarity-for-production team has only three main tasks: to exchange labour; to receive materials from the State for distribution to its members; and

to mobilize the peasants to fulfil their obligations to the State. Hence the view held by some that the solidarity-for-production team "stands on the margin of socialism" — which explains why it is slighted and even ignored in some places.

In fact, in solidarity-for-production teams with a good record their activities go beyond mere "drilling" collective life and socialist elements begin to appear. Some instances: solidarity-for-production team No. 9 at Ke An — Ke Sach has accumulated enough fund to buy such means of production as tractors, insecticide sprayers, etc. The solidarity-for-production teams in Tien Giang have re-arranged their fields, done irrigation work, etc., showing that they are in a transitional stage to socialism.

"Transition" implies a stage in which new elements appear and old ones disappear. Transition does not mean only "drilling" in collective life but also comprises transformation and elevation to a higher level. In its evolution the solidarity-for-production team develops material factors, the embryos of collective production. These elements cause the peasants to get together, thus creating strength for the collective economy and premises for advancing toward a higher form: the production collective.

Here many old economic relations still remain: the means of production are still **owned** privately (implements) or **used** privately (land). Therefore distribution relations have not yet changed. Most of the peasants' economic relations are still closely bound to the free market. Production is still scattered and unorganized.

However, if old economic relations unavoidably still remain, it is necessary to create new economic factors in an active way and cause them to prevail in production activities if one is to go ahead.

Depending on the characteristics of each locality the solidarity-for-production team may have its own

orientation and form of development. But in order to progress to a higher form, the production collective, it must fulfil 4 conditions:

First, to build some initial common material and technical bases; create conditions for applying new scientific and technical achievements; take steps toward scientific and technological revolution;

Second, the poor peasants, the main force of future production collective, have accumulated enough capital and sufficient economic potential for effective investment in production;

Third, the managerial cadres can handle management of production; and

Fourth, the peasants have been sufficiently acquainted with collective production through experience of voluntary collective work.

Having undergone the test of practice, the solidarity-for-production team, a transitional form of agricultural cooperativization in the Mekong delta, is considered a universally valid and necessary³ step. This transitional form is being studied and applied by all localities in the South according to their concrete conditions. It will help the Southern countryside advance firmly on the path of socialist transformation.

PHAM BICH HANH

1. In many other instances the cause of the failure is that cooperativization was not preceded by readjustment of land holdings. This was treated in Vietnam Courier No. 1—1983.

2. Land is owned by the entire people but used by individuals or collectives.

3. We do not rule out the possibility of going direct from individual production to the organization of production collectives, bypassing the stage of the solidarity-for-production team, wherever favourable material, technical and social conditions exist or big investments are made by the State.

Land-holding Readjustment linked to Manpower Redeployment and Building of Production Collectives in Long An province

Long An (5,100 square kilometres; population 865,000) has set itself the central task of eradicating exploitation in the countryside and carrying out land-holding readjustment, land allotment to poor and landless peasants linked to manpower redeployment and building of production collectives. In 1976-1978 the province concentrated on liquidating the vestiges of feudal exploitation by landlords and rich peasants, putting an end to land tenancy and land rent collection while confiscating illegally appropriated land and doing away with land usurpation. More than 12,300 hectares of land were thus recovered and 3,200 hectares allotted to peasants, in the first place to families of revolutionary martyrs, disabled soldiers and those who had given support to the revolution, who had no or little

land. From 1979 to 1982 the province urged rich peasants and rural bourgeois to cede land to the State. This land was allotted to individual peasant households and production collectives. In places where production collectives or solidarity-for-production teams had not yet been set up, the land was provisionally allotted to peasant groups who would organize production collectives later on.

Land-holding readjustment was carried out in accordance with the actual conditions prevailing in each region of the province. In Dong Thap Muoi (Plain of Reeds) where most of the land had been reclaimed by peasants and put under extensive farming with extensive land appropriation, the province divided the land into three categories according to soil quality and entrusted to each family

0.3—0.4 hectare (not including house, garden, fish pond). In other regions where most of the land had long been in the hands of landlords and feudalists, the province, basing itself on State policy and taking into account the attitude of each exploiter, enforced such measures as confiscation, or forcible cession to poor and landless peasants. By the end of 1982, in implementation of those measures more than 2,500 families of upper-middle peasants had ceded 3,622 hectares, and 133 families of rural bourgeois 672 hectares. Moreover, the province had recovered 322 hectares and, in implementation of State policy on land allotment, distributed 1,085 hectares to 1,648 peasant families and 2,439 hectares to production collectives.

Together with the readjustment of land holdings Long An successfully redeployed manpower and step by step organized the peasants for collective production. Between 1976 and 1979 2,600 solidarity-for-production teams had disbanded for lack of experience. But by the end of 1981 the province had consolidated and set up 430 teams. Since early 1982 Long An has resolutely linked land-holding readjustment to manpower redeployment and the building of production collectives, taking Tan Thanh district as a pilot scheme. Lying in Dong Thap Muoi this district has about 73,200 hectares of land with a population of 16,000 and fairly extensive land holdings (more than 4 hectares on an average), with scores of families occupying over 20 hectares). On the other hand, nearly 200 families had little or no land. The province classified the land into categories then set 0.4 hectare as the limit for land holdings; of the remaining

2,400 hectares it allotted 882 hectares to poor peasants and 1,247 hectares to 44 production collectives for them to build new economic zones. Within the first 3 months of 1982 all the landless peasants in 5 communes of Tan Thanh district received land.

Also since 1982, after a drive for land-holding readjustment, 1,435 peasants in Vam Co district and 292 others in Can Duoc and Can Giuoc districts volunteered to go and build new economic zones. On this basis the province set up 44 production collectives comprising 1,013 peasants right in Tan Thanh district. In other districts land-holding readjustment also went along with building production collectives. In this way, by the beginning of 1983, 81 communes out of the 141 in Long An were engaged in organizing production collectives. Production collectives were set up in all the communes in Vinh Hung, Can Giuoc, Duc Hue districts and the rural suburbs of Tan An town. The southern districts (key rice-growing areas where population density is high) built production collectives tilling 40—50 hectares of land each while the northern districts (mainly in the Plain of Reeds) exploited 70—100 hectares each; many production collectives had 150—300 hectares each. Nearly all production collectives in the province drew up production plans for each crop and after one year of collective work their members already saw their income rise including those who were formerly middle peasants. By the end of 1982, 184 out of 448 production collectives were applying the contract system down to individual farmers. Thus the contract system is becoming a

new booster for production collectives in Long An province. However, land-holding readjustment and the building of production collectives still proceed rather slowly and the Party and State line and policy are not yet correctly applied in some places. Nevertheless, Long An has acquired initial experience in land-holding readjustment, manpower redeployment and building of production collectives. On this basis, production collectives are to be set up in all remaining communes—a target set for the end of this year.

Since the beginning of this year Long An has mobilized its population to reclaim land in the Plain of Reeds and the northern part of Ben Luc and Thu Thua districts, while continuing to encourage people to build new economic zones. The province has helped Tan Thanh district draw up a master plan and mobilize over ten thousand people to build an irrigation system, a communication network and a number of welfare projects... thus creating favourable conditions for people coming from other places in the province and from provinces in the North to build new economic zones. The province also has made investments in agriculture with a view to producing half a million tonnes of food grain this year. It is planning to train more than 20,000 cadres for management, veterinary service, animal husbandry, plant protection, etc. This personnel is to serve as a core for the consolidation and building of production collectives in all three regions—coastal, plain and mountain—of the province.

P. V.

19 MILLION TONNES OF FOOD GRAIN IN 1985

Vietnam plans to produce 19 million tonnes of food, including subsidiary food crops equivalent to more than 3 million tonnes of paddy in 1985.

To reach this target the following measures are to be carried out:

—To reclaim virgin land and grow rice, obtaining an average rice yield of 2 tonnes per hectare on 80,000 hectares and 2.6 tonnes per hectare on 150,000 hectares.

—To multiply crops on 250,000 hectares planted with subsidiary food crops (2 tonnes/ha), 160,000 hectares planted with Winter-Spring rice (3.16 tonnes/ha), 102,000 hectares with Summer-Autumn rice (3 tonnes/ha) and 482,000 hectares with 10th-lunar-month rice (2.36 tonnes/ha).

—To supply enough good rice strains to the whole rice area, and increase input of fertilizers: 9 million more tonnes of manure and 300,000 more tonnes of nitrogenous fertilizer. To carry out strictly the transplanting of rice on schedule on 1.2 million hectares (the transplanting being done hitherto behind schedule), increase the density of rice seedlings on 3 million hectares and fulfil the task of pest control on the whole rice area.

These factors are all important and follow this order of priority: intensive cultivation, crop multiplication and reclamation of virgin land.

Special attention must be paid to intensive cultivation. A proper intensive cultivation will give us 3,870,000 more tonnes of food in 1985. If good rice strains are used in an organized way an increase of 10—15 per cent in rice yield can be obtained. A rational crop structure in each area can give an

increase of 15—20 per cent and the use of selected strains will make it possible to have a 40—50 per cent increase in yield.

With regard to fertilizers, during the present five-year plan, if every hectare of rice is given one more tonne of stable manure, we may obtain an additional 270,000 tonnes of paddy (it is estimated here that every additional tonne of stable manure will give 30 more kg of paddy but in fact an increase of 200—300 kg of paddy has been obtained in many places). Besides, the State also plans to supply food crops with an additional 300,000 tonnes of nitrogenous fertilizer annually. If properly used, a tonne of chemical fertilizer can increase rice yields by 2—3 tonnes per hectare.

With regard to planting technique, at present, too early or too late rice transplanting still affects nearly 30 per cent of the whole rice area (about 1.2 million hectares). If the transplanting is done strictly on schedule, rice yield may increase by 0.3 tonnes per hectare. If the proper density of rice seedlings is planted on over 3 million hectares, which until now are too thinly planted (in some places, only 25—30 tufts of seedlings per square metre), an increase of 0.6 million tonnes of paddy can be obtained annually.

Every year, pests and diseases cause considerable loss to food crops, reducing output by over 20 per cent. Efforts should be made in plant protection to reduce losses. If we can retrieve only 7 per cent of the loss, 0.812 million more tonnes of paddy will be added to total output annually.

Crop multiplication and land reclamation are two important measures to expand food crop area. However, more attention should be given to crop multiplication because whereas the reclamation of 230,000 hectares of virgin land will give 0.472 million more tonnes of food, crop multiplication on the same area will give 2.708 million tonnes. In our country, it is not too difficult to raise the rate of land utilization from 1.3 to 1.5.

To facilitate intensive cultivation, crop multiplication and reclamation of virgin land, the agricultural branch must carry out the four following tasks:

1. To speed up the building of the material and technical bases for agriculture which include water conservancy works to irrigate 3.6 million hectares of paddy fields (0.96 million hectares more than in 1980); the drainage of 0.2 million hectares, and the prevention of invasion by sea water for 0.25—0.30 million hectares; the production of more organic fertilizer including 400,000 hectares of azolla pinnata, and 10,000 hectares of sesbania; the rational utilization of chemical fertilizers; the perfection of the system of production; the supply of seeds and the prevention of pests and diseases, and the supply of adequate farming tools; to try to raise the proportion of mechanized tillage to 45 per cent by 1985.

2. To define the system of crop cultivation for each area.

3. To consolidate and expand the socialist relations of production, and strengthen managerial work.

4. To build high-yield rice areas and high-yield subsidiary food crop areas: 2.4 million hectares of rice in the Red River and the Mekong river deltas producing 9.7 million tonnes of paddy and 420,000 hectares of subsidiary food crops yielding the equivalent of 1.7 million tonnes of paddy.

DUONG HONG DAT

VIETNAM COURIER

THE MEKONG DELTA

Geologists hold that 6,000 years ago, an invasion by the sea took place in the Mekong delta; then the water receded. According to some documents, the sea has also left traces of its presence 2,000 years ago in Phu Lan, Long Binh, near Ho Chi Minh City. If this is true, then we can say that only a few hundred years after the construction of Co Loa citadel in the North did the land on which Saigon-Cholon was to be built, emerge from the sea. For millions of years there was continued contention between the sea and the rivers. A geographer wrote: "Between the river (Mekong) and the sea, there has been a long struggle for space. When the river is the more powerful, it dumps alluvium into the sea, driving it farther east. When the sea is the more powerful, it pushes the river waters northwestward, and adds salt to alluvium, making the soil saline."

The expansion of the land at the expense of the sea is a phenomenon which has gone on for ages. Those

of us who have visited Ben Tre and Tra Vinh have certainly noticed the *giong* — raised stretches of land of crescent shape, lying perpendicular to the river mouths. Their sandy soil is suitable for the growing of dry food crops and perennial trees. Geographers hold that they are vestiges of seacoast. In face of the unrelenting onslaught of fresh water and alluvium, the sea had to give way.

This phenomenon is most visible at Cape Ca Mau. It has been reckoned that the land gains about 60 metres a year on the sea. Dr. Tran Kim Thach calls Cape Ca Mau "a thorny problems for geographers," and comes to this conclusion:

"The law governing the silting-up taking place in Ca Mau is applicable to the whole of the Hau Giang delta. Only if we understand this law, can we control this plain and exploit its natural resources profitably. The vegetation growing on the swamps of this delta, will

not only contribute to retaining this soil but will also make it suitable for the growing of industrial crops."

From century to century, the rivers have perseveringly carried silt, which forms plains on which forests grow. In the submerged swampy regions along the seacoast, the forests in their turn contribute to retaining alluvium and enlarging the foreshore. These interrelated effects contribute to the enrichment of the soil and show the inner balance of nature.

The role played by forests in covering hillslopes with greenery, retaining water and regulating the climate is well known. In this delta, the forest fully plays this important role; so its protection assumes great importance.

Since liberation, Prof. Pham Hoang Ho has written many articles denouncing the US imperialists for "destroying forests in South Vietnam with a violence never before recorded in history." They used "the latest scientific achievements to

destroy nature in our country."² Citing figures supplied by American scientists and the Pentagon themselves, he wrote that by 1971 American bombs and shells had dug 21 million craters in areas totalling 140,000 hectares, mostly forests and forestland. The Pentagon admitted that its defoliants had destroyed nearly 2 million hectares of forests, an area equaling all the farmland in the North. Even as this crime met with general condemnation, they levelled 300,000 more hectares of forests by using giant bulldozers. The same destruction was applied to our coastal forests. This explains the gradual exhaustion of our national resources in the South, particularly fish and shrimps. Some species have even totally disappeared.

Mangrove forests which grow on land flooded with brackish or salt water are a source of food for aquatic animals. According to a scientific survey, with regard to many kinds of fish and shrimps in the world the catch is in direct proportion to the areas of mangrove forest close to where they live.

The growth of fish, shrimps, and crabs depends on the proportion of nutritive elements contained in their food.

In the coastal forests, leaves falling from plants and trees are sometimes directly eaten by crabs and snails, which will in turn fall prey to fish. But generally, after falling into the water, the leaves are decomposed by the action of bacteria. These bacteria and other substances contained in the leaves are eaten by tiny organisms called planktons which are the main source of food for shrimps. Then the shrimps are swallowed by the

fish, and small fish are eaten by bigger ones. So the food chain begins in the mangrove forest; this explains why aquatic animals are so abundant in the South. An hectare of tropical forest dumps ten tonnes of leaves per year; we imagine the quantity of food supplied to aquatic animals by three hundred thousand hectares of mangrove forests in the South.

The natural resources in the Mekong delta are still very abundant, but definitely not so as formerly. This is quite understandable. As the population grows, more food is required. But wanton exploitation of the land, the absence of protection for the environment, and the resulting rapid squandering of natural resources characterized the old regime. The situation was aggravated by war and neo-colonialism in both depth and scope.

What we must do when seeking to exploit the large potentialities of the Mekong delta is to respect nature, protect the environment, and take care not to upset the ecological balance.

The Gifts of Nature

One of the greatest favours bestowed by nature on South Vietnam is its climate. Northerners who visit the Mekong delta are deeply impressed by its luxuriant vegetation. In the rainy season, by merely looking day after day at the green hedge around a house we may notice how quickly the plants grow. We see riceplants everywhere in the fields at various stages of growth. Here they are newly transplanted, there they are being harvested; elsewhere they are in the ear. Technically speaking,

this method of cultivation is not to be encouraged. It reflects unorganized work and contributes to the spread of plant diseases and pests. But it shows that here plants and trees receive enough sunlight at all periods of the year to flower and bear fruit. Up north in the Red River delta the peasants would be most anxious in spring if the sky remain cloudy for a fortnight or a month at a stretch. Then the riceplants, for lack of sunshine, would be pale and sickly like a young woman shut up in her chamber all the year round. The peasants, like the riceplants, impatiently long for the sun and the first clap of thunder which announces rain. But this is not the worry of the peasants in the Mekong delta, because there is no lack of sunshine here even in the rainy season. Most of the time there is sunshine in the morning and rain in the afternoon.

The Mekong delta lies in a tropical monsoon region and is more or less under the influence of equatorial climatic conditions. This influence grows more visible as we go farther south. The average temperature does not vary a great deal during the year. The difference in temperature between a warm month and a "cold" month (cold merely means less warm) is insignificant, and people do not suffer discomfort from sudden changes in the weather as they do in the North, where the thermometer may fall 12°C within the same day. There is no need for a farmer to differentiate between summer and winter crops, though each kind of plant naturally has its own most favourable growing time. Total number of sunny hours is great;

and the temperature totals 10,000—12,000 degrees a year. This is a basic advantage for obtaining high yields.

In the Mekong delta, there are two distinct seasons: the dry season which runs from October to April, and the rainy season, from May to September. Generally speaking, the latter accounts for 90% of total yearly rainfall leaving barely 10% for the dry season. Wind blowing in the dry season is 70% northeasterly; the rest is easterly. In the rainy season, southwesterly wind prevails; some of it is westerly. Wind velocity is 2—3 metres per second; it decreases as the wind blows deeper into the mainland.

On the whole yearly rainfall is abundant in the Mekong delta, but it varies according to the region. At Moc Hoa in the north, it is 1,200 millimetres, barely enough to compensate for evaporation; it is 1,500 millimetres in the central part of the delta, and 1,750 millimetres at Chau Doc, Rach Gia, Tra Vinh. It is more abundant in the south due to the influence of the sea which surrounds this region from three sides, and that of the forests and mountains in the west; it is 2,300 millimetres at Ca Mau town and 2,500 millimetres or more at the southernmost tip of the country.

Rainfall is evenly distributed in the wet season; this is not the case in the North which is subjected to typhoons. In the Mekong delta the frequency rate is 10% (that is, occurring only ten times in a century) for rainfall to be as high as 170—189 mm. in three successive days and 264 mm. in five days³. In general, rainfall decreases

as we go north. It may be as high as 382 millimetres in five days at Ca Mau, but the maximum recorded is only 127 millimetres at Moc Hoa. Typhoons may cause rain, but their effect is most visible on the tide. In October—November, at the beginning of the dry season, typhoons would rise in the East Sea, causing a markedly high rising of the tide. Likewise the monsoon will drive sea water deep into the hinterland, seriously affecting plant growth.

There may be spells of drought even during the rainy season. According to data collected over a period of 46 years, 10-day spells of drought occurred in the rainy season at the rate of 83% (83 times in a century) at Can Tho, 87% at Rach Gia, 94% at Ca Mau and 100% (that is every year) at Moc Hoa. This makes it necessary for the peasants sometimes to irrigate their fields manually even in the rainy season.

A calamity which may cause serious drops in rice output is plant diseases and pests. However, the destruction would be greatly reduced if the right planting schedule is observed, good seeds sown, and plant protection ensured.

The soil in the Mekong delta is fairly fertile. In future the area of cropland may be increased to three million hectares, or one million hectares more than at present. Most of the land can give two crops a year, some of it three.

Rice is the most important food crop in the Mekong delta. According to many agronomists, Nam Bo may be one of the early rice-producing regions in the world; it is here that wild rice was domes-

ticated. Nam Bo is a new land, however, and cannot be one of the earliest rice-growing regions.

Wild rice (*Iua ma*: ghost rice) looks like the ordinary rice plant, but the joints on its stem are far between. It grows quickly and is not affected by flood. Each stem has only a few ears and each ear a few thin and elongated seeds. The grains do not ripen all at the same time. When ripe they are black. Falling into the water they are eaten by fish. Those seeds which can take root in the mud will sprout the next year.

Wild rice has no economic value, but poor people living close to where it grows may derive some food from it. Two people would go on a small boat among the plants. One would row while the other would beat the rice ears with a stick causing the grain to fall into the boat. The grain of wild rice has a long stem and has to be soaked in water before pounding. When cooked, it gives off a peculiar, pleasant fragrance.

Rice Not the Only Crop

To stress the importance of rice does not mean to make light of the other crops. Sorghum, recently grown only experimentally, is now planted on tens of thousands of hectares. Paradoxically enough, this dry crop can be planted in Long Xuyen which is flooded several months a year. It can be grown according to two methods: it may be sown at the same time as rice at the beginning of the wet season after the first rains; then it can be reaped before the floods come. Or it can be sown in ricefields when the riceplants begin to ripen. After the rice harvest comes the dry

season, but the fields are still wet enough to allow sorghum to grow. If necessary, one may have to irrigate the fields and manure the plants. Soya, a source of protein for the poor and an indispensable food for domestic animals, has high economic value and bids fair to become a crop of the future. Peasants in Hau Giang province usually grow soya right after the harvest of the winter-spring rice crop, when the fields are still humid. In the fields still bristling with rice stubble, they dibble soya seeds. After several months of tending (watering the plants once in a while with a solution of nitrogenous fertilizer), each hectare may yield as much as one tonne of beans. After rice, soya is considered the most important crop in the Mekong delta.

Listing the crops which can be grown in the Mekong delta would be of little meaning for almost all the crops grown in the country can be planted here. The question is which kind will bring the greatest benefit to the national economy. Keeping this in mind, after rice, we can mention soya, maize, sorghum, peanuts... Pineapple, sugarcane, manioc can be planted on newly cleared land; they can grow on aluminous soil and reduce its acidity. Coconut palms can be grown on the banks of canals and along the seacoast, mulberry on the sandy banks of rivers; and sugarcane and jute, and finally rush which is best grown in submerged fields. Jute, which has a high economic value, can be raised extensively here.

Due mention should be made of fruit trees in the Mekong delta. Even if you have tasted the fruits sold at the "open-air fruit shop" at the My Thuan ferry, even if you

have seen the immense stretches of ricefields, I would strongly recommend a visit to the orchards of Nam Bo. In May when the rainy season begins, take a motorboat to an island on a river, walk under the shady trees and cross the many footbridges, some of them mere tree trunks, laid across canals and ditches which bring alluvial water from the river to the trees. Here it's a wonder land of fruit. Treading on a soft carpet of dead leaves amidst fruit-laden trees—rambutan, jambosa, litchi, etc.—you may suddenly come upon the tiny watch tower of the garden keeper hitherto hidden from sight by the thick foliage. Or you may find a hammock hung between two trees. Lie in it, admire the fruit, and muse over the generosity of nature, and the prospects facing the "orchard economy".

As said above, most of the Mekong delta is made up of alluvial deposits. Generally speaking, the soil is heavy, with a high percentage of organic matters, though poor in phosphorous substance. Aluminosity and salinity are major obstacles to crop cultivation. They can be gradually removed, however, by building irrigation works and applying the proper farming techniques and biological measures.

It is not easy to find on the surface of the earth a region endowed with all the ideal natural conditions for crop growing and human life.

Advantages are always accompanied by drawbacks. But by using his brains and his hands, man can remove obstacles and conquer difficulties and even in some instances turn them into advantages. Bearing this in mind, we can affirm that

nature has offered basic advantages to the Mekong delta, in spite of important hurdles. This delta is level, fertile and rich in agricultural potentials, it is endowed with plenty of light, heat, rainfall, wind, moisture and also a precious treasure still hidden in its subsoil. We must carefully exploit it, taking care not to devastate the forests or pollute the environment. Wherever the ecological balance is destroyed, changes will happen in the climate; water will become scarce while floods grow more violent. Much of this is not caused by nature. If irrigation work is not done with due respect paid to the laws of nature, it will be labour lost or may even cause harm.

Our ancestors have laboured for many centuries to arrange the Mekong delta as we see it today. Under the socialist regime, conscious of our role of masters of society and of nature and drawing on the achievements of science and technology, we shall do our best to make the Mekong delta even more fertile and beautiful. We shall develop it in accordance with both the laws of nature and our wishes.

PHAN QUANG

In our next issue: *The formation a rice bowl*

1. Tran Kim Thach: *Water in Ca Mau* (in Vietnamese).

2. Pham Hoang Ho: *Forests in South Vietnam and Land Clearing* (in Vietnamese).

3. From 7 p.m. September 23 to 7 p.m. Sept. 24, 1963, 731mm of rain fell in Thanh Hoa. The figure was 286mm on October 15, 1962, in Dong Hoi (Binh Tri Thien) and rose to 472mm after four days (Nguyen Xien, Pham Ngoc Toan, Phan Tat Duc: *Characteristics of the Climate of North Vietnam*, in Vietnamese).

FOR BETTER BREEDS IN ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

For many years now, especially in the last few years, stockbreeding in Vietnam has made substantial progress not only in quantitative terms, but also in measures which have contributed to solving the question of food and improving the life of the people and increasing the national income.

Crossbreeding

Vietnam has many valuable indigenous animal species such as the "Y" (pronounced 'ee), Mong Cai, Ba Xuyen and Thuoc Nhieu pigs, or the yellow and humped oxen, or the Ngo and Re buffaloes, or the Ri, Dong Cao and Mia fowls... In the past fifteen years or so, several countries (the Soviet Union, Cuba, the Federal Republic of Germany, France...) have shown interest in studying animal species in Asia including Vietnam, regarding them as genetic banks accounting for some of the best qualities in species of the tropical regions, such as high breeding rate, high resistance to disease, heat and humidity, and adaptability to coarse feeds.

There is a tendency in the whole of Southeast Asia to overestimate the qualities of imported thoroughbred species while neglecting or paying little attention to local breeds even though the latter are supplying the greater part of foodstuffs for the local populations.

One of the urgent measures to improve the local breeds and make the most of the strong points of crossbred species in order to create new genetic groups with good qualities is crossbreeding which is known in Vietnam as "economic breeding".

This chiefly consists of crossing a local female animal with a highly productive imported male with a view to quickly increasing the number of crossbred animals. That is why, the crossing according to the formulas: a Dai Bach pig (Yorkshire) with an "Y" pig, a Dai Bach with a Mong Cai, or a Lang Hong with a Landrace pig, have been widely practised in a growing number of localities. Together with other formulas this has brought the proportion of crossbred pigs in the country up to about 40% of total at present. The same has also been done with regard to oxen. For instance, the crossing of a Sind ox with a Yellow cow of the local breed has given crossbred animals weighing 20% more than a thoroughbred local animal, while a Holstein dairy cow coupled to a Sind or Yellow ox with Sind blood has created a new generation of dairy cows giving about 2,000 litres of milk per year. This is still a modest quantity but it has never been obtained from any local breed. Among the fowls, the local "Ri" breed combined with imported productive species like

Plymouth, Cornish, Rhode Island or Leghorn species have also resulted in higher yields of eggs and meat while preserving the qualities of the local species such as prolificness and high resistance to disease. Recent attempts to cross the local *bau* species of duck with imported species such as the Peking breed, or the imported Anh Dao breed with the local breed called *co* have opened up bright prospects for the production of more and bigger duck eggs and more meat while preserving the qualities of the local breeds such as their rusticity which enables them to be raised in all places and seasons. Thus, in addition to the combined raising of rice and pigs, we can also combine rice growing with duck raising.

The Problem of Acclimatization

In the present-day world there have developed numerous highly productive animal species. Many breeders have achieved record yields, especially for poultry. For instance, some sub-species of Leghorn fowls give an average of 280 eggs a year. Some dairy farms obtain an average of 6,000 litres of milk a year per head of animal. These achievements in the world are being introduced into Vietnam and efforts are being made to cross imported species with local species to increase the number as well as the weight of the animals raised. However, transportation provokes physiological reactions from the animals and changes in latitudes and longitudes lead to changes in the environment. That is why, animals imported into our country must go through a period of acclimatization, and the bigger the animals the more difficult the acclimatization. Production is also liable to changes when crossbreeding is involved. Therefore, acclimatization is a long and difficult pro-

cess which must be undertaken only on the basis of careful calculations.

The imported high-yielding breeds such as the *dai bach*, D.E. (German *Dai Bach*), Landrace, Duroc, and Cornwall are nuclei for the reproduction of thoroughbred animals, which are then used by crossing an imported male with a local female. The Holstein cows raised on the Moc Chau plateau and to a lesser extent in Lam Dong in Central Vietnam still retain their average yield of 3,500 litres of milk or more a year in the conditions of a mean temperature exceeding 20 degrees C and a degree of humidity exceeding 60%.

The Scientific Council of the Ministry of Agriculture has recognized the successful acclimatization of the White Leghorn fowls laying 250 eggs per year as well as Plymouth and Rhode Island fowls raised for meat which can attain an average weight of 4—5 kilos (male) and 3—4 kilos (female) after ten months.

In order for the imported animals to quickly adapt to the new environment while preserving their high-yielding quality, with the exception of a number of poultry breeds which have to be imported in great quantities for consumption, we will import other animals at a moderate rate, and use them as nucleus breeds to be crossed with the local breeds. Imports will also be staggered in time in order to "have fresh blood" continually. Attention is being paid to the import of animal feeds and veterinary medicaments.

Creating New Breeds and Groups of Breeds

In the process of importing high-yielding breeds, studying the local breeds, and practising crossbreeding,

many localities have created new breeds or groups of breeds. Since the late 18th century new breeds giving large quantities of eggs or meat have been created in the world. It is interesting to note that these are actually genetic groups springing from coupling local breeds of European countries with imported breeds from Asia and Southeast Asia including Indochina. Today, in creating new breeds through crossbreeding, Vietnamese scientists and stockbreeders are doing almost the same thing. The only difference is that they are now crossing breeds whose forbears had in them blood of Vietnamese species with present Vietnamese breeds.

In the recent past, the Scientific Council of the Ministry of Agriculture has recognized the scientific basis of new breeds of pigs springing from the coupling of a *Dai Bach* with an "Y" (DBI in abbreviation) and a Berkshire with an "Y" (BI in abbreviation) created by the Stockbreeding Institute after 15 years of research and experimentation. To give full play to the good qualities of the new breeds such as quick growth, high breeding rate and resistance to disease, they must be stabilized and their number must account for a relatively high proportion of the total number of pigs in the country, or at least in a given number of localities.

The crossbred animals, the acclimatized breeds, and the new breeds or groups of breeds created are precious assets. They are new genetic groups enriching the already diversified breeds of our country. In that sense, they constitute a new advance in animal breeding in our country.

TRAN DINH MIEN

After the complete liberation of South Vietnam in 1975, the Sociology Department¹ under the Vietnam Commission for Social Sciences² was set up to fulfil a task pointed out in the Resolution of the Fourth Party Congress (December 1976). The Resolution said: "We must apply social sciences in building socialism in Vietnam." In this spirit, the Commission for Social Sciences has reached a conclusion that sociology in Vietnam should:

- study the stage of development from small-scale production to large-scale socialist production which is unfolding in our country in various forms;

- study social management on the basis of socialism; first of all, concentrate on the management of labour, the role of workers, the trade unions, the influence of technology and the environment, the supply of services, problem of security and order;

- study the development of culture and human personality.

Sociology is a new science in Vietnam, that is why we have very few experienced sociologists. After eight years' work in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City the department has trained over 60 young cadres who have degrees in economics, economic planning, literature, history and psychology. Most of them have served in the army and worked in factories. Their knowledge has been upgraded in courses and seminars on philosophy and

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sociology. They have also benefited from lectures and studies by professors from the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Hungary, Belgium, and Japan. An organization has been set up composed of the following sections: social structure, social administration, rural sociology, urban sociology, family sociology, cultural sociology, social ways and habits, logic and history and methods and techniques.

In 1978, the Sociology Department received its first major assignment: a study of housing problems. This work relates to many aspects of our people's life. Working with the department were professors, doctors, architects and cadres from many branches: construction, culture, public health, education, statistics. In three years of study it gathered a large amount of data, interviewed 9,000 families in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City and rural regions, completed 19 surveys, 13 of them related to Hanoi. It began to study the mode of life of various social strata in Hanoi and made suggestions on the housing situation in the capital city. For instance, how to mobilize capital to build more homes: investments by the State? by the people? their economic and social effects?

Besides, in 1982 and early 1983, in cooperation with the Vietnam Women's Union, the Ministry of Justice, the Supreme People's Public Prosecutor's Office, the Supreme People's Court, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, the Central Committee of Nationalities, it conducted initial surveys on marriage and the family in Hanoi and the districts of Tam Dao, Thanh Son, Phong Chau (Vinh Phu province).

In the near future, it will conduct investigations into marriage and the family in the southern provinces. Their investigations are aimed at studying the changes occurring in families belonging to various sections of the people, the trends in marriage among the youth, the characteristics of the family. These investigations will prepare the ground for the enactment of a new law on marriage and the family consistent with the present period of social development.

The investigations made in Ho Chi Minh City on the social evils left by neo-colonialism, on the state of mind of various social strata after liberation, on the situation in the new economic zones, on religion, etc., have

resulted in the production of the first sociological surveys.

As the organization of the Sociology Department is still weak, the investigations have not yielded many results as yet and have not delved into such important questions as the situation at the district level, the contract system in agricultural cooperatives, the improvement of the management of production in enterprises, problems of juvenile misbehaviour, study of religions, investigations into the life and state of mind of the elderly.

The Commission for Social Sciences is planning to strengthen this important scientific branch to allow it to fulfil its task.

1. A department is the forerunner of an institute.

2. Vietnam Commission for Social Sciences:

In 1965, the Commission on Literature, History and Geography under the State Commission for Science became a separate unit named the Institute of Social Sciences. In 1967, the Vietnam Commission for Social Sciences was set up, which now comprises:

— 11 institutes: Philosophy, Economics, Law, Han (Classical Chinese) Nom (Vietnamese demotic script), Information in the Social Sciences, History, Archaeology, Ethnography, Literature, Linguistics, and the Institute of Social Sciences in Ho Chi Minh City.

— 7 departments: Southeast Asia, Sinology, World Economy, Folk Culture, Geography, Encyclopedia, Sociology.

FAMILY PLANNING IN A SOUTHERN PROVINCE

It is not accidental that the birthrate in Quang Nam — Da Nang was gradually reduced during recent years, from 3.05% in 1976 to 2.37% in 1978 and 1.84% in 1981, making it the leading province in the family planning campaign in southern Vietnam.

Seven years ago, family planning was a novelty to many people. They said it was against the law of nature and argued that "If Heaven creates an elephant, it will create enough grass for it to eat; there is nothing to be afraid of". Some deliberately opposed this policy. The provincial authorities had to patiently explain to them the advantages of birth control.

In April 1976, an instruction on family planning was issued by the Standing Bureau of the provincial Party Committee, followed by the organisation of family planning teams from provincial to district levels, whose task it was to agitate among and persuade the broad masses of the population to give an active response to the campaign. The provincial Cultural and Information Service and various

information teams at the grass-roots used many lively forms of propaganda, such as ballads, folk-songs, as well as photo and painting exhibitions and plays... to highlight the benefits of family planning. The medical services of the province and the districts sent teams specialised in vasectomy and in IUD insertion to communes, factories and State farms... Afterwards, these teams became teams for mother and child welfare and family planning which were also in charge of giving care in obstetrics, gynaecology and paediatrics. At the beginning, they came up against numerous obstacles and lacked warm popular support. Here and there they met with anxiety, indifference, even opposition and "boycott". Once, the medical workers of a team were spotted at a ferry and weren't allowed to cross the river! However, these teams patiently came to each village, each family with determination to fulfil their task. They have not only practised IUD insertion, vasectomy, and assisted women in childbirth, but also treated people suffering from obstetrical troubles.

Thanks to their help, some people previously thought to be sterile have borne children. Over 30 such cases have been recorded so far. This proves to the people that family planning is a humane policy, which cares about people's happiness, and not simply a measure of birth control.

In 1978, the provincial People's Committee set family planning as a target for emulation. It worked out various forms of reward to encourage individuals as well as units that made progress in reducing the birthrate. Meanwhile, various forms of reward were given by districts, communes, co-operatives or factories: any woman co-op member having an IUD inserted would be entitled to 30 kilograms of rice plus ten days off with full payment of work-points. A mother of one child who had an IUD fitted would receive 100 *dong*; a mother of two children, 70 *dong*...

After careful control, 54 communes and city wards and the cities of Da Nang and Hoi An of Quang Nam — Da Nang were recognized by the Ministry of Public Health as having attained the target of having 5% of their child-bearing-age women fitted with IUD's. Da Nang, the second largest city in the South (population: 350,000), has brought its annual population growth rate down to 1.5%.

In the resolution of the 13th Congress of the Party's Provincial Branch, held early this year, the target of reducing the population growth rate to 1.6% by 1985 was set. To facilitate the attainment of this target the provincial People's Committee adopted, in late

February, "provisional regulations on rewards for implementation of the family planning policy". Some provisions: women workers and cadres of child-bearing age (under 45), except for sterile cases, who after having one child, pledge not to have a second pregnancy within a period of 5 years or who, after having two children, pledge to have no more pregnancies, will receive 200 *dong* as an annual reward starting from the 6th year onward, until they are 45 (if their husbands are still alive and they are not divorced). Newly-wed couples of 22 or 25 years of age living in Quang Nam—Da Nang will receive 200 *dong* as reward if they have their first child only two years after their marriage, and 300 *dong* after three years (except for sterile cases) and so on.

The resolution also stipulated a system of rewards for individual co-op members and farmers and for localities with a good family planning record.

A successful commune or ward will receive 2,000 or 3,000 *dong* as reward and a diploma of merit from the provincial People's Committee. Sanctions will also be meted out to violations of the regulations. For government enterprises, and collective units, this target is a mandatory criterion in the fulfilment of their annual production plans. If their production plans are fulfilled but not their target for family planning, they will not be recognized as all-round emulation units or classified as A-1 units.

DANG MINH PHUONG

VIETNAMESE WOMEN SHOULDER SOCIAL TASKS

WOMEN DELEGATES TO THE SEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (1981—1985)

- Delegates: 108 (21.77% of total)
- Vice-Chairwoman: 1
- Standing member: 1
- Member of the Council of State: 1

WOMEN HOLDING OFFICE IN STATE ORGANS (1981)

- Member of People's Councils of provinces, cities and districts: 44.95% of total
- Chairwomen, vice-chairwomen of provinces and districts: 5.16%
- Cabinet Ministers or equivalent rank: 5
- Vice-Ministers or equivalent rank: 12
- Directors and vice-directors of departments: 219

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL WOMEN CADRES IN STATE-RUN SECTOR (up to 1980)

- Scientists and technicians: 49.6% of total
- Cadres with university and post-graduate education: 31.2%
- Cadres with secondary vocational education: 50.2%
- Skilled workers: 34.6%
- Among them:
- College teachers: 3,857 (26%)
- Secondary vocational-education teachers: 4,000 (34%)
- Basic and secondary general-education teachers: 226,664 (60%)
- Doctors: 6,102 (47.3%)
- Assistant doctors: 16,674 (52.6%)
- Pharmacists: 3,215 (64.3%)
- Assistant pharmacists: 2,878 (65.4%)
- Midwives: 13,909 (100%)

CHRONOLOGY

JUNE

(June 16 — July 15)

16. Chairman of the Council of Ministers Pham Van Dong sent a message to UN Secretary-General Javier Perez De Cuellar and Alhaji Yusuff Maintama Sulle, Chairman of the Special Anti-Apartheid Commission, on the occasion of the International Day for Solidarity with the South African People, reiterating the Vietnamese people's firm stance of support to the just and legitimate struggle by every means of the South African people.

— A Vietnamese delegation, headed by lawyer Phan Anh, Vice-Chairman of the SRV National Assembly and of the World Peace Council, and Chairman of the Vietnam Peace Committee, attends the World Assembly for Peace and Life, against Nuclear War, held in Prague.

22. Rafeeudin Ahmed, Deputy Secretary-General and special envoy of the UN Secretary-General ends his visit to Vietnam, begun on June 18.

23. Founding of the Vietnam — Sweden Friendship Association.

24. Closing in Hanoi of the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, begun on June 18, which decides on urgent ideological and organizational problems for ensuring the implementation of the immediate socio-economic tasks.

— A delegation of Hanoi, capital city of the SRV, ends its friendship visit to Nicaragua, begun on June 19.

25. Holding in Hanoi of the fifth session of the Seventh National Assembly (from June 25 to 30) which adopts the law on the organisation of the People's Councils and People's Committees and approves the general part of criminal law.

— An ESCAP delegation ends its visit to Vietnam, begun on June 22.

28. A delegation of the Lebanese Communist Party, led by General Secretary Georges Haoui, ends its

visit to Vietnam, begun on June 23. A joint communiqué is published.

— Signing in Bucharest of a protocol on goods exchange and payments for 1983 between Vietnam and Romania.

— Vietnam attends the 106th session of the Executive Committee of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, held in Moscow.

29. Australian Foreign Minister Bill Hayden pays an official visit to Vietnam.

30. Signing in Ulan Bator of a protocol on goods exchange and payments between Vietnam and Mongolia.

JULY

2. The Vietnamese Foreign Ministry returns to China 14 Chinese nationals captured while illegally intruding into Vietnamese territory.

— Holding in Phnom Penh of the first session of the Conference of chairmen of the economic and cultural cooperation commissions of Kampuchea, Laos and Vietnam.

3. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the Council of State and the Council of Ministers of the SRV issue a statement totally supporting the Joint Statement of the Summit Meeting of the Warsaw Treaty member States on 28 June 1983.

5. The Vietnamese Council of State confers the Gold-star Order on Wojciech Jaruzelski, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Minister of National Defence of the Polish People's Republic.

7. Vietnam attends the Thirteenth International Film Festival held in Moscow.

— All six Vietnamese participants in the 24th Mathematics Olympiad held in Paris have won prizes (three second prizes and three third prizes).

8. Signing in Berlin of an agreement on the GDR's solidarity aid to Vietnam in 1983.

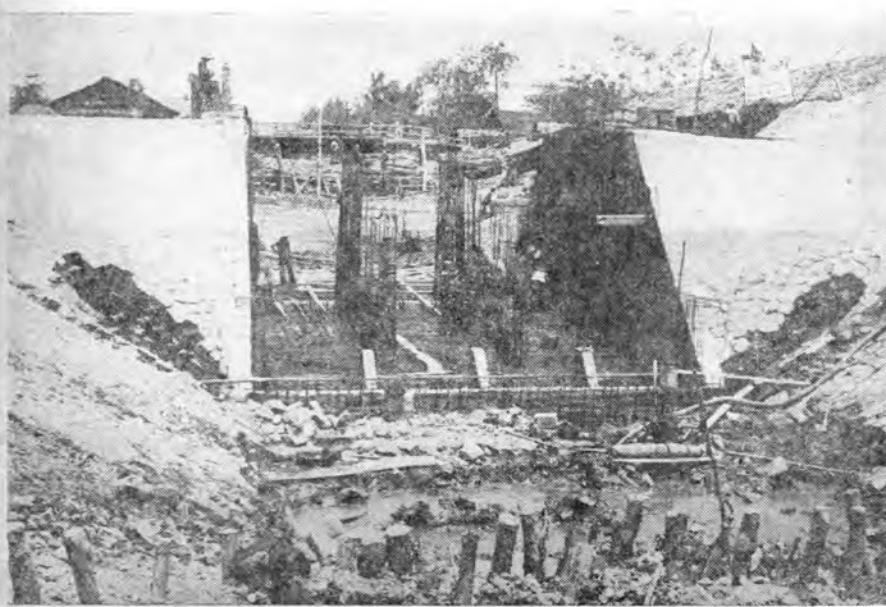
9. Promulgation of the law on the organisation of People's Councils and People's Committees adopted by the SRV National Assembly on 30 June 1983.



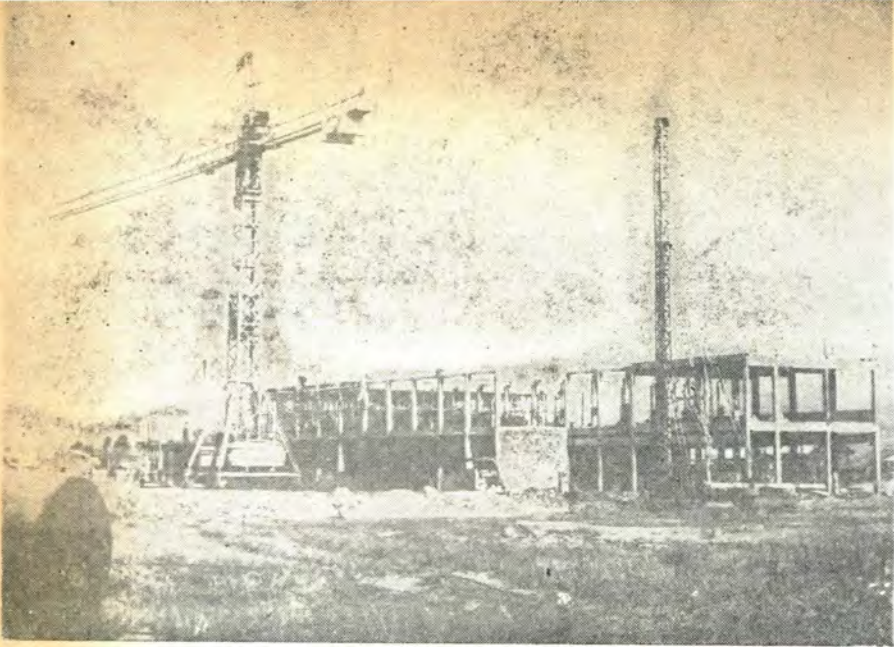
INTENSIVE PREPARATION FOR THE SUMMER-AUTUMN RICE CROP

▲ Combating drought for the 10th-lunar-month rice crop in Hiep Hoa district, Ha Bac province.

Transplanting 10th-lunar-month rice in the mountain district of Lac Son, Ha Son Binh province. ►



◀ Building the Bai Gia sluice for drainage in Long Phu district, Hau Giang province.



THE CENTRE FOR RESEARCH ON THE MEKONG RIVER DELTA

With the assistance of the Indian Government, the construction of the Centre for Research on the Mekong river delta (with emphasis on rice growing) was started in O Mon district, Hau Giang province, in early 1983.

Building the laboratories.

Photos : MINH LOC



**Vietnam
courier**

**Le courrier
du Vietnam**

**HOBOCTB
BETHANA**

**El Correo
de Vietnam**

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