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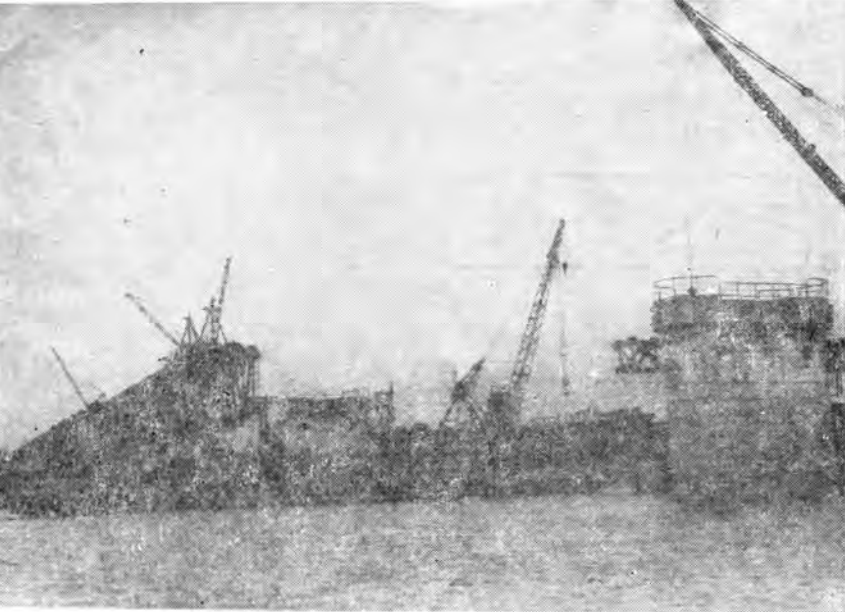


A MONTHLY REVIEW

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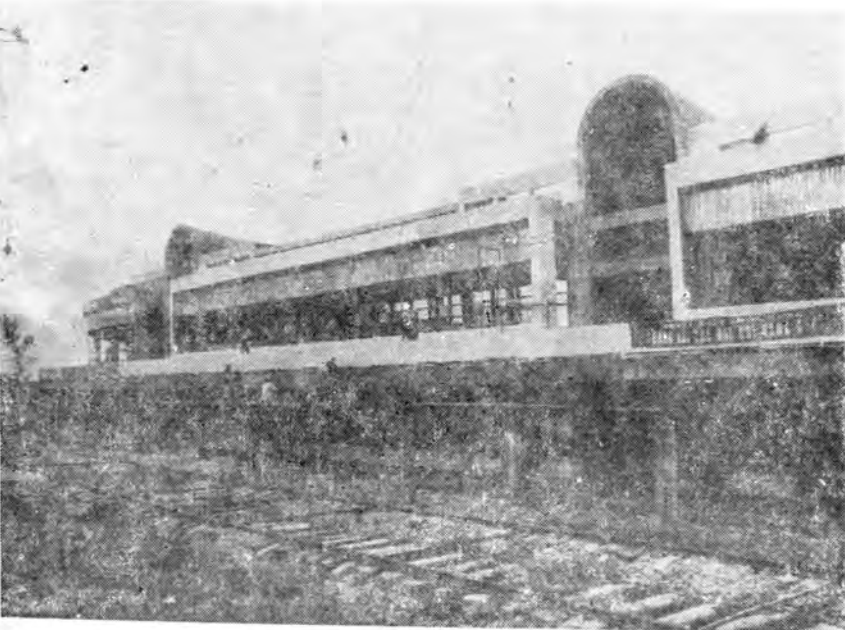




VIETNAM IN CONSTRUCTION

The Thang Long Bridge spanning the Red River.

Photo: VU HANH



The Children's Palace of Culture in Hai Phong.

Photo: THE THUAN



A new hotel in Thanh Hoa town.

Photo: CAO PHONG

On the Threshold of the 39th Year of Our Republic

The Vietnamese people are preparing for celebrations of National Day, September 2. Thirty-eight years ago, on the 2nd of September 1945, President Ho Chi Minh proclaimed Vietnam's independence, following the victorious General Insurrection known in our history as the August Revolution.

The existence of this first People's Democratic State in Southeast Asia was not to the liking of imperialist forces. France, with the means and methods of old-style colonialism, then the United States of America, with the far more wicked and wide-ranging means and schemes of neo-colonialism, tried to use their armed forces to crush the Vietnamese revolution. But the two successive wars of resistance waged by the Vietnamese people against them ended in victory with two historical landmarks—the Dien Bien Phu campaign in 1954 and the Ho Chi Minh campaign in 1975.

Our struggle for national independence, however, still goes on, for the men in power in Beijing have dropped their mask when in their expansionist drive into Southeast Asia they ran into a reunified socialist Vietnam which refused to follow their lead and especially "dared" to help its neighbour, the Kampuchean people, topple the Pol Pot gang, agent of Beijing, and thus smash China's first bridgehead for advance into Southeast Asia.

Beijing proclaimed Vietnam its arch enemy. This about-face occurred as Beijing fell into line with US imperialism and other international reactionary forces. An alliance of all kinds of enemies of Vietnam quickly took shape. For the US, this was a rare opportunity for it to try to tarnish the image of Vietnam which, following its victorious fight against the US imperialists, has been regarded as a symbol of courage and self-denial, of conscience and dignity, and exerts great attraction on all nations and social strata which are thirsting for independence and freedom, in a word, an image that threatens the imperialists' domination.

*

Over the past several years, especially since it helped liberate Kampuchea, Vietnam has had to cope with many acts of opposition and sabotage by Beijing: the armed invasion of February 1979 and subsequent threats to "teach Vietnam a second lesson", thereby compelling this country to maintain a large armed force which is a heavy burden on its national economy; an economic blockade coupled with pressure put upon other countries and international organisations to drastically cut all aid to, and cooperation with, Vietnam; manoeuvres aimed at destabilizing Vietnam by pressuring Hoa people (ethnic Chinese living in Vietnam) to return to China, thus provoking a mass exodus; acts of sabotage against our economy, and schemes and actions aimed at sowing division among various ethnic groups and religious communities in our country.

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Front Cover: Women students of the Ha Nhi ethnic minority at the Viet Bac Medical College.	

Photo: VNA

The propaganda machines of Beijing, Washington and a number of other capitals have striven to present Vietnam as a country which is opposed to human rights internally, and is applying a policy of regional hegemony externally.

The enemies of Vietnam nurture the hope that they would eventually succeed in bleeding Vietnam white, causing its economy to collapse, and forcing it to pull out its troops from Kampuchea, and that the latter would then fall back under the sway of imperialism and China under a vague label of "neutrality".

*

For Vietnam, this is a terrible challenge. However, as early as 1978-79, we coolly assessed the situation and clearly perceived the factors which allow us to win in this new struggle. In comparison with previous periods of our struggle, against French colonialism then US imperialism, Vietnam has become much stronger, having been completely reunified, and now possessing greater potentials—material, technical, economic, and in terms of cadres. Moreover, we have become a full member of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) and signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union on November 3, 1978. We are convinced that our noble goals—which have remained unchanged since the August Revolution—will in the end be understood by all people of conscience, even though our enemies' huge propaganda machines may temporarily conceal the truth.

Today, standing on the threshold of the 39th year of our Socialist Republic, we fully realize the judiciousness of that assessment. Over the past years, the Vietnamese people have continued to endure great sacrifices, but they have also attained greater maturity.

First of all, to our enemies' bitter disappointment, Vietnam's economy, far from going bankrupt, is facing rather bright prospects. The years of war and neo-colonialist occupation of the South have left us with few resources and a lot of problems. We still lack experience, and there is no model for us to follow, in building socialism starting from a backward economy characterized by small-scale production. During the war years we mainly relied on foreign aid, and as a result, acquired more skills in using this economic assistance to meet the needs of the resistance than in managing production. However, thanks to our Party's sensitiveness to the new requirements of the situation and the people's spirit of initiative, the Vietnamese State, as early as late 1979, decided to give up the mode of economic management based on administrative subsidies and adopt one based on economic accounting. A series of drastic measures were taken: application of the product-based contract system to agriculture, revision of capital investments, reorganization of industrial production, elaboration of a new wage and bonus system in factories, readjustment of prices in the purchase of products by the State and more recently, changes in tax legislation and an end to laxity in market management. These measures have brought encouraging initial results.

Since 1982, Vietnam has been in the main self-sufficient in food. Industrial output has also increased in many branches. The State is holding control over commodities and money more and more firmly, a basic condition for eventually solving the problem of the circulation and distribution of

goods which still causes difficulties to the people's life. Meanwhile, major projects which have absorbed large investments for years have been, or will soon be, commissioned. These include thermo and hydro-electric power plants, oil and gas projects, transport and communications facilities, factories producing building materials, etc.

These achievements are paving the way for new progress in the whole of the national economy.

The political cohesion of the Vietnamese nation is unbreakable. A citizen may have things to complain about, or may even disagree with some concrete point in the Government's policies, but when it comes to implementing the line for building socialism and defending national independence, the overwhelming majority of Vietnamese will firmly close their ranks around the Communist Party of Vietnam, and all divisive plots of our enemies can only meet with failure.

*

The special relationship between Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea has been further enhanced following the first Summit Conference of the three countries held in Vientiane in February 1983. The world can clearly see their close unity, respect for each other's independence, and common policy of peace, friendship and cooperation, and that they do not threaten anybody. The "Indochinese Federation" bugbear so often alluded to with the aim of driving a wedge between Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries has proved to be a figment of Beijing's imagination.

Developments in Kampuchea have shown heartening progress. The "miraculous revival" of this talented nation has attracted due attention worldwide. During the first years after Kampuchea's liberation, Vietnam helped it get back on its feet. Now it is helping this country gradually assume its own national construction and defence. The initial successes gained in this endeavour have enabled Vietnam and Kampuchea to reach agreement on yearly partial withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteer troops from Kampuchea.

Whereas the Kampuchean revolutionary administration has grown ever stronger, the self-styled "tripartite coalition government of Democratic Kampuchea", which is but the Pol Pot regime in disguise, has been locked together in internal strife and grown ever weaker. The military operations conducted by the Kampuchean revolutionary armed forces and Vietnamese volunteers in March 1983 inflicted serious losses on remnants of the Kampuchean reactionary army which would have been wiped out had it not been for the sanctuaries offered them by Thailand. The internal contradictions within that "coalition government", evident in Sihanouk's oft-repeated threats to leave it, are causing the hopes—probably the last shreds of hope—of opponents to a Kampuchea of the Kampucheans to crumble to dust.

On which side is time? On the side of the peoples of the three Indochinese countries, or that of the Beijing hegemonists? Beijing believes that it will carry the day, thanks to the weight of its billion Chinese, the complicity of the US imperialists and its multi-faceted war or sabotage, and that it will eventually bring Vietnam to its knees. But the past four years have testified to the resilience and endurance of the peoples of Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea, who enjoy the assistance of the Soviet

(Continued on page 29)

THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES IN VIETNAM

Right after its foundation the Communist Party of Vietnam affirmed in its Political Thesis of October 1930 the necessity for revolutionary legislation: "The proletariat must have its own laws." In the thirty-eight years in which it has held power the Party has paid full attention to the use of State laws as effective tools to implement its line and policies and express the will of the proletariat and the working people, who had become the authentic masters of the country. In each stage of the Vietnamese revolution, the legislative work of our State has made new progress, meeting in time the requirements of the revolution and contributing to its advance.

I. THE STAGE OF THE PEOPLE'S NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION (1945 — 1954)

Following the triumph of the August Revolution, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was founded. Acting upon the spirit of the Proclamation of Independence of 2 September 1945, the people's democratic State abolished the laws of the feudal and colonial regime and replaced them by new legislation which met the requirements of the revolution. However, this replacement could not be done overnight. For this reason, Decree 47/SL of 10 October 1945 temporarily retained a number of old laws which were judged "not to contravene the principle of the independence of Vietnam and the democratic republican regime." At the same time work was started to gradually devise new legislation to help fulfil the new tasks of the revolution.

The people's national democratic revolution in Vietnam had two central tasks:

— To preserve the integrity of our territory, win complete independence, struggle for national liberation against the French colonial aggressors;

— To overthrow the feudal landlord class and put into effect the watchword: "Land to the tillers!"

The new legislation was to institutionalize the line and policies of the Party with the aim of fulfilling the above tasks.

In order to build and consolidate the revolutionary power, on 8 September 1945, the State issued Decree 14/SL on the holding of general elections to elect the first National Assembly of our country.

On 9 November 1946, the National Assembly approved the new Constitution. This Constitution of 1946 recorded the fruits of the August Revolution and pointed out the objectives of our people's struggle: to preserve the integrity of our territory, win complete independence and build the country on a democratic basis, maintain the unity of the entire people, and organize a strong and clear-sighted administration of the people. Discussion and approval of the Constitution in the extremely tense atmosphere of the last days of 1946 while the fate of the country "hung by a thread" — in the words of President Ho Chi Minh — expressed the high resolve of the State to use legislation as one of the essential measures to safeguard the newly-won independence and freedom.

On the basis of the provisions of the Constitution, a whole series

of legal documents, mainly decrees, were issued by the State with the aim of fulfilling the following tasks:

1. To build and consolidate the people's power:

The first document was Decree 63/SL of 22 November 1945 on the organization of the People's Councils and People's Committees. It was followed by others aimed at building and strengthening a light and unburdened administrative machinery capable of managing State affairs under the prevailing circumstances when we had to carry out resistance war and national construction simultaneously.

The revolutionary administration was built and consolidated not only in the free areas but even in regions under enemy occupation or threats (Decree 225/SL of 19 November 1948 on the organization of People's Councils and Resistance and Administrative Committees in regions under enemy control or threats).

2. To ensure political security and social order:

Exercising dictatorship against those who opposed the revolution, a decree of 13 September 1945 provided for the internment of "those who are dangerous to the Vietnamese democratic republican regime" and the establishment of military tribunals (political tribunals) to try "offences against the independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam". Other ordinances punished treasonable and reactionary actions and plots and actions against the homeland (Decrees 133/SL of 20 January 1953 and 175/SL of 18 August 1953).

To safeguard order and security, decrees were issued providing sanctions against such offences

38 years of legislative activities in Vietnam

as kidnapping, blackmail, assassination, making counterfeit money, sabotage of the national currency, bribery, embezzlement, unauthorized arrest of people and torturing them to obtain confessions, etc.

3. To build up and consolidate the people's armed forces:

To serve the protracted war of resistance of the nation, the State issued ordinances on the organization of a Vietnamese national army and a militia; conscription; the citizens' duty to join in the resistance to the colonial aggressors; their duty to serve as volunteers in work for the resistance; requisition for goods and services, etc.

4. To build and protect the economy:

Rules were issued on the nationalization of the properties of French colonialists, reactionaries and traitors; the establishment of State monopoly on mines, railways, banking and treasury; the cancellation of old taxes (especially the head tax) and the establishment of new ones suited to the new situation; the control of foreign trade; the blockade of the enemy's economy and the economic struggle against him; the prohibition of speculation and hoarding, that of rice in particular; the ban on food export; sanctions against destruction of and damage to public property (bridges and culverts, river dykes, railway tracks, telephone lines, etc.)

5. In the fields of culture and education:

The State decreed compulsory learning of the national latinized script (*quoc ngu*) and established basic rules for the new system of education.

6. In civil matters:

Decree 97/SL of 22 May 1950, among other ordinances, established a number of fundamental principles which had especially important significance in civil affairs, marriage and the family:

— Civil rights are protected only when "the persons concerned have acted in conformity with the interests of the people".

— Any contract involving disadvantage to one side owing to exploitation by the other side and discrepancy between the economic situations of the two sides could be considered null and void;

— Freedom in contracting marriage;

— Equality between husband and wife;

— Full legal capacity for married women;

— Children born out of wedlock are protected by the law;

— Right to relinquish inheritance and refuse to pay the debts of the deceased beyond the value of the heritage.

Decree 159/SL of 17 November 1950 on divorce provided for equality between the sexes and emancipation of women from feudal family shackles.

7. Agrarian revolution:

This was the second central task. It was fulfilled step by step through a series of decrees which provided for:

— 25% reduction of rent;

— Confiscation of land belonging to French colonialists and Vietnamese traitors and its provisional distribution to the peasants;

— Confiscation of land which had been lying fallow for five consecutive years and its provisional distribution to the peasants;

— Banning of land lease; limits put on the right of land-owners to take back land from tenants;

— Reduction of debt interests; moratorium and cancellation of debts.

On 4 December 1953, the National Assembly approved the Law on land reform which put a definite end to land-ownership by the landlord class and put into effect the watchword "Land to the tillers." With a view to a strict enforcement of the Law on land reform, Decree 150/SL of 12 April 1953 established special people's

tribunals to try and punish landlords who opposed the law "when-ever and wherever the masses are mobilized for land reform."

Viewing the situation as a whole in the period between 1945 and 1954, it can be seen that in the hard conditions of the war of resistance, our young revolutionary State took urgent legislative actions in many fields which met the requirements of the resistance war and national construction and abolished the age-old exploitation by the feudal land-owning class.

II. THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION IN THE NORTH AND THE STRUGGLE TO LIBERATE THE SOUTH (1954 — 1975)

In this period the Vietnamese revolution had to fulfil two simultaneous strategic tasks: to build socialism in the North and to continue to struggle for the liberation of the South thus completing the people's national democratic revolution in the whole country.

The 1946 Constitution, having fulfilled its historic task, was replaced by a new one. Our country's first socialist Constitution was approved by the National Assembly on 31 December 1959.

The 1959 Constitution summed up the past achievements and asserted the will of the people to take the North to socialism and turn it into a solid base for the struggle to liberate the South and reunify the country.

1. Before the adoption of the Constitution, in the period of economic rehabilitation (1955 — 57), our laws protected private property and the right to private enterprise, authorized private individuals to engage in business activities under the guidance and supervision of the State (rules on enterprise issued in 1956); on the other hand they ensured increasing guidance by the State over the national economy and severely punished speculation and hoarding by traffickers.

The Law on trade unions of 5 November 1957 confirmed the role played by the trade unions in the management of production.

2. In subsequent years, with a view to carrying out socialist transformation, the State issued model rules for low-level agricultural cooperatives (1959), handicraft cooperatives (1959), buying and selling cooperatives and consumers' cooperatives (1955), rural credit cooperatives (1956), rudimentary-means transport cooperatives (1962), joint State-private enterprises (1959)...

In the penal field, Decree 267/SL of 15 June 1956 punished attempts and actions to sabotage State property and property of the cooperatives and the people at large, and to hamper the implementation of State policies and plans.

3. Following the completion in the main of socialist transformation and in preparation for the carrying out of our first Five-Year Plan, the State promulgated the Rules on Economic Contracts (Decision 001 of 4 January 1960, later replaced by Decision 54/CP of 10 March 1975) and set up the Economic Arbitration Council (Decision 20/TT of 14 January 1960, later replaced by Decision 75/CP of 14 April 1975). On the basis of the principles governing economic contracts, rules were promulgated on specific contracts in such fields as buying and selling of goods and supply of services, goods transport on sea and river by mechanized means, etc. In this period (1961-65) efforts were focused on building the material and technical bases of socialism and at the same time completing socialist transformation and turning the economy of the North into a socialist one.

Starting from 1965, owing to the American air war of destruction, the economy of the North was put on a war footing, and the ensuing period extending to 1975 was one of resistance to the US war of destruction interspersed with short periods of economic rehabilitation.

4. With a view to the fulfilment of the above tasks, the State apparatus was to be strengthened:

On the basis of the 1959 Constitution, the National Assembly passed laws on elections to the National Assembly (1959), the

organization of the National Assembly (1960), the organization of the Government Council (1966), the organization of the People's Councils and People's Committees at all levels (1960), the organization of judiciary organs and prosecutor's offices.

5. The people's role as collective master was more and more strongly emphasized. A series of laws on democratic freedoms were promulgated: freedom of the person and inviolability of the citizen's home, properties and correspondence (Law of 21 April 1957), freedom of assembly (Law of 21 April 1957), freedom of association (Law of 21 April 1957), freedom of religious belief (Decree 234/SL of 14 May 1955), equality among the nationalities (Decree 299/SL of 29 January 1955), freedom of the press (Law of 20 May 1957), freedom of publishing (Decree 003/SLT of 18 June 1957).

Other ordinances dealt with the citizen's duties, especially his duty to do military service (Law on military service of 15 April 1960 and subsequent amendments), to contribute human and material resources to the war of resistance, to do voluntary work for the resistance, to observe labour discipline...

6. With a view to ensuring political security and social order and protecting socialist property and private property of the citizens, many penal ordinances were issued:

— Decision 49 on the internment and reeducation of elements whose activities could endanger society;

— Ordinance of 30 October 1967 punishing counter-revolutionary offences;

— Ordinance of 21 October 1970 punishing offences against socialist property;

— Ordinance of 21 October 1970 punishing offences against private property of citizens.

7. In the field of marriage and the family, on 29 December 1959 the National Assembly passed the

Law on marriage and the family, which was based on four fundamental principles: free and progressive marriage; monogamy; equality of the sexes; protection of the rights of women and children.

III. THE PERIOD FROM THE GREAT SPRING VICTORY OF 1975 TO THE PRESENT

With the historic victory won in the spring of 1975, the revolution in our country entered a new stage, in which the whole country was to advance to socialism. The central task of this stage is the building of socialism in the whole country and the defence of the socialist homeland.

On 25 April 1976 general elections were held to elect a National Assembly for the whole reunified country (Sixth National Assembly). On 2 July 1976 the National Assembly proclaimed the foundation of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Also on that day, it took the following decisions:

— To set up a Committee for the drafting of a new Constitution;

— Pending the adoption of a new Constitution, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was to be organized and to function on the basis of the 1959 Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam;

— The Government Council of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was entrusted with the drafting of laws and ordinances as required by the new situation, which were to be approved by the National Assembly or its Standing Committee.

With regard to the existing legislation (laws, ordinances, decrees, resolutions, decisions, circulars...) of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Republic of South Vietnam, guidance for its enforcement was to be provided by the Government Council to suit the new situation.

1. On the integration of legislation of the Democratic Republic of

Vietnam and the Republic of South Vietnam, the Government Council took two decisions (bearing the numbers 76/CP of 25 March 1977 and 306/CP of 30 August 1979) which listed 654 legal texts to be enforced throughout the country.

2. On the elaboration and promulgation of new legislation:

The task of the new Constitution was to institutionalize the Party line in the revolutionary stage ahead, as set forth at the Fourth Party Congress. It was approved by the National Assembly on 18 December 1980 and promulgated by the President of the Republic on 19 December 1980. It is the third Constitution of our country, the Constitution of the transitional stage in which the whole country is advancing to socialism.

Before its adoption, many important legal documents were promulgated by the State in various fields:

— Decision 93/CP of 8 April 1977 laying down the rules for State-run factories;

— Decision 115/CP of 18 April 1977 on foreign investments in Vietnam;

— Government declaration of 12 May 1977 on the territorial sea, the contiguous zone, the exclusive economic zone, and the continental shelf of Vietnam;

— Decision 446/NQ, QHK6 of 5 March 1979 of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly ordering general mobilization for resistance to the war of aggression launched by the expansionist group within the Beijing rulers;

— Decision 83/CP of 5 March 1979 on the militarization and arming of the entire people;

— Ordinance of 14 November 1979 on the protection, care and education of children;

— Decision 201/CP of 1 July 1980 on unified management of land and strengthening of land management throughout the country.

With a view to the implementation of the new Constitution, the State has issued a number of laws and ordinances:

— The Law on elections to the National Assembly; Laws on the

organization of the National Assembly, the State Council, the Council of Ministers, the People's Courts, the People's Prosecutor's Offices; the Law on Military Service; the Law on officers in the Vietnam People's Army; the Law on the organization of People's Councils and People's Committees.

— Ordinance punishing bribery; ordinance on the examination and settlement of citizens' complaints and denunciations; ordinance punishing speculation, smuggling, counterfeiting, and illegal trafficking; ordinance on the agricultural tax; ordinance amending legislation on industrial and commercial taxes.

The State Council has approved a five-year legislative plan involving 43 documents. With a view to its implementation, State organs are preparing draft laws and ordinances to be examined and approved by the National Assembly or the State Council, such as the law on land, the law on environmental protection, the law on nationality, the ordinance punishing offences against the person, etc. Particularly worthy of mention is the completion of the draft penal code, of which the General Part was approved by the National Assembly on 30 June 1983 (it will be examined in the next issue of *Vietnam Courier*) and the Special Part (on specific offences) was to be examined at its year-end session. Preparations are also under way for the drafting of a civil code, a code of penal procedure, a code of civil procedure and a labour code—all of which are to be presented to the National Assembly sometime in future.

In the new revolutionary stage, the State has made the necessary efforts to strengthen socialist legality in accordance with the resolutions adopted at the Fourth and Fifth Party Congresses, and article 12 of the Constitution: "The State governs by laws and shall ceaselessly strengthen socialist legality."

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The above outline shows that although the Vietnamese legal system is not yet complete, im-

portant laws, ordinances and decrees have none the less been promulgated in a timely manner in various fields: political, economic, cultural, social, national defence, home policy, foreign policy... and have had a positive effect on the building, strengthening, and safeguarding of the revolutionary power and on the organization and management of the economy, and have promoted the right of the people to collective mastery. All the main branches of the law have taken shape.

However, a number of shortcomings and weaknesses have appeared: the legislative activities of the National Assembly are still inadequate, and insufficient attention has been paid to the elaboration of laws to settle some important problems; no code has so far been promulgated. One of the reasons for this state of affairs is that during the war of resistance the National Assembly was not able to hold regular sessions owing to difficult communications and the partition of the country. A number of legal texts were, however, approved by the Standing Committee of the National Assembly and called decrees. Later they have been approved by the State Council and called ordinance. Legal rules have mostly been issued by the Government Council; the systematic collection of rules into codes has not been done, hence many difficulties in their implementation.

In the light of the resolutions adopted at the Fourth and Fifth Party Congresses on the strengthening of socialist legality, our legislative work has made encouraging progress: a strong boost has been given to the legislative activities of the National Assembly; proceeding from scattered rules enacted as conditions required, we have worked out a legislative plan for the next five years and subsequent years; and we are soon to have relatively comprehensive codes which will serve as a solid basis for State administration.

August 1983

LE DUY LUONG

Tradition and Revolution

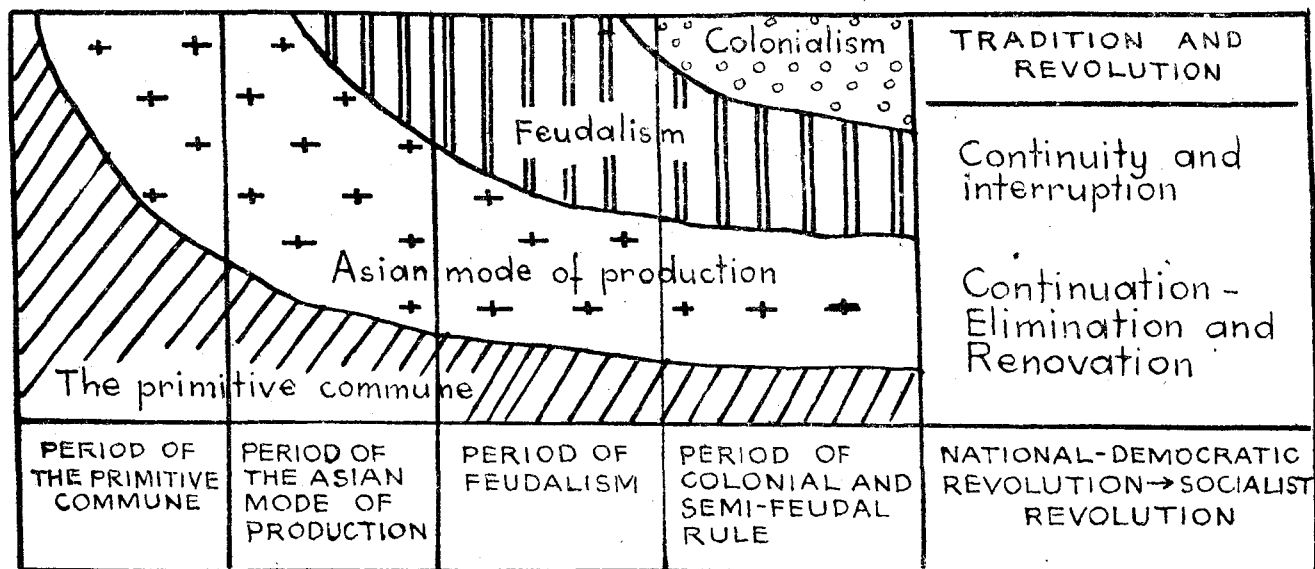
I—POSITION OF THE PRESENT SOCIALIST REVOLUTION IN NATIONAL HISTORY

Vietnam, like all other countries and indeed mankind as a whole, in the far-off past went through a long period of development of the *primitive commune*. In the history of Vietnam, this initial socio-economic form was long gone, yet its vestiges have been preserved to this day, especially among ethnic minorities living in the mountain regions.

Starting from the dawn of our nation under the Hung Kings and (their successor) King An Duong, Vietnam gradually evolved a society with an initial class differentiation and a socio-economic structure typical of the East. In this society, exploitative slavery appeared and developed to a certain degree but only in the form of patriarchal serfdom, and never held a leading position in society. The solid basis of society was the rural commune (that is, the traditional ancient commune and village, known in ancient Vietnamese as *ke, cha, chieng...*) with the system of communal land ownership and broad autonomy in many respects. We give it the provisional name of *society with an Asian mode of production*, an expression used in 1859 by Karl Marx in his *Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, although it can be seen that this expression does not fully reflect the basic features of this socio-economic form.

On the basis of the Asian mode of production, feudal relations of production emerged and developed from the 10th to 15th centuries, and led to the establishment of the *feudal* system in the 15th century. The Vietnamese feudal system was not based on the fief economy and seigneur-serf relationships as in the West, but on the preservation and feudalisation of the rural commune and on the landlord economy and landlord-tenant relationships. It belonged to a form of Asian feudal system with characteristics different from those of Western feudalism.

From the middle of the 19th century onward, following invasion and domination by the French colonialists, Vietnamese feudal society became a *colonial and semi-feudal society*. Earlier, within the decaying feudal society, the first embryos



Tradition and Revolution

of capitalism had developed but very slowly and weakly. Under the colonialist rule, capitalist relations of production developed to a certain degree but they were also seriously hampered.

Following the victory of the Revolution of August 1945, on the basis of completing the national-democratic revolution throughout the country, Vietnam bypassed the period of capitalist development and step by step entered the transitional period of direct advance to socialism.

The evolution of socio-economic forms in Vietnamese history up to the national-democratic revolution and the present socialist revolution may be summed up in the chart on page 7.

In connection with this chart, I would like to emphasize the following points:

1. In ancient times, Vietnam did not go through a period of domination by a Greek or Roman-type slave-owning system and in contemporary and modern times, it is bypassing the period of capitalist development, although the exploitative relations of slavery and capitalist relations of production did develop to a certain degree.

2. Vietnamese history never went through any real social revolution prior to the present one. But we don't mean to deny the fact that revolutionary changes took place as one socio-economic form was replaced by another and that in our national history there were revolutions for national liberation and peasant movements with a more or less revolutionary character.

3. In the evolution of socio-economic forms, the new form did not erase the old one, but instead preserved it to a certain extent and changed it to make it meet the new requirements of society. As a result, there was an overlapping and interweaving of different social forms in different historical periods.

4. The present social revolution is the first and also the most thoroughgoing revolution in Vietnamese history.

In countries that have gone through the period of capitalist development prior to proletarian revolution, bourgeois revolution had performed the task of transforming and eliminating the pre-capitalist socio-economic structures.

In the East, there are countries like India, where starting from the 19th century, the British colonialists, seeking to promote their own selfish interests, developed transport and communications and industry, and "that interference destroyed those half barbarous, half-civilized little communes, by liquidating their economic bases, and consequently, carried out the greatest social revolution, indeed the only social revolution Asia has ever gone through so far."¹

As Karl Marx put it, the British colonialists carried out that revolution as "an historically unconscious instrument"² and they only destroyed the old world

without building a new one suited to the life of the Indian people. With regard to Vietnam, the French colonialists failed to carry out even such an "historically unconscious" revolution.

Thus, in the whole evolution of Vietnamese history, the present socialist revolution, for which the national-democratic revolution was a preparatory step, actually plays the role of the first and most thoroughgoing social revolution. Its historic task is to transform and eliminate an old world which is not based on a single socio-economic form but embraces a structure in which colonialism old and new, feudalism, and lingering vestiges of the primitive commune and the Asian mode of production are combined, in order to build a new world, that of socialism advancing to communism.

The above chronological review clearly points out the important position, great historic mission and heavy, complex task of the Vietnamese revolution at present.

II — A PRICELESS HERITAGE TO BE CONTINUED, PROMOTED AND HEIGHTENED

Lenin castigated "national nihilism" and stressed that "proletarian culture does not fall from the blue"³. He attached great importance to the continuation of "democratic and socialist elements" in the national culture.⁴

Our people's long struggle in the course of history to conquer nature and to build and defend their country, has left an invaluable heritage comprising a wealth of experience, cultural and spiritual values, and fine traditions. President Ho Chi Minh and the Communist Party of Vietnam treasure that heritage and hold that we continue, promote and heighten that quintessential part of national history.

The main source of our nation's traditional values may be found in the following:

1. Our Labour to Conquer Nature, Build our Country, Develop our National Economy and Culture, and Create our Civilization.

Labour is the source of all cultural values, material and spiritual. The tradition of labour is a noble value of mankind and of the working people in all countries.

The Vietnamese people have worked hard to build their country in the conditions of a tropical monsoon natural environment, rich and beautiful but also very harsh, and in almost constant struggle against both natural calamities and foreign aggression. It is precisely that "challenge and response" that have forged

1, 2. Karl Marx: British Rule in India, in On Capitalist Society, Social Sciences Publishing House, Hanoi, 1975, pp. 62-64. (Retranslated from the Vietnamese)

3. Lenin: Tasks of the Youth Union, in On Culture and Literature, Literary Publishing House, Hanoi 1977, p. 402. (Retranslated from the Vietnamese)

4. Lenin: Critical Ideas on the National Question, in On Culture and Literature, *ibid*, p. 147. (Retranslated from the Vietnamese)

our people's tradition of industrious and persevering, intelligent and creative labour. That tradition, before the birth of the proletariat, manifested itself mostly in the labour of the peasants, craftsmen and men of culture, in the time-honoured multiple cultural achievements of our nation.

2. Our Struggle Against Foreign Aggressions to Defend National Independence and Sovereignty, Human and National Dignity.

Fighting against foreign aggressions is not special to any nation, for what nation has not had, in the course of its existence and development, to fight for its survival and independence? The outstanding feature of our people's struggle against foreign aggressions is that ever since the birth of our nation, we have had to fight continuously against foreign aggressors, conduct national construction along with national defence, and in this defence cope with big and powerful enemies, fight and win against heavy odds and in very hard conditions.

The protracted struggle against foreign aggressions in those conditions has had a profound impact on all aspects of our national life. It has given rise to and developed at a very early date *patriotism and national heroism, the will for national independence and an indomitable spirit.*

3. The Village-and-Hamlet Structure Based on the Rural Commune.

From time immemorial the Vietnamese people have been living, working and fighting in well-knit traditional village-and-hamlet structure. The origin and foundations of that structure are the rural commune of the Asian type the basic feature of which is the system of land ownership by the commune; the close combination of agriculture with handicrafts, and of neighbourhood with consanguine relations; and the commune's autonomy. That socio-economic structure creates a kind of democratic communal relationships. As Karl Marx noted even in the Middle Ages in Europe, the commune remained "the only centre of freedom and activity of the people".⁵

In Vietnamese history, the rural commune, the centre of all popular cultural activities, was preserved over a long period of time and played an important role in the clearing of virgin lands, the construction of water conservation works and the fight against foreign invasions. Its positive aspect is to have contributed to creating and preserving many democratic communal relationships, a tradition of solidarity, mutual affection, and mutual assistance among co-villagers.

4. Unification of the State and the Nation.

In view of the characteristics of the pre-capitalist socio-economic forms in our history and of the need for building and defending the country in those natural and historical conditions, our nation has been developing according to this main orientation: *unification of the State and the nation.* This does not mean that tendencies making for division and

separation did not exist. They sometimes surfaced very strongly, but were always promptly stamped out.

The spiritual product of that process of unification of the State and the nation has been *national cohesion, a tradition of unity for the great cause of the nation and the will for national unity.*

Vietnam is a multi-ethnic nation, yet its history is virtually free of any serious prejudice and conflict among the various ethnic groups. On the contrary, the tradition of "mutual love among fellow countrymen" and sentiments of "blood brotherhood" have been shared by the whole community.

These traditional values account for the qualities of the Vietnamese nation. They have forged the essence and originality of Vietnamese culture and are one of the main sources of our nation's vitality. These are the quintessence of our national history and symbolise the wisdom, soul and way of life of Vietnam.

In the socialist revolution, these traditional values are not only continued and promoted but are also to be further heightened in order to acquire a new quality in accordance with the revolutionary stance of the proletariat, Marxist-Leninist ideology and proletarian internationalism, together with the achievements of modern science, as pointed out by the Resolution of the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam:

"Our new culture... crystallises and raises to a new height what is finest in the 4,000-year-old tradition of the Vietnamese soul and Vietnamese culture while selectively absorbing the gains of human civilization and the achievement of modern culture and science."

III—A BURDENSOME HERITAGE OF THE PAST TO BE CRITICISED AND OVERCOME

As Marx and Engels clearly pointed out in *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, the proletarian revolution being "the most thoroughgoing divorce from the traditional system of ownership, there is no wonder that in the process of its development, it thoroughly gets rid of traditional ideas."⁶ Lenin described this revolution as "a time-consuming task," in which "we must overcome the resistance (usually negative, especially stubborn and especially hard to overcome) of a host of vestiges of small production; we must overcome the great power of habits and conservatism connected with those vestiges."⁷

5. Karl Marx: Letter to Vera Zassulish, in *On Pre-Capitalist Societies*, *ibid.* p. 34. (Retranslated from the Vietnamese)

6. Marx and Engels: *Selected Works*, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1962, Vol. I, p. 47. (Retranslated from the Vietnamese)

7. Lenin: A Great Initiative, in *On Culture and Literature*, *ibid.* p. 380.

Generally speaking, in keeping with the laws governing its development, the socialist revolution must transform and eliminate the system of private ownership of the means of production, the regime of class oppression and exploitation and small-scale production together with all thoughts, vestiges and bad habits associated with them. In this respect, in the concrete developments of Vietnamese history, the socialist revolution of our country must get rid of a rather complicated burden of the past which needs to be analyzed so as to clearly detect its origin. Here, aside from the lingering consequences of the war and the schemes and acts of sabotage of the enemy, from the point of view of our national history, I would like to draw attention to the following factors which stem from the overlapping socio-economic forms of the old world which I have summed up in the above chart.

1. Some 400 Years of Stagnation and Backwardness

In the development of world history, the period from the 16th to 19th centuries marked a turning-point separating the East and the West.

In the West, capitalism came into being early in the 16th century followed by the victories of the bourgeois revolution in the 16th--18th centuries, then of the industrial revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries. These changes catapulted the West into a period of capitalist development and turned it into civilized industrial capitalist countries.

During this period, the formerly civilized East, with the exception of Japan which showed an early trend toward Western-style development, lapsed into the prolonged stagnation of a pre-capitalist society. The inevitable consequence was that the backward East became the object of invasion and colonization by Western capitalism. Colonialism checked all advance of the East and rendered it still more backward, while history was making long strides forward.

Our country shared the same destiny, which originates from the decaying feudal system based on the vestiges of the Asian mode of production, and from colonialism.

Not until after the Russian October Revolution, in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism on a world scale and especially following the Second World War, did the East wake up, smash the shackles of colonialism, struggle to regain the right to existence and national revival, and gradually overcome its backwardness in order to catch up with the trend of progress in the world.

In the history of Vietnam, the socialist revolution and socialist construction have to shoulder an important and heavy task, namely, to eliminate the poverty and backwardness of the country which had lasted about four centuries and at the same time, wage a no less complex struggle to overcome the chronic stagnation of the old society still affecting life in various fields.

2. Colonialism Old and New and Its Poison.

Although our country did not go through the period of capitalist development, yet under the colonialist rule, capitalism developed to a certain degree.

The struggle to transform and eliminate capitalism must therefore go alongside the struggle to eliminate all the poison of colonialism old and new and the influence of reactionary, depraved culture coming from outside.

3. Feudalism and Its Vestiges.

The feudal system in our country, in the period of its decline, was a very oppressive and conservative bureaucratic monarchy. That outdated feudal system was liquidated in our national-democratic revolution, yet its vestiges still subsist, especially those of the ideology and habits of the patriarchal and caste system, the system of special rights and privileges, that of autocratic bureaucracy and the influence of Confucian ideology.

4. Vestiges of the Primitive Commune and the Asian Mode of Production

The primitive commune and the Asian mode of production based on communal relations stamped with equality and primitive democracy have shown their positive aspects in the formation and preservation of a number of fine traditions of our people. However, in the advance of history, that socio-economic structure has long become obsolete and its prolonged preservation, as Marx and Engels repeatedly stressed, is a characteristic of the East and also a cause of the stagnation of Eastern society. Our rural commune has its own peculiarities but is none the less part of the general picture.

Regionalism, hierarchical differentiation with a caste character in the family and the village, the concept according to which the commune is an "entity" while the individuals are mere accidental objects or only its components, egalitarianism... have been specific features of the commune, and have left a fairly deep stamp on rural life. Moreover, over a long period, vestiges of the commune system and the Asian mode of production had been used by the feudal and colonial regimes to introduce into village life such evils as oppression of the common folk by village notables, formation of cliques, banqueting and revelling...

5. Small-scale Production.

When it came into existence, small-scale production marked a step forward of the productive forces and played the role of productive cells of society in long periods of history. In the West, from the 16th to the 18th-19th centuries, small-scale production was gradually replaced by large-scale capitalist production, by large-scale capitalist mechanized industry.

But in our country, small-scale production has remained preponderant to this day, and we may say that the 4,000 years of our building and defending our country have also been 4,000 years of predominance of small-scale production.

(Continued on page 28)

8. Karl Marx: The Pre-Capitalist Social Forms, in *On Pre-Capitalist Societies*, *ibid.* p. 75. (Retranslated from the Vietnamese)

NATURE, SCHEMES AND OBJECTIVES OF BEIJING UNCHANGED

Immediately after the 12th congress of the Chinese Communist Party held in September last year, some Western newspapers opined that it might have signalled an end to the "Mao Zedong era" and the beginning of the "Deng Xiaoping era". Since then apparently unusual statements and theories have been set forth by important personages in the Beijing leadership or in the Chinese press. A higher pitch has been observed in verbal attacks on US "hegemonistic policy" with regard to the Taiwan question, or its "arbitrary behaviour" in trade relations with China, and a bitter attack was made on Washington's "dirty act" of granting political asylum to a young Chinese woman tennis player defector.

Beijing has also taken up again — after a long silence — the theme of "combining patriotism with internationalism".

Commenting on the 12th congress of the CPC, the *China Quarterly*, a mouthpiece of western sinologists, wrote in its March 1983 issue: "China's foreign policy continues to aim at pragmatism in its own national interest." "That is why," the paper added, "both superpowers have come under increasing and equally virulent denunciation. This suggests that China is determined to preserve its sovereignty."

Does all that mean that since the Sino-American strategic cooper-

ation reached its apex toward the end of President Carter's term of office, Beijing has revised its policy and is striving for a more "balanced" stance in the world political scene? Does that mean that Deng Xiaoping has dumped in the dustbin of history Mao's notorious "three-world" theory of which Deng himself was once the most vocal exponent from the rostrum of the United Nations, a theory which would ultimately lead to the formation of a "world-wide anti-Soviet front" of which US imperialism is to be, with Beijing's support, the uncontested leader?

The Chinese people have certainly not forgotten that at the recent Chinese Party congress, Deng and his group, with utter disregard for facts, painted a rosy picture of China six years after Mao's death. They also promised a bright future for the Chinese people. This enchanting vision, according to the Chinese authorities and their propaganda organs, is based on the "summing up of experience gained from both successes and failures" the "clarification of a series of rights and wrongs in theory, orientation and policies, in order to arrive at a scientific conclusion", especially in the "reevaluation of the merits and errors of Mao Zedong and his thought".

Also at this congress, Hu Yaobang put emphasis in his political

report on the strategic significance of the 3rd plenum of the 11th Central Committee of the CPC held in December 1978 which marked the triumph of Deng Xiaoping's policy following Mao's death. In Hu's words, this plenum had completed the hard task of "righting the errors in the guiding thought", "scored major successes in practical work", and "achieved a historic turning-point".

In the current noisy campaign of eulogy for Deng's "Selected Works" the Chinese mass media have again lauded to the skies Deng's "immense services" in achieving this "historic turning-point".

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The internal and external policies of a country, in the final analysis, always form a unified whole aimed at achieving objectives which cannot be separated from and still less be contradictory to each other. How could the Chinese rulers reconcile the two irreconcilable aspects of their overall policy? Internally, they loudly proclaim proletarian dictatorship and the building of socialism according to Marxist-Leninist principles. But, in their external policy they openly collaborate with imperialism and all other anti-communist reactionary forces, and claim to rely on them to "build socialism". At the same time, they oppose socialism and the world socialist community. While pledging to care for the

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well-being of the Chinese working people and to build a "20th-century material and spiritual civilization" within China, externally they are conducting a brutal policy of expansion and hegemony of the kind that Ch'in Shih Huang Ti practised more than two thousand years ago, in an attempt to impose their Greater Han domination on other nations.

Of course, the future of China and the destiny of the Chinese people are matters for the Chinese people themselves to decide. But what the other peoples, especially those in Indochina and the rest of Southeast Asia cannot close their eyes to, is the perfidy of the Chinese rulers who are pretending that their new path, methods and strategic guideline would cause them to "continue siding with the world's people in the struggle against imperialism and hegemonism and for world peace" (Hu Yaobang).

It is certain that the national interests of the Chinese people and a path of development for Chinese society that conforms to the common trend of progressive mankind urgently demand a genuinely scientific reevaluation and the complete and definitive renunciation of the Greater Han chauvinist doctrine which is the essence of Maoism. This is of vital importance not only for the destiny and honour of the Chinese people but also for peace and security in the world, especially for the peoples

living next door to China, first of all those in Southeast Asia, who are the direct targets of Beijing's expansionist aims.

Unfortunately, so far the actual deeds of the Beijing ruling circles (as distinct from their declarations and pretences) have indicated that under the iron-handed control of the new helmsman of the post-Mao period — Deng Xiaoping — and his group the Chinese ruling circles are still unable to escape from the big shadow of the deceased "Great Helmsman". Mr Deng laboured in vain when he tries to prune the documents of the 12th Chinese Party congress of the stale stock phrases of Maoism and replace them with misused Marxist-Leninist terminology.

While keeping temporarily silent about the "three-world" theory the Chinese rulers claim that China belongs to the Third World. Now and then, they kicked up a row with the United States on the occasion of some minor clashes of interests and even condemned "US imperialist aggression and bellicose policy" at one place or another in the world. But, one may ask, how can they hope to deceive the world with such pretences?

"Practice is the criterion of truth". This is the theoretical weapon wielded by Deng in his struggle for power with his opponents of the so-called "Mao Zedong said" school in the protracted infighting at Zhongnanhai. But Deng is hoist with his own petard.

A quick glance at what Deng and his group have been doing suffices for us to conclude that the so-called "rectification of the guiding thought" and the so-called "historic turning-point" claimed by Deng has not affected in the least the big-power expansionism and hegemonism and the Greater Han chauvinist policy which make China the centre of the world and oppose communism, the Soviet Union, the socialist community and all revolutionary forces in the world. With regard to Vietnam and the other two countries of Indochina, the policy of division, aggression, expansion and hegemony pursued by the reactionaries in the Beijing ruling circles has not changed an iota both strategically and tactically. On the contrary, as the revolution in Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea advances with steady steps and their solidarity strengthens continually, the Beijing rulers have become even more obstinate, perfidious and ruthless than ever in their hostile policy.

They openly declare their intention to "bleed Vietnam white" by using the hands of the genocidal Pol Pot clique and conducting a mutli-faceted war of sabotage which they vow to continue indefinitely.

The "Deng Xiaoping era", if one may call it that, is essentially the "era of post-Mao Maoism", that of the "doctrine of the cat" —

an "era" when Deng is putting a facade of pragmatism of the worst kind on Maoism and using all sorts of camouflages to allow the reactionary forces within the Chinese ruling circles to adapt themselves to the new situation and accelerate their all-round collusion with imperialism, first of all with the United States and Japan, and with reactionary forces of all hues in their crusade against the world revolution. The false pretences put up by the Beijing ruling circles remind us that we should not for a moment slacken our vigilance in face of the perfidy of the Chinese hegemonists. On the other hand, they are evidence of their passivity in the context of the general strategic passivity of the imperialist and reactionary forces led by US imperialism in face of the onrush of the three revolutionary currents and the irresistible movement for national independence and socialism.

Once again, facts show that the unholy Sino-US collusion stems from a weak position.

That, and nothing else, is the actual starting point — one fraught with contradictions — of the so-called "rectification of the guiding thought" and the essence of the readjustment being conducted in the "Deng era".

One thing is certain: the new path, methods and strategic guideline of Beijing, which are aimed

at the objectives defined above, definitely cannot bring China to "side with the people throughout the world in continuing the fight against imperialism and hegemonism for the preservation of world peace" as they have claimed. Eloquent facts have shown that the Beijing ruling circles in no way oppose imperialism; on the contrary they are cooperating more closely than ever with it. They not only do not oppose hegemonism but on the contrary are promoting their expansionist and hegemonist policy more strongly than ever. They not only do not preserve peace but are bent on wrecking peace, preparing for war and in fact have conducted and are conducting wars of aggression in one form or another against other nations, especially against their neighbours, the Indochinese countries.

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Who is the imperialist ringleader, the bastion of world imperialism, the main warmonger and the centre of international reaction in the world today? It is US imperialism. The reactionaries in the Chinese ruling circles apart, who is the biggest expansionist and hegemonist in the world? It is also US imperialism. US imperialism is deploying more than half a million troops at more than 2,600 military bases and points in 114 countries in the Pacific, the

Far East, Southeast Asia, Western Europe, North America, the Caribbean, South America and many other regions, including intelligence-gathering installations established right on Chinese soil and directed against the Soviet Union and Vietnam. It has been reckoned that in the period from 1946 to 1975 the United States conducted no fewer than 215 armed interventions or threats of armed intervention, including the threat of nuclear attack, against other countries of which the most wicked, barbarous and brutal example was the war of aggression against Vietnam, which drew worldwide condemnation.

Under the Reagan Administration, the US is provoking a new arms race involving the most horrible weapons of mass destruction, devoting to it the largest military budget ever seen in American history, exceeding 1,600 billion dollars for a five-year period. From Southeast Asia to the Middle East, from Africa to central America, the United States has been involved either directly or indirectly in the creation of hotbeds of tension which are threatening world peace. Without US complicity and support the Israeli expansionists could never have annexed Palestine, occupied part of Lebanese territory and plunged this country in blood and fire. Without US support, the white racists in South Africa could never have acted with such im-

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punity in southern Africa. Without US blessing, the British colonialists could not have reoccupied Argentina's Malvinas islands, Japanese militarism could not have reared its head, and the fascist clique of Pinochet in Chile, the reactionary ruling cliques in El Salvador and Honduras, the Samoza remnants operating on the border with Nicaragua, the Afghan counter-revolutionaries operating on Pakistani soil, the remnants of the genocidal Pol Pot clique nurtured by China on Thai soil, and all the other henchmen of the imperialists, could not have stood on their own feet and gone on the rampage. Recently, US imperialism has interfered in Tchad kindling there another war.

The ruling circles in Beijing loudly proclaim that they are anti-imperialist. But they have not at all opposed the United States, the imperialist ringleader, the number-one enemy of the whole of mankind. On the contrary they have allied themselves with it and taken orders from it. So, one may ask, in what way are they anti-imperialist?

They declare themselves to be against hegemonism, but their policy and actions against Vietnam, the other countries in Indochina, and their other neighbours embody

the most retrograde and wicked hegemonism ever: Greater Han expansionism and hegemonism. At the 12th Chinese Party congress and on subsequent occasion, they have repeated *ad nauseam* the hypocritical claims dating from Mao's time, e.g. "China does not covet a single inch of land from anyone", "China has not a single soldier outside its borders", "China will never practise hegemonism", and so on and so forth.

But how can they hide the brutal facts that they unleashed 600,000 Chinese troops in 1979 in a large-scale war of aggression against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, that Chinese forces are occupying the Hoang Sa archipelago of Vietnam and 38,000 square kilometres of Indian territory, and that Beijing is claiming another 90,000 square kilometres of India's territory? If the Chinese ruling circles really meant what they said, why, then, at their 12th Party congress did they not openly renounce and condemn Mao's "aggression on maps" and his territorial claims against China's neighbours which together represented an area even greater than the present territory of the People's Republic of China? Why, then, did they not openly repudiate Mao's notorious declarations and his well-known intention to annex the whole of Southeast

Asia, seize control over the Pacific, and eventually be the master of the whole of this planet? Why, then, did they keep silent over Mao's horrifying theory that a nuclear world war would be the shortest way to socialism for humanity? They declare that they are "rectifying Mao's errors" in order to "restore the original features of Mao's thought". Does that mean that all the above views of Mao concerning war and aggression, expansion and big-power hegemonism, are "original features of Mao's thought", which they now inherit and are trying to promote?

The ruling circles in China treat mankind's memory very lightly. Only yesterday did they proclaim at all international forums that another world war was inevitable. Today, wishing to flaunt a sham peace banner, they declare to "side with the people throughout the world in safeguarding peace". But how can they defend peace when they have called themselves NATO of the East, urged the United States, Western Europe, Southern Europe and South Asia to oppose the Soviet Union, brought Sino-US collusion to a new height, provoked tensions and tried to weaken other nations so that China could enjoy the "great order" while the world is plunged into "utter chaos"? How can they safeguard peace when they openly align

themselves with the number-one enemy of peace — US imperialism — and rely chiefly on it and on Japanese militarist imperialism to carry out their “four-modernization program”, aimed first of all at modernizing their war machine for aggression? How can they mingle with peace militants when they are loudly pleading the cause of the United States and trying to convince people that the Soviet Union, too, has to bear responsibility for the present international tension, that the United States, the ringleader of the imperialist warmongers, is at worst only as “bellicose” as the Soviet Union, the socialist power which is shouldering the historic role of the bulwark of world peace and revolution?

While boasting that they are “struggling for peace”, they are giving a helping hand to imperialism and trying by all means, both overt and covert, to divide and weaken the world socialist system. They seek to lull the vigilance of the peoples in Southeast Asia through vigorous professions of peace and friendship while sparing no effort to prevent the trend toward dialogue between the countries of Indochina and ASEAN, push for confrontation between them, and provoke and maintain an explosive situation in this vital strategic area of the world. They approve and support the re-arming and expansion of Japanese imperialism, setting at defiance the

fully justified concern of the countries in Southeast Asia and the peoples and governments of such countries as Australia.



The occasional exchanges of hard words between Beijing and Washington, which the former deliberately amplified in order to mislead public opinion, cannot hide the fact that Sino — US collusion continues to intensify in fundamental domains. Total trading between the two countries is on an upward trend, rising from 5.2 billion dollars in 1982 to a projected 6.2 billions this year. The Reagan Administration is authorizing ever broader transfer of high technology to China including nuclear technology and technologies susceptible of both civilian and military uses, the kind most coveted by Deng Xiaoping. High-level negotiations have begun, yielding “very satisfactory results” aimed at ensuring guarantees for US investments in China for at least the next ten years. Following the visit of US Secretary of State George Shultz, the Pentagon chief is due to visit Beijing shortly. Chinese Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian will pay a return visit to Washington later this year. Testifying before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee the Assistant Secretary of State for Asia and the Pacific observed that China and the United States

have “parallel strategic interests” and that both regard the Soviet Union as their common foe (!)... Accordingly, he argued, in the interests of both countries, “it is essential for them to resist Soviet aggression in Afghanistan and check Vietnamese aggression in Southeast Asia” (AFP, February 28, 1983). Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, a bosom friend of both China and the United States, has added this apt remark: “There can be no basic change in US — Chinese relations.” (AFP, April 12, 1983).

Beijing is using one false pretence after another in an attempt to hoodwink others. But no supernatural sharpness of mind is needed to see the true colours of the wolf masquerading as a lamb now active in US-led imperialist and reactionary ranks, when it comes to examining burning questions affecting the destiny of all nations, battlefronts where the objectives of our time are being fought for, namely peace, national independence, democracy and social progress, and places where the world socialist system is playing a decisive role in determining the trend of development of human society.

DIEU BINH

1. *“It doesn't matter whether the cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice” — a favourite “principle” of Deng's.* (Ed.)

Socialist industrialization is the central task throughout the transitional period in our country, the keystone of which is the building of a system of heavy industries to serve as the material and technical bases of socialism. Lenin wrote: "The only possible economic basis of socialism is a large-scale mechanized industry. Who forgets this is not a communist." He also wrote: "The material bases of socialism can only be a large-scale mechanized industry capable of transforming agriculture."

The question is how to carry out socialist industrialization in a given country. The Soviet Union did it by concentrating right from the outset on building a whole system of heavy industries. The situation in the Soviet Union at that time demanded that effort and it had the capacity to make it. After the first five-year plan (1928—1932), the Soviet Union already was provided with the basis for large-scale industry and after the second five-year plan (1933—1937), it became a major industrialized country in the world, second only to the United States.

How should socialist industrialization be carried out in the conditions of Vietnam? The 4th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (1976) laid down the line for building our socialist economy as follows: "To step up socialist industrialization, build the material and technical basis of socialism, and take the economy of our country from small-scale production to large-scale socialist production. To give priority to the rational development of heavy industry on the basis of developing agriculture and light industry on the basis of developing agriculture and light industry, build industry and agriculture in the whole country into an industrial-agricultural economic structure; build the central economy while developing the regional economies, combine the central economy with the regional economies into a unified national economic structure; combine the building of productive forces with the setting up and perfecting of new relations of production; combine economy with national defence; strengthen the relations of division of work, cooperation and mutual assistance with the fraternal socialist countries on the basis of socialist internationalism, at the same time develop our economic relations with other countries on the basis of firmly maintaining our independence and sovereignty, and mutual benefit; turn Vietnam into a socialist country with modern industry and agriculture, advanced culture and science, firm national defence and a civilized and happy life."¹

That is the guideline for the whole period of transition to socialism in our country, and also for the present stage. In implementing this line we have divided the process of socialist industrialization in our country into several stages. In the present stage—the eighties—as was pointed out in the Political Report of the Central Committee to the 5th Party Congress, we shall have to "concentrate on a vigorous development of agriculture, to regard it as a priority, to take it a step further to large-scale socialist production, to strive to boost consumer-goods production and to carry on the building of a number of important branches of heavy industry; to combine agriculture, consumer-goods

industry and heavy industry in a rational agro-industrial structure. These are main orientations of socialist industrialization in the 'coming stage.'"²

The Political Report further said: "That is precisely 'to give priority to the rational development of heavy industry on the basis of developing agriculture and light industry', and to create a new productive force in this first stage. This is also to lay the basis for later stepping up of socialist industrialization. At this later stage the main aim will be to build a modern agro-industrial structure with a comparatively developed heavy industry as its core."³

To determine the contents of industrialization in the stage ahead is a crucial point in the concretization of the Party line. Whether or not we can achieve the four socio-economic objectives set by the 5th Party Congress⁴, effect a change in our economy, and solve two urgent and fundamental tasks (accu-

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mulation and improvement of the people's life) depends on the carrying out of the industrialization program, in other words, on the correct handling of the most fundamental relationship in our national economy: that between industry and agriculture in the stage ahead. It is the most fundamental relationship because agriculture and industry are the two basic branches producing both means of production and articles of consumption. It has a bearing on all other activities.

In the handling of the relationship between industry and agriculture in the eighties, we have several options:

— We may immediately concentrate on building a relatively developed system of heavy industries by building a number of iron and steel works with capacities in the range of three or four million tonnes a year, a system of heavy-engineering industries and a sizable chemical industry. But, in the present conditions, this option is impractical.

— We may concentrate on developing only agriculture while neglecting or giving very little attention to the development of consumer-goods industries and heavy industry. This, in practice, would not allow us to take our agriculture to large-scale production while leaving idle industrial potentials which could be turned into our account;

— Or we may give equal attention to heavy industry and agriculture, concentrating on neither.

All the three options mentioned above are not compatible with the practical conditions of our country in the stage ahead. That is why our Party has opted for the following: "To concentrate efforts on strongly developing agriculture, considering agriculture to be in the fore front; take agriculture one step further toward large-scale socialist production while making great efforts to promote the production of consumer goods and continue the building of a number of important branches of heavy industry..."

We have made this option because it conforms to the present situation in our country and in the world—a situation which allows us to effectively carry out our industrialization program and solve in the best possible way our two fundamental and urgent tasks in the stage ahead.

Some have argued that to concentrate on developing agriculture is a difficult undertaking, and

c) Other potential areas in which to deploy our work force are the various crafts and trades of our people, including sideline occupations in the countryside, handicrafts, small industries and consumer-goods industries.

d) The most important motive power behind our economic construction is the system of socialist collective mastery.

We all know that labour and land (in the case of Vietnam at present this includes the sea and the forests) are the two most important factors for agricultural production. However, our present mode of production makes for very low productivity. We still have a large surplus work force and plenty of cropland, forestland and sea areas which remain unexploited. Yet, we are short of food and have achieved no accumulation. That is why, there must be a better combination of labour with land, forests, sea and trades and crafts according to a new mode of production which will take our agriculture to large-scale production and produce more material wealth. Marx dealt with this question in the conditions of capitalist production. He wrote: "...by incorporating with itself the two primary creators of wealth, labour power and the land, capital acquires a power of expansion that permits it to augment the elements of its accumulation beyond the limits apparently fixed by its own magnitude, or by the value and the mass of the means of production, already produced, in which it has its being."⁵

On the basis of the above analysis, the 5th Party Congress affirmed that "...the most important task, which can and must come first is to achieve collective mastery in the interest of a rational and effective use of labour and land, and a vigorous expansion of local industries and trades at all points of production, in every locality, and throughout the country; the purpose is to provide jobs for all working people, to exploit all available land, to develop all branches and trades in both quantity and scope, to achieve better social labour productivity, a higher gross national product, and a wider variety of product."⁶

To concentrate on developing agriculture, considering it to be in the fore front, and taking it one step further on the road to large-scale socialist production, absolutely does not mean to develop agriculture alone; instead it means to develop agriculture in close and correct combination with industry. As has been pointed out by our Party, in the stage ahead "it is necessary to combine agriculture, consumer-goods industries and heavy industry into a rational industrial-agricultural structure." More concretely, this means:

The development of agriculture must be combined with the development of consumer-goods industries, in both scope and depth. These industries must comprise the food industry, the light industries, the small industries and the various crafts in both town and country.

Agriculture (including forestry and fishery) and consumer-goods industries are two very important branches of production. They not only produce commodities to meet the needs of the people but are also indispensable to socialist industrialization, es-

INDUSTRIALIZATION IN THE EIGHTIES

that a number of Third World countries have been able to develop their economies by concentrating on oil and other mining industries. Our road, they say, should also pass through the mining industries. This, indeed, should be a good way to proceed. We have rich sub-soil resources and some of our ore reserves have proved sizable. But their mining would demand very big investments and even so, we cannot begin it right away. Oil is also an important resource for industrialization. Our country and the Soviet Union have put in fairly important investments, but obviously we cannot yet extract large amounts of oil in the years ahead. In the long run this is a great prospect for our country. But in the present decade, while we have large labour and land potentials and a certain number of industrial bases, should we do nothing but wait for oil and other minerals to be extracted? No, decidedly, we cannot do so.

Our Party, before deciding on the best way to socialist industrialization, has taken into consideration the following factors:

a) Our most precious asset is our labour force (the developed countries have large material and technical bases which are in fact the embodiment of past labour).

b) What can attract the most labour in our country are our land, forests and sea.

pecially in the initial stage of the transitional period in our country. This is because in order to carry out production, in order to industrialize, we need both means of production and commodities, i.e. farm products and consumer goods. Lenin said: "Of course, it is wrong to speak of accumulation being 'independent' of the production of articles of consumption, if only because the expansion of production calls for new variable capital and consequently, articles of consumption."⁷

Our Party has consistently pointed out that agricultural development is aimed at ensuring food for the whole of society, supplying raw materials for consumer-goods industries and goods for export. It says: "To boost consumer-goods production is crucial policy orientation to meet the material and cultural needs of society, broaden the domestic market, create an important source of exports, and expand the market abroad. To boost consumer-goods production is to increase the value of agricultural produce, provide the State with commodities for exchange

with the peasants, stimulate agricultural production; broaden the division of labour, create more jobs, develop the economy, increase social labour productivity, the national product and national income in the present stage."⁸ The Party further points out: "Small industry and handicrafts in our country have great potential as an important section of the consumer-goods industry. They are being transformed and reorganized into a component of the socialist economy, and will hold an important position in the national economy over a long period, especially in this first stage."⁹

That is why, there must be an accurate inventory and classification of all the crafts and trades and a rational division of labour and cooperation throughout the country. Along with the comprehensive development of agriculture, we must make the most of the major industrial bases of both the centre and the localities, of small industries, handicrafts and individual craftsmen in order to develop consumer-goods production.

Vietnam Advances

Export Goods from Thai Binh

Following in the steps of major cities—Ho Chi Minh, Hanoi and Hai Phong—Thai Binh is taking the lead, among the plain and upland provinces, in average export value per capita as well as per working people. "To rely on one's work force and land and to advance from one's output of paddy, pigs and industrial crops" is the motto of the province. On the basis of increased productivity and yield in rice production, the province has put nearly 10,000 hectares, out of a total of 89,000, under industrial crops in order to provide materials for the manufacture of export goods.

Thai Binh's main exports include jute and such jute products as carpets, bags... besides rush mats and carpets, paprika, dried and powdered garlic, essential oils, bamboo and rattan items, pigs, poultry and feathers. There are also products from handicrafts and small industry such as leather gloves, badminton rackets, table-tennis bats... At present, the value of export products made from local materials comes up to 60% of total.

As one of the most densely populated provinces in the country, Thai Binh has an abundant work source. Engaged in making

goods for export are over 80,000 persons, i.e. more than 10% of the social work force, not to speak of those who grow jute, rush, mulberry and other plants which supply materials for making export products. More than half of the work force of Thuong Hien and Minh Lang communes is engaged in making goods for export. Thirty-seven, out of thirty-nine, communes of Kien Xuong district have shops making goods for export.

The province now has two State-owned enterprises and over three hundred cooperatives turning out export items. It's interesting to note that of these three hundred cooperatives, only forty are working on their own, the rest being appendages of agricultural cooperatives. Under the present circumstances, this structure makes for greater solidity. The reason is that so long as agriculture relies mainly on manual labour, it may be affected by both shortage and redundancy of manpower. With handicraft shops set up within agricultural co-ops, we can have sufficient work force for intensive farming during cultivation campaigns and make full use of redundant manpower during the slack periods to

turn out export items. Thus, the co-op members' income is raised and its capital accumulation increased while a large volume of products is contributed to the State. This also leads to better local division of labour, a gradual shaping of an agro-industrial structure within the cooperatives, and lays the foundation for the speedy formation of an agro-industrial structure in the district—and this, without having to ask for food subsidies from the State as the country is facing difficulties in food supply.

Exports in order to finance imports: this is the road to self-reliance. Thai Binh's imports are, above all, chemical fertilizers for intensive farming, feed for livestock, materials for making export goods, which creates jobs and valuable merchandise. In 1982, thanks to its exports, Thai Binh imported 15,000 tonnes of ureal fertilizer and 5,000 tonnes of other nitrogenous fertilizers. These were supplied to various districts which will pay back in rice in 1983. The quantity of nitrogenous fertilizer imported by the province thanks to its export proceeds was larger than that set aside for it by the State plan. Its exports have also made it possible for the province to import an additional 300,000 metres of cloth last year and 500,000 metres in the first half of this year, to help meet the clothing requirements of the people and to exchange for exportable items.

HUU THO

On the combination between agriculture, consumer-goods industries and heavy industry in the stage ahead, our Party has pointed out: "To develop agriculture and consumer-goods production is to lay the foundation for the development of heavy industry. On the other hand, to develop agriculture and consumer-goods production, we must fully use available industrial capabilities, build in a rational way the essential heavy industries to supply electric power, coal, petrol, fertilizers, insecticides, basic chemicals, ordinary tools, semi-mechanized and mechanized tools, building materials, etc".¹⁰ The primary and immediate aim of the development of heavy industry in the present stage is to help accelerate the development of agriculture and consumer-goods industries. In case of deficiencies on the part of our own heavy industry, we should export goods produced by our agriculture, consumer-goods industry and even heavy industry, in order to cover imports of what is needed to give a boost to our agriculture and consumer-goods industry.

In this way, we shall combine agriculture, consumer-goods industries and heavy industry into a rational industrial-agricultural structure in the present stage.

Pending the construction of a developed system of heavy industries we should never lose sight of that objective and should create all possible conditions for its realization in the future. That is the firm and principled stand of our Party in the building of socialism. Accordingly, in the present stage, we must make active preparations in all fields, especially in geological surveying, so that when conditions permit we can start building a number of key branches of heavy industry, especially the engineering and steel industries.

This is because we always bear in mind that the material and technical bases of socialism can be nothing but a large-scale mechanized industry capable of transforming agriculture and re-equipping the whole national economy. We cannot resign ourselves to the fact that our country, with a population of 50 — 60 million inhabitants, is not producing 5 — 10 million tonnes of steel annually. We need to have steel for everything, from making nails and wire to building bridges, roads, houses, machinery, automobiles, railway engines, ships, etc. At present our per capita steel production is only 1.13 kilograms. Without steel, there cannot be socialism. Moreover, we must always bear in mind our needs in national defence. If in ten years' time we could have planted 500,000 hectares with soybean, 200,000 — 300,000 hectares with rubber, hundreds of thousands of hectares with coffee, etc., and have lots of farm products for export, that would be a good condition for the building of a system of heavy industries.

In a word, we should overcome the following incorrect views about socialist industrialization:

— Either to regard socialist industrialization simply as aiming at taking agriculture to large-

scale production, and overlook its overall content; or inversely, to fail to realize that to take agriculture to large-scale production is also an objective of industrialization;

— Or to concentrate only on developing agriculture while neglecting or making light of the building of some necessary branches of heavy industry in the present stage and pay little attention to preparing for future large-scale industrialization;

— Or to look for another road, which disregards the present conditions of our country. This reflects a failure to see what we should and could do in priority, in order to produce more material wealth for society.

DAO DUY TUNG

1. Communist Party of Vietnam — 4th National Congress, Political Report of the Central Committee, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1977, pp. 58, 59.

2. Communist Party of Vietnam — 5th National Congress, Political Report, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1982, p. 52.

3. Op. cit. p. 52.

4. Op. cit. pp. 42, 43: The overall economic and social objectives of the eighties are:

— To meet the most pressing and essential requirements of everyday life, gradually stabilizing, and eventually improving to some extent the people's material and cultural livelihood. First of all, we must end the grain and foodstuffs shortage, and make efforts to meet the requirements in clothing, study, medical care, housing, transport, child care, and other essential consumer needs.

— To continue building the material and technological infrastructure of socialism, with the emphasis on boosting agriculture, consumer-goods production and exports, while at the same time improving the technical basis of the other economic branches, and making preparations for a more vigorous development of heavy industry in the next stage.

— To complete the socialist transformation in the southern provinces; to continue perfecting the socialist relations of production in the North; and to consolidate the socialist relations of production in the whole country.

— To meet the requirements of national defense and to maintain security and order.

5. Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. I, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, p. 604.

6. Communist Party of Vietnam — 5th National Congress, Political Report, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1982 pp. 44 — 45.

7. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. I, Moscow Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1963, p. 85.

8. Communist Party of Vietnam — 5th National Congress, Political Report, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1982, pp. 49 — 50.

9. Op. cit. p. 50.

10. Op. cit. p. 51.

The 1983 spring rice crop was the sixth grown on Haiphong's outskirts under the product-based contract system. A bumper crop was reported in all areas and by all cooperatives. Success was achieved in all fields: the cultivated area was 1.8% and the per hectare paddy yield 300 kg above target. Some districts chalked up 7—8 tonnes per hectare in certain areas. This has been the best spring rice crop of Haiphong to date. Until a few years ago Haiphong has seldom succeeded in planting all its planned rice area. But since the new system of management was introduced, no plot has ever been left idle.

Potentials and Realities

All agricultural units in Haiphong we visited were engaged in intensive work. The slogan was: "Concentrate on agriculture, the foremost task in present economic development".

Haiphong has seen six successive good harvests, with sharp increases recorded in both yields and output. Average per hectare yield rose by one tonne in 1982 compared with 1981, and by 0.9 tonne in 1981 compared with 1980. In 1982 all the six suburban districts and 161 co-ops out of a total of 179 (only 35 in 1979) reaped more than 5 tonnes per hectare, some from 7 to 8 tonnes, and one production brigade even got more than 10 tonnes per hectare that year. Total rice output in Haiphong in 1982 exceeded 227,500 tonnes, 48,000 tonnes more than the previous year.

In the five previous crops, thanks to the new system of management, Haiphong obtained an additional 16,000 tonnes of paddy, not including the food crops grown on newly-reclaimed lands on the sea coast and on family plots. The face of the rural suburbs of Haiphong is changing from year to year. If formerly only about 20% of the peasant families in Haiphong could produce enough food for their needs, the proportion has now risen to 60—70%; 30% of the peasant families have reserves of rice and money savings. According to Hoang Ngoc Thanh, head of the Agricultural Committee of Haiphong, from

Sixth Rice Crop Grown Under Contract

System on Haiphong Outskirts

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROBLEMS

1980 to 1982 the countryside of Haiphong saw the building of 200,000 square metres of brick-and-tile housing and the income from farming was estimated at 1.5 billion *dong*. More and more co-ops have been able to increase their reserve funds.

Food procurement by the State in 1982 reached almost 60,000 tonnes, treble the planned annual target over a five-year period. We were told that the figure could have been higher with better organization and mobilization.

Along with practising intensive farming on the existing lands, the Haiphong people have contributed money and manpower to the building of new economic zones according to the slogan "Let the State and the people join efforts". The city administration has been investing heavily in major projects, while the districts, communes and co-ops have opened up new lands along rivers and the coast on a more modest scale. Within the space of about two years, they have built 75 kilometres of sea dykes, dug 150 kilometres of irrigation and drainage canals on newly-opened lands, built 50 kilometres of new road, and 20 sluices to bring in fresh water and drain away salt water for soil improvement. Thus, 10,000 more hectares have been gained on the sea. Total investments amounted to more than 130 million *dong* of which the local budget contributed 70—80%, not including nearly 100 million *dong* set aside for building embankments along the sea shore. Up to the end of 1982, nearly 4,000 more hectares had been exploited including 2,200 hectares of ricefields, the rest being devoted to fish and shrimp

raising and stockbreeding. A State farm and three new agricultural co-operatives have been set up on the newly reclaimed lands. To expand agricultural land by gaining on the sea has proved to be a correct policy: it strengthens local economic potentials, creates jobs and combines economic construction with the defence of our territorial waters.

Since 1981, Haiphong has built a number of new irrigation and drainage systems such as the Da Do system in Kien An and Do Son districts, the Cong Ro sluice in Tien Lang district, the Thuong Dong system in Vinh Bao district and the An Son sluice in Thuy Nguyen district... These are indispensable auxiliaries to the main irrigation and drainage systems in the region. The co-operatives are also operating hundreds of diesel-powered pumps and have built tens of thousands of irrigation ditches to bring water from the main canals to the ricefields. As a result, the area covered by irrigation and drainage systems has gone up from about 34,000 hectares in the spring crop, and about 40,000 hectares in the autumn crop to respectively 42,000 and 47,000 hectares at present.

Also in the past two years, the city has equipped the co-operatives with more than 300 insecticide power sprayers, hundreds of diesel-powered pumps, and scores of kilometres of electric-power transmission lines. Meanwhile, the co-ops have purchased one thousand more draught cattle (though the present draught power still falls short of their needs) and a lot more transport means.

With the application of the new system of management at the co-

operatives, the farmers have been able to fully exercise their right as collective masters in production management and distribution. Manpower has been put to better use; new jobs have been created; and the co-ops' incomes have increased.

The socialist relations of production in the countryside have been strengthened and improved. There are practically no more "weak" co-ops while those which have excelled continue to make progress in both production and management. Most co-ops have ensured a harmonious combination of the three interest: those of the State, the collective and the individual farmer.

First Problem: Contract Yield and Output

What are the yields and output to be assigned to each group of farmers or each individual farmer under contract? A judicious figure would not only have a good effect on the thinking and attitude of the farmer but will also help ensure the harmonious combination of the three interests mentioned above. In many co-operatives, the contract yields and output are determined on the basis of the average yields of the three previous years and also on fertility rating for each plot and farming conditions in each locality. This is followed by democratic consultations between the co-op management and the farmer. The figures thus agreed will remain unchanged for a period of from three to five years. This makes the contracting farmers confident and encourages them to practise intensive farming. In some areas, however, the contract figures were based only on the average yields of the three previous years (1978 — 1980). During that period Haiphong had had the poorest harvest ever. Besides, no consideration was given to soil quality in each area, with the result that the contract figures were much lower than what the land could actually yield.

At present, the co-ops are reassessing the contract figures for two main reasons:

First, after five or six rice crops, with the land area assigned to

each farmer remaining relatively stable, the fertility of the fields has, generally speaking, increased. There have also been improved conditions for intensive farming: better rice strains, more fertilizer, better irrigation, more draught power, and practice of crop rotation. As a result, the contract yields and output have been too low compared with the potentials of the land, and the incomes of the co-operatives, though stable, compare unfavourably with that of the individual farmer, account being duly taken of the extra investments and labour put in by the latter. Secondly, the government has recently promulgated a decree on agricultural tax. On the whole, tax rates are higher than in the past, up 8—10% in some areas. For instance, the Truong Son co-op which formerly had to deliver 70 tonnes of paddy as agricultural tax annually, now has to deliver 104 tonnes, or nearly half as much again. The new tax system will come into force in the coming season. Tax rates are now computed on the basis of soil quality and the contracting farmer has to pay tax commensurate with the fertility of the soil he tills. However, in view of the fact that the contract figures have been fixed on a three-to-five-year basis, the co-ops could not make the contracting farmer pay more tax than under the terms of the contract. So, the co-ops will have to pay the increase in agricultural tax with paddy from the reserve fund, instead of collecting more tax from the farmers.

For these two reasons, many co-ops are contemplating a rise in the yields and output to be achieved by the farmers. This was done for the crop being grown by the My Duc co-op farmers: the yield to be achieved is 400 kilograms (of paddy per hectare) higher than for the same period last year.

The Second Problem: More Rational Selection and Utilization of Rice Strains.

Undeniably, the last rice crop has been a very good one in Haiphong but a look at the fields will show several varieties of rice growing on the same plot. From the rural suburbs of Haiphong to Tien Lang

then Vinh Bao and eastward to Do Son, Kien An, Thuy Nguyen and An Hai districts, the fields everywhere present evidence of the sowing of several varieties of rice.

For instance, in Vinh Bao district, we saw rice plants of the "424" species interspersed with those of the "314" species. The seed bank of every co-op has at least six or seven different strains of rice which came from various sources. This has caused what the local people call a "confused situation". This mixture of rice strains is caused by many factors but it is mostly due to lax control by the State and the co-operatives. All co-ops have set forth this guideline: "seed selection to be jointly done by the co-op and the farmers". But in reality, it has been done by the co-op only on paper, i.e. the co-op merely draws up a plan while the work is actually done by the co-op members themselves. They are free to select seeds, preserve them, prepare them for sowing and finally sow them wherever they like. The seed-selection teams of the co-ops have simply disbanded or ceased to operate. Indeed they now exist only at the Dai Dong and Nui Doi co-ops in Do Son district. In other districts like Kien An, they have disbanded for the most part. The seed farms down to the district and communal levels are both ineffective and insufficient in number, and are not in a position to supply seeds in adequate quantities to the co-operatives. So, in order to "re-establish order in the selection and preparation of seeds", one of the immediate tasks is for the State and co-operatives to firmly control this work and stop leaving it to the farmers. In a co-operative, this work may be entrusted to a specialized team or a group of farmers in a production brigade. The seed nurseries must be located in the most fertile fields and more money should be invested in seed selection. An adequate policy should also apply to the management of the seed bank of each co-op. At least one seed farm should be urgently set up in each district. Only then can we preserve the good seeds, prevent the mixing of strains, and ensure an appropriate seed structure for each crop and each region.

HOANG HIEN and MINH SON

Having settled in regions of fertile alluvial soil watered by large rivers and with plenty of high-lying ground¹ Viet people went gradually farther, and arrived in less favourable regions either submerged by water or with acid or saline soils. The exploitation of these new economic regions was linked to the defence of our borderlands².

To meet these requirements, the first task for settlers to perform was to dig canals linking rivers in order to bring fresh water to the ricefields and wash acidity from the soil. This system of waterways was also most important as it served the transport of troops and supplies and civilian communications as well. As virgin land was cleared, hamlets were built. At strategic points near the frontier or where living conditions were hard *don dien* (agricultural settlements) were set up under the authority of State officials, usually militarymen who concurrently took charge of administration work.

The first regions to attain prosperity were Pho island in Bien Hoa, Ben Nghe in Saigon — Gia Dinh, and later My Tho, Vinh Long in the Mekong delta proper. In these regions, minimum conditions existed for stable settlement. The first canals were probably dug near Saigon — Gia Dinh which began to develop into a trading centre. From there the canal network spread ever farther.

These large-scale projects were carried out on orders from the royal court with concrete objectives and policies.

Digging Canals

The most famous of the men who supervised the digging of canals in the Mekong delta was Nguyen Van Thoai, Marquis of Thoai Ngoc (Thoai Ngoc Hau), a general native of Dien Phuoc (Quang Nam province). His first brilliant feat was to quickly complete the digging of the Nui (Mount) Sap canal, later called, on orders from the king, Thoai Ha (Thoai river); Mount Sap had its name changed to Mount Thoai, a great honour done to Thoai Ngoc Hau. Today, Mount Thoai is a populated commune straddling the highway leading into the Long Xuyen quadrangle. At the beginning of the 19th century, the region was one of thick woods where "deer took refuge" as Thoai Ngoc Hau said in an inscription on a stele erected on Mount Thoai: "Obeying the King's orders, braving dangers, we felled trees, drained swamps, and within a month dug a canal 20 *tam* wide (50 metres) and 12,410 *tam* long (32 kilometres) which proves most convenient to navigation." This was quite an achievement in those days.

Another canal, the Vinh Te, was larger and more difficult to dig as it crossed areas of hard soil. It could not be quickly completed and this added to the difficulties; for instance, the supply of drinking water to the tens of thousands of men working on it toward the end of the dry season was a thorny problem. In the initial stage, besides the five hundred soldiers of the Uy Vien post, five thousand men toiled on the project. In peak periods this figure rose to twenty-five thousand.

The Formation of a Rice Bowl



Work went on on a round-the-clock basis. Begun at the end of 1819, the canal was finished only in the first half of 1824. The number of deaths from accident and disease was certainly high. Nguyen Van Thoai, who was then 67 years old, presided over the memorial ceremony for the dead, held four years after the completion of the work. Today, next to his tomb on Mount Sam standing on the bank of the Vinh Te canal, one can also see the fifty-odd graves of canal diggers. Thoai Ngoc Hau had rightly honoured them as "people who died in the fulfilment of their duty."

The sacrifice of these pioneers was not in vain. Vinh Te is an important canal which carries the waters of the Mekong to the west coast, where it empties in Ha Tien Bay through the Giang Thanh canal. About one hundred kilometres long³, the Vinh Te canal runs parallel to the frontier with Kampuchea. In the rainy season, the current is quite strong. At present the irrigation project in the Long Xuyen quadrangle includes the dredging and widening of this canal.

Many regions in this immense plain were submerged for many months each year. Except for some high-lying areas and lanes of strategic importance, the construction of roads at that time was next to impossible, waterways were the most important and convenient means of communications and transport.

Depicting life in the Gia Dinh region Trinh Hoai Duc⁴ stressed this particularly at least three times in a single chapter of his monograph: "Gia Dinh has many rivers canals, islands and sandbanks; nine out of ten men there know how to swim and row boats"; "Gia Dinh has plenty of waterways and islands, nine out of ten men know how to paddle a boat, and like to eat fish..."; "Boats can be seen everywhere in Gia Dinh. They are used to live in, to go on pleasure trips or pay visits to friends and relatives, or to transport rice, firewood in commercial transactions."

It was only natural that villages and hamlets should be built along canals and roads. In newly-exploited areas, the rows of houses looked onto the canals. Behind them were large gardens then immense stretches of ricefields. Beyond these was virgin land, which people were free to clear and lay claim to. In some localities roads were nonexistent. The houses were built close together on the water's edge, facing the canals. Shops and workshops were arranged likewise. People did their

Pioneers in the MEKONG DELTA

shopping in boats; goods were essentially transported on waterways. Populous agglomerations stood at river junctions and crossroads. Those market places and townlets later grew into bustling administrative or commercial centres.

Villages formed of strung-out houses is a characteristic feature of newly-settled lands, unlike regions of ancient settlement like the Red River delta. In his remarkable study *The Peasants in the Tonkin Delta*, the French geographer Pierre Gourou pointed out three forms of rural settlement in North Vietnam. First, the villages built on high-lying ground along rivers. Typical are the areas along the Red River, Ca Lo river, To Lich canal, Nhue river and Khoai Chau and Cua Yen canals. Secondly, the villages built at the foot of hills; low-lying land being reserved for rice cultivation. Small hills may be completely ringed by houses of the same village. In the case of bigger hills, each hamlet of the village will occupy a hillside. The third form of settlement is the villages along the sea coast: the houses are strung out along the shore, sometimes only three or four rows deep.

The forms of settlements are not so diversified in the Mekong delta. Seen on the map, villages are stretched thin along rivers or roads. The regions of ancient settlement may have grown more and more populated with the result that the houses had tended to be grouped together instead of being strung out owing to the shrinking of available space, but it is certain that they developed along a thin line at the beginning.

Setting Up of Don Dien

Parallel with encouraging able men to recruit people to build hamlets, the setting up of agricultural settlements (*don dien*) at vital points and their gradual transformation into villages and hamlets were a wise policy.

In fact, even before the opening up of the Mekong delta such settlements had come into existence. In the 15th century, under the Le dynasty, many of them were established in the north to boost production. During the internecine hostilities between the North and the South, the Nguyen seigneurs continued to set up agricultural settlements in the South (southward of the Gianh river in Binh Tri Thien). When production had become stable and the political situation secure those settlements became ordinary villages and hamlets.

Toward the end of the 13th century, many *don dien* were set up in Nam Bo, mostly by volunteers but in some cases using coercion. The recruitment order issued in the year Canh Tuat (1790) stipulated: "Those who can recruit ten or more people will be appointed *cai trai* (chief of the farm) and have their names withdrawn from the original hamlet's registers", "Chinese residents who engage in shady transactions and people with no occupation will be sent to do production work." "...Those who want to grow rice but lack farm implements can borrow money from the State..." People who refused to work in spite of such assistance would have to do *corvée* or would be pressed into the army, "as a warning to idlers..." Certainly at the outset the *don dien* people were made up of soldiers—thus the army was made to engage in economic activities—but later these soldiers were to become civilians. At the beginning, the *don dien* people received from the State supplies covering part of their needs. "Former soldiers will receive each month five *tien* (one *tien* equals 60 *dong*) in cash and a *phuong* (equals 30 litres) of rice (while former prisoners were given rice only). These grants will stop when enough rice is produced." "Soldiers working on the *don dien* could freely dispose of the fruits of their labour. In a few years' time, when there is enough rice from the fields, the food rations will be cut, and the State will give them cash assistance only; this is to be a long-term measure."⁵

At first taxation by the Nguyen court was light in order to encourage people to settle in the newly-cleared lands. In 1830, when his mandarins suggested a tax moratorium for Chau Doc, where not enough virgin land had been opened up, King Minh Mang agreed, saying: "For the sake of our people we must pay particular attention to the administration of this border area." The people were exonerated from taxes for three years. Later newly set up villages and hamlets were exempted from tax for another three years.

From the middle of the 18th century onward, population re-distribution in the new zones became more pressing. On the proposal of Nguyen Tri Phuong⁶, a plan was urgently carried out to "exploit land to feed the population" and to "fight invaders and ensure security for the people" through the setting up of *don dien* and hamlets.

Concrete policies were issued. In the establishment of *don dien*, anyone who managed to recruit fifty persons and organize them into a platoon, would be nominated *suat doi* (platoon chief). Anyone who succeeded in recruiting five hundred persons to form a *co* (company) would be appointed *cai doi* or *pho quan co* (company commander). Later when the land clearing had yielded good results and the settlement had become stable a *doi* would be turned into a hamlet and its chief would become hamlet chief. A *co* would become a *tong* (canton) headed by a canton chief.

The hamlet had a civilian administration. It had to comprise at least ten persons. Only then were they authorized to exploit the land and keep a register. As incentives to recruiters anyone who succeeded in recruiting thirty persons would be exempted from

Pioneers in the Mekong Delta

taxes for life; those who had recruited fifty persons would be decorated with a *cuu pham*⁷, those who had recruited one hundred persons would receive a *bat pham*⁸. Be he a soldier or civilian, any offender who undertook to recruit enough men to set up a platoon or a hamlet, would be released on parole, with the village standing surety for him. He would be pardoned if he fulfilled this pledge. A prisoner who worked in a *don dien* would be set free if he worked well.

This policy quickly yielded good results. One year later Nguyen Tri Phuong could report to the court that he had set up twenty-one co with about one hundred hamlets totalling over ten thousand inhabitants. This represented nearly 10% of the total registered population of the six provinces in Nam Ky at that time. This was no small feat. Another document says that under the reign of Tu Duc, five hundred villages were formed from the *don dien* and one hundred *mau* of land were cleared for rice cultivation.

Those pioneers formed the nuclei of the populations of An Giang and Ha Tien provinces, later described by Court historiographers as "fairly good scholars and diligent peasants... light-hearted, fond of entertainment, honest and generous..."⁹

Land clearing was the major task. Even Buddhist monks who wished to win the respect and confidence of the population had to give them guidance and leadership in land clearing. Besides, land clearing was the only solution to the food problem. The most famous monk was Doan Minh Nguyet, who lived in the middle of the 19th century¹⁰, and was later honoured as Phat Thay Tay An (The Buddhist Master of Tay An). He was the founder of the Buddhist sect of Buu Son Ky Huong and an able organizer in land clearing who set up many farms in Nui Ket, Lang Linh, Dong Thap Muoi, Cai Dau.

What was the general appearance of the south-western part of Nam Bo at that time? Through stories told about Phat Thay, and chiefly about two of his disciples, Bui Van Tay and Bui Van Than, who were entrusted with the task of guiding land-clearing operations in the south of Chau Doc, we can get some details of this enterprise.

Under the guidance of Bui Van Tay, also called Dinh Tay, and Bui Van Than, alias Bui Thien Su, thousands of Buddhist believers cleared virgin land to build Xuan Son and Hung Thoi villages, which later were merged into Thoi Son, a commune which was to be known in the two wars of resistance¹¹ as a "supplier of revolutionary cadres."

At the beginning of the last century, this region was wasteland. To go from Chau Doc town to Mount Sam, a distance of only 10 kilometres, one had to stop in midway for the night; this shows how difficult communications were. Tigers, wild boars, crocodiles roamed the area. Bui Thien Su was known as a skilled tiger fighter. Legend has it that

once, after freeing a tiger of a bone stuck in its throat, the grateful animal killed a wild boar and offered it to him. Dinh Tay for his part was known as a skilled fighter of crocodiles. At that time in Lang Linh, a particularly ferocious crocodile sowed terror among the population, who nicknamed it "Sir Five Paddles" (probably its four legs and tail). But the crocodile was said to be afraid of Dinh Tay. When it rose in the submerged plain people would immediately call out: "Mr Dinh Tay, Five Paddles is coming!" Whereupon the crocodile would vanish.

Such stories may be exaggerations, but they show that the western part of the Mekong delta was a wilderness at that time.

At the beginning of this century, the Ca Mau peninsula was still a haunt of tigers. The terrified local inhabitants would call this animal "Master", or ironically enough, "Mr Huong Quan" (an oppressive official). Tigers were also seen in Phong Dien, on the bank of the Hau river, now known for its lush orchards. At that time, Rach Gia was also the home of wild elephants.

Tran Van Thanh, another disciple of Phat Thay Tay An, better known under the honour title of Duc Co Quan was also active in land clearing.

The *don dien* set up at that time played a significant role in subsequent wars of resistance against foreign aggressors. Many *don dien* settlers fought under the banner of Truong Dinh¹². *Don dien* farmers rose up at Chi Hoa against the French. That is why one of the first things the French colonialists did after their conquest of the South was to disband the *don dien*.

Land Exploitation Under French Rule

By the time the French occupied Nam Bo, the Mekong delta had undergone radical changes, compared with the previous century. One hundred years of strenuous work by the pioneers had left a deep imprint on this land. Their efforts bore profound national traits: by clearing land, digging canals, setting up villages, taking advantage of favourable natural conditions, they had developed traditions begun in the period of the Hung Kings, at the dawn of our history. Developing production while maintaining order and security along our borders, such was the major undertaking of those pioneers in this southern part of our country, before it was occupied by the French. Owing to the scarce population, the abundant land, and the mild climate, life was easy in spite of the difficulties inherent in pioneer work. At that time nature was most generous and man's requirements were few. Plants grew vigorously in the tropical climate. Subsidiary food crops (maize, cassava, potatoes, etc.) were not eaten at the principal meals. Speaking of the local agricultural products, Trinh Hoai Duc wrote: "They are of great variety: gourds, egg plants, mustard are available in great quantities, I cannot list them all. Beans, melons, sweet potatoes are eaten only at breakfast. They are neither sliced and dried nor ground to powder to be kept as food reserves. The Gia Dinh people eat rice at their three principal meals; even rice gruel is rarely eaten, let alone

other cereals. Rice is plentiful; there has never been a crop failure."

This abundance of foodstuffs was partly due to the Nguyen King's policy of having stocks of rice kept in reserve for the army. Soon after he mounted the throne, Gia Long gave orders to build granaries to store rice collected as tax. In 1805 two rows of brick storehouses were built in Gia Dinh citadel to keep rice from the *don dien*.

Historiographers of the Nguyen court wrote: "In 1804, the Luzon country (The Philippines) suffering from famine sent an envoy to negotiate for the purchase of rice from Gia Dinh. The king authorized the sale of half a million *can*. Thirteen years later, Kampuchea faced the same predicament. The region along the Tien river sold to this country ten thousand *hoc* (a *hoc* equals 16 cu.m.) of paddy. Many foreign merchant ships called at our ports to buy rice; in 1816, the Court ordered a halt to all rice exports in order to build up our own reserves."

In March 1859, French Rear Admiral Rigault de Genouilly, after seizing Gia Dinh citadel in a surprise attack, ordered it burnt down two weeks later. Besides thousands of guns and other weapons and a large dump of gunpowder, the rice stores in the citadel were also to be consumed by fire. Foreign merchants then offered to buy the rice at the price of eight million francs, a very large sum in those days. But their offer was turned down. The fire was to smoulder in the granaries for a long time.

In the middle of the 18th century Saigon became a port for the exportation of rice. One year after the occupation of Gia Dinh, on February 22, 1860, the French opened the port of Saigon for foreign merchant ships. In the first ten months of that year, 249 steamers and junks of various countries totalling 63,300 *tonneaux*¹³ called at Saigon to load 54,000 *tonneaux* of rice, value at 5 million French francs and other goods totalling one million francs. Imports through Saigon in the same period amounted to 1.5 million francs, one-third of this being opium. That was the first "gift" from the colonialists coming to "civilize the natives."

In that first year, large quantities of rice were exported, taken from the stocks built up in previous years. But in the following years exports dropped gradually due to the turmoil in the countryside caused by patriotic uprisings. Anyhow the above figures gave an idea of the agricultural situation in the Mekong delta more than one hundred years ago.

According to ancient documents, in 1873, the population of the whole of Nam Bo was 1.5 million. There were 600,000 hectares of ricefields and 90,000 hectares of gardens, orchards, and land planted with subsidiary food crops and industrial crops. According to French statistics, in 1880, Nam Bo had 520,000 hectares of ricefields, produced 650,000 tonnes of paddy and exported nearly half of it: 300,000 tonnes. If the quantity of rice left for local consumption was distributed evenly to the 1.5 million inhabitants, each would receive a mere 233 kilograms per year. These figures testify to the exploitative policy of the French colonialists who started collecting rice for export as soon as they seized control of our country. The life of the people was certainly much

harder than in the days when Trinh Hoai Duc wrote in his book *Gia Dinh Thanh Thong Chi*: "The inhabitants eat three meals a day"; "whenever a visitor comes, the host will first offer him betel then treat him to a plentiful meal, regardless of whether he is a close relative or a stranger and whatever his place of origin."¹⁴

The people lived frugally. Though now living far from the land of their ancestors up north, and in contact with foreigners, they faithfully observed the old national traditions, as Trinh Hoai Duc reported: "Except for the mandarins, people wear a chignon and go barefoot. Young men and women wear short-sleeved shirts and palm-leaf hats. The people smoke water pipe, live in low-roofed cottages, and sit on mats spread on the ground. Each village has a communal house where annual ceremonies are held in honour of the tutelary god. Toward the end of each year, the tombs of the ancestors are tidied up; new clothes are made; couplets are written on red paper and pasted up in the house, and the altars of ancestors are decorated in preparation for the Tet festival. On the first day of the new year, joss-sticks are burnt to the ancestors, tribute paid to the head of the clan and new-year greetings exchanged. In spring festivals are organized, young people enjoy themselves swinging on bamboo swings and indulging in other amusements..."

These customs were the same as in the northern and central parts of the country.

Betel chewing, a tradition from time immemorial, was preserved by the pioneers in Nam Bo. Betel leaves and areca nuts were a sizable source of revenue. They were planted over large areas in some regions such as the "eighteen betel hamlets" in Gia Dinh. This region played an important role in the resistance to the French at the end of the last century; but long before that, Nguyen Anh had taken advantage of the favourable conditions offered by the terrain to fight his Tay Son adversaries.

As everywhere in Vietnam, in the Mekong delta, people would start a conversation by an offer of betel. People with worries would chew betel to calm their nerves. Indeed betel was chewed by men and women, young and old, rich and poor.

Before its occupation by the French, Nam Bo and especially the Mekong delta was a land where Vietnamese tradition were well preserved. In their long march southward, the pioneers never flinched from difficulties. Before them the wilderness receded. Nature yielded its hidden wealth to them. Now like them we keep enlarging our territory by gaining on the sea, and continue their work in exploiting the new lands.

PHAN QUANG

In our next issue: *The Mekong Delta — A century of French Colonization*

1. The first population movement to the South across the Hoanh Son Range was made under the command of Duke Doan in the year Mau Ngo (1558). It comprised members of the Nguyen clan in Tong Son district (Thanh Hoa province) and soldiers native of Thanh Hoa and Nghe An provinces. Many of them were accompanied by their families.

Mummy Statues at Dau Pagoda

The Vietnam Institute of Archaeology has been studying two mummies preserved in the form of statues at Dau pagoda in Nguyen Trai commune, Thuong Tin district, Ha Son Binh province.

Dau pagoda was built under the Ly dynasty nearly 1,000 years ago. It has undergone many repairs since. This is a very beautiful pagoda which was eulogized as one of the "top scenic spots of the country" by the Le royal court in the 17th century.

Among the relics still found at the pagoda are two statues, said to be the preserved remains of two Buddhist monks who succeeded each other as Bonze Superior at this pagoda in the middle of the 17th century.

The first statue is believed to be the mummy of the bonze Vu Khac Truong in whose handwriting an inscription was carved on a stone stele kept at the pagoda and dated 1639. The inscription reveals that the other statue is the mummy of the bonze Vu Khac Minh, his

predecessor at the pagoda. The first statue was damaged during a flood and later repaired by the local population who had it repainted in bright colours as seen on Buddhist statues of more recent date.

The second statue, the mummy of the bonze Vu Khac Minh, is almost intact. It stands 57 centimetres high and weighs 7 kilos. It represents a life-size man sitting with his body bent forward and his legs folded in the lotus position, that adopted by a man in meditation. Legend has it that the bonze sat in that position and fasted for almost a month until he died. X-ray photographs show the bone in perfect anatomical order and no glue at the joint, which means that it was a whole skeleton, not an assemblage of bones, and that it was not taken apart and rearranged before the body was made into a statue. The skull also is intact and the bridge shows no hole through which the brain could have been extracted at the time of mummification. Archaeologists have tentatively concluded that the dead was mummified with all his internal organs left untouched, and that the body was dried in some way before the first coating was applied.

This first coating was constituted by finely powdered anthill soil mixed with raw lacquer and very fine sawdust. The body was then covered with a layer of lacquer and very thin silver foils stuck on it when it was still wet. Finally, the whole was coated with

a very thin layer of translucent resin. The application of the first coating was also made on lacquered panels and scrolls decorating the main gate of the pagoda and remains an essential element of the present-day art of pumiced lacquer as practised in Vietnam.

Dau pagoda lies only a little more than one kilometre from Bang village, renowned for its pumiced lacquer articles. This may be the reason why the pagoda front was lacquered in bright red and gold. Especially, the door panels were thought by art researchers in the country to be archetypical paintings of clouds and storks in traditional pumiced lacquer art. Unfortunately, most of those panels had been either destroyed or heavily damaged during the two wars of resistance. In 1947 the main building of the pagoda was burnt down by French aggressor troops.

Another trait of the Dau pagoda: it was originally built of tens of thousands of white bricks with rectangular pictures of stylized birds or flowers in relief, each with a different design. Only a few scores of such bricks are still preserved in the mass of ordinary bricks used in successive repairs.

The two statues mentioned above may be the only remaining relics of this very original method of mummification. A group of researchers of the Vietnam Institute of Archaeology are continuing to study the Dau pagoda and the other relics found there.

This testifies to the existence of a plan for definitive settlement.

2. In the middle of the 18th century, the region later called Nam Bo was divided into three dinh (province), each of which was headed by a tran thu (governor). Ha Tien, the farthest region, became a tran (border province).

3. The map issued in 1965 by US services says: 98,300 metres.

4. Trinh Hoai Duc (1765—1825) wrote Gia Dinh Thanh Thong Chi (Monograph on Gia Dinh). See Vietnam Courier No. 7—1983.

5. Vu Huy Phuc: "Various kinds of don dien and the formation of hamlets and villages in the South in the 19th century" in Viet Nam Hoi Dien.

6. Military Governor of Quang Nam province, later commander of the army fighting the French in Gia Dinh.

7., 8. Honorary titles.

9. Dai Nam nhat thong chi.

10. 1807—1856

11. To French, then American, aggressions.

12. He was an overseer in a don dien. In 1862, he organized armed resistance against the French at Go Cong, Tan An.

13. Shipping and the Colonies, issue of December 1861 (quoted by J. Buisseau). In foreign trade, a tonneau equals 2.83 cubic metres.

14. The book was written around 1820.

An Eye Doctor's Experience

During almost 20 years of work at the Hanoi Institute of Ophthalmology, I have taken part in research on the application and improvement of methods of diagnosis, treatment and surgery of eye diseases with a view to raising the level of ophthalmological science in our country and to contribute, in some measure, to the advance of this branch in the world.

So far, I have summed up the experience I have acquired in several fields, mainly in corneal transplants to restore eye-sight to those blinded by corneal scars and in the treatment of glaucoma — a frequent cause of permanent blindness. Besides, I have tackled such problems as surgical treatment of detachment of the retina and cataract, the removal of larval tapeworms from the eyeball, etc. My work in these fields has been published in magazines and reported at seminars in Vietnam and abroad.

Encouraged and helped by my colleagues, and thanks to Soviet assistance in technical equipment, I have, for the first time in Vietnam, conducted some of the operations of modern ophthalmology such as fitting artificial crystalline lenses (1978) and grafting artificial cornea (1982).

In those cases, I have performed micro-surgery with the help of a microscope.

A noted contribution to the scientific and technical revolution in Vietnamese medicine was the successful operation performed on Le Duy Ung, a disabled soldier.

While participating in the campaign to liberate Saigon in 1975, painter Le Duy Ung was seriously wounded: his right eye was lost and with his left eye he could only distinguish light from darkness.

Having learned of Ung's record and his ardent love of art, I longed to use my professional experience to try and restore vision to his left eye. I came to see him and saw the works he has created since he became blind. His energy and optimism won my admiration. If his left eye was successfully treated, he could see again the face of his wife and also see the faces of the two children she has borne him since his blindness;

he could also bring his artistic talents into fuller play.

Ung's left eye was blind for two reasons: a corneal scar and clouding of the lens. To remove only one of these two causes would not improve his vision to any significant extent, hence the necessity to remove both causes simultaneously. This required a complicated surgical operation which is but rarely performed. In the world such operations have so far been conducted only by highly skilled surgeons and on untraumatized eyes. Although our equipment may not equal that available in other countries, it was thought we had gained the necessary experience and skill, and so it was decided that I should conduct the two surgical operations simultaneously. In fact it was the only solution to Le Duy Ung's case.

On October 4, 1982, the operation was carried out and lasted from 3 to 7 p.m. After the removal of the crystalline lens, the corneal graft was made, using thread only 0.025mm thick.

Several months passed before Ung was able to see light. Now his eye-sight, with corrective glasses, is eight-tenths of normal. He can see his wife and children, his relatives and friends. He has also done some new paintings to be shown at a national art exhibition this year.

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Scientific and technical research is a trying process. Success, more often than not, is preceded by failures, sometimes bitter ones. One has to decide between one's own interests and the common interests, between immediate and long-term interests. The necessary conditions for our work to succeed are not easily available, and we have to overcome many difficulties, for instance in trying to obtain materials for a corneal transplant or equipment for a delicate surgical operation. Time for working people is so short...

In 1982 scientists abroad suggested to our Ministry of Public Health that favourable conditions should be created for me to write a

doctoral thesis. I thought the matter over, and after discussions with my colleagues, decided that I should not do it for the time being. This was not because I had not gathered enough materials for a doctoral thesis, but because it would take me at least two years to sum up my research and experience over the past years. Instead of reviewing the past, I preferred spending my time on the future. After 20 years spent on conducting research and accumulating experience, I thought it was time for me to try to work out new techniques. Being one of the senior ophthalmologists in Vietnam, I could spend these two years helping to save from blindness many patients.

Recently, we succeeded in grafting an artificial cornea on Candidate Doctor of Science Le Tiep who had been blinded in an accident (chemical burn), doing a corneal transplant on comrade Dang, former chief of the technical section of the Tu Son Factory, and doing emergency corneal grafts on two of a dozen children who had suffered burns from firecrackers during the last Lunar New Year Festival. At present, a method of micro-surgery I had initiated for the treatment of glaucoma has been chosen as the subject of a candidate-doctor's thesis in Vietnam. This method is an original one in several respects. One is that a 1mm-thick membrane is split into three layers instead of only two as so far done abroad. Specialists from the Soviet Union, France, Germany and Belgium have watched operations performed according to this method and expressed their appreciation. A Belgian surgeon has tried this method in his country and predicted a bright future for it. The President of the World Glaucoma Association has also expressed his appreciation of this method and invited Vietnamese delegates to a seminar to present the technique.

The difficulties we encounter may, to some extent, limit and delay our achievements, but they cannot block our way.

NGUYEN TRONG NHAN
Candidate Doctor of Science
Hanoi Institute of
Ophthalmology

Tradition and Revolution

(Continued from page 10)

To transform small-scale production and build up large-scale socialist production is difficult, but the struggle to overcome the vestiges of small-scale production as they linger in our way of thinking, style of work, and customs and habits... is very complicated and will take a long time.

As Lenin said, we "can (and must) build communism with a human material which has been spoiled by hundreds, by thousands of years under the regimes of slavery, feudalism, capitalism, the regime of scattered small enterprises, by the war waged by each against all for a place on the market, for a higher price for one's products or labour."⁹

In the transformation and elimination of the old world and the building of a new one the struggle between the new and the old, the good and the bad, the progressive and the backward, is unfolding in a complex and protracted manner in all domains. The Resolution of the Fifth Congress of our Party points out: "The struggle between the two roads: between the new and the old, the advanced and the backward, the progressive and the reactionary in cultural and ideological fields, in the way of life, is unfolding daily. It is a very complicated one which we must not make light of." In order to guide and stimulate that struggle, we must clearly perceive the new and its basis, and also the old together with its origin and what leads to its preservation.

At the dawn of the nation, under the Hung Kings and King An Duong, the Vietnamese successfully

made a historical leap forward, opening up the first era of civilization in their national history: the era of Van Lang — Au Lac civilization.

After more than a thousand years of Chinese domination and of struggle against Chinese rule, our people went vigorously forward, overcame the consequences of the domination and attempts at assimilation by the Greater Han expansionists, rebuilt their country, restored the national culture and created our second era of civilization: the era of the Dai Viet civilization.

Today, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam, our people have completed the national-democratic revolution, regained peace, independence and national unity, and are striving to carry through the socialist revolution, opening the way for the country's advance to our third era of civilization, which may be called the era of Vietnam civilization, build on the basis of socialism.

In this great national renaissance and upsurge, the question of tradition and revolution is being raised in response to the new requirements of our national history and our times. It demands that each of us should make an objective, comprehensive and serious study and reappraisal of the whole traditional legacy of the nation, bring out what is fine and beautiful and must be continued and promoted, while perceiving what is bad and must be severely criticised and overcome.

Professor PHAN HUY LE

9. Lenin: A Little Picture to Clarify Big Problems, in On Culture and Literature, *ibid.* p. 372. (Retranslated from the Vietnamese)

Designing Garments for Summer and Autumn Wear

A recent competition on garment designing for summer and autumn wear, held in Hanoi, has been attended by a number of garment-making enterprises and artists. They presented 200 models of

clothes for various occasions: work clothes; clothes for wearing in the home, for everyday wear, for ensuring labour safety, for ceremonial occasions; sports clothes; student uniform, etc.

Special attention has been attracted by models for everyday wear and for work. Such major enterprises as the Cotton, Fabric, and Yarn Company of Hanoi and the Garment-making Trust have presented interesting models, which are both specifically Vietnamese and "trendy" in an international way.

As in any country, fashion is a matter of interest to the public in

Vietnam, especially the young people. Recently a debate has started in the press (publications for the youth and for women in particular) on how to view fashion matters from a correct angle. The general consensus seems to be that while seeking to assimilate what is best in garment-designing abroad, we should design models that conform to the climatic, economic and cultural conditions of Vietnam.

Some garment-making enterprises have sponsored competitions on garment designing and presentations of models. The first Vietnamese mannequins have appeared on such occasions.

(Continued from page 2)

Union and other socialist States and the sympathy of many Third World countries and quite a number of people in the West. They have not only successfully countered all attacks by their external enemies, but also gradually improved their own economic situation. This has caused increasing circles in the West, and even in the ASEAN countries, to ponder over these points, which the three Indochinese countries have repeatedly emphasized:

— The root cause of instability in Southeast Asia is China's policy of winning hegemony over this region, aimed in the first place at the three Indochinese countries. Following Vietnam's unilateral annual withdrawals of troops from Kampuchea, China is now faced with the question: when will Beijing show a flexible enough attitude, which will allow Vietnam to get all its troops out of Kampuchea?

— No solution to the "Kampuchea issue" can be based on the resolutions of the United Nations, which essentially imply recognition of Pol Pot's "Democratic Kampuchea" and negation of the people's administration now in power in Phnom Penh, and which were at the time of their adoption approved by only one side in the debate. The basis for a settlement in Southeast Asia, including Kampuchea, can only be the Resolution of the Summit Conference of Non-aligned Countries, which was approved by both the three Indochinese countries and by the ASEAN countries members of this movement.

Now as ever Vietnam remains faithful to the foreign-policy principles proclaimed at the founding of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam 38 years ago: peace and friendship with all countries on the basis of respect for each other's independence and sovereignty. Once again we reiterate our sincere desire to have relations of friendship and co-operation with all our close neighbours: the countries in Southeast Asia and the People's Republic of China. There is no reason why Vietnam, which has been ravaged by so many years of war, should not want to live in peace in order to rebuild itself, unless there is a real threat to its independence.

The present confrontation between the ASEAN countries and the three Indochinese countries is an artificial situation provoked by people living outside this region. Many objective conditions now exist for replacing this confrontation by dialogue, which will lead to mutual understanding and the establishment of a peaceful and stable Southeast Asia.

The people of Vietnam treasure their traditional friendship with the people of China. We wish to restore normal relations with the People's Republic of China. The proposals for unconditional resumption of talks between the two countries, repeatedly put forward by Vietnam, are still valid. Let the Chinese authorities be more realistic and realize that they cannot make use of any third country to do harm to Vietnam. In the course of Sino-Soviet consultations, the Soviet Union has made it clear that it will abide by the principle of not trying to solve problems of a third country, while the ASEAN nations have more and more clearly realized

that their long-term interests and China's are not at one. We have held out our hand, wishing to solve all problems directly with China, and restore good neighbourly relations between the two countries. We are still waiting for China's response.

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The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is entering the 39th year of its independence, firmly believing that it is approaching a new stage in which it will have all necessary conditions, internal and external, for putting into effect the motto set forth by the founder of the modern Vietnamese State, our late President Ho Chi Minh: Independence — Freedom — Happiness.

August 19, 1983

ARCHEOLOGICAL FINDS in Thanh Hoa Province

During excavations of Neolithic tombs at Co Ngua, a knoll in Ha Tinh commune, Trung Son district, Thanh Hoa province, more than one hundred skeletons have been found. This is the first time in Vietnam that such a large number of human skeletons have been discovered in Neolithic tombs.

Many of the skeletons are found in circular graves in a sitting position, with arms clasped around the knees — a fairly common custom among ancient populations in the world. Besides individual graves, there have also been found graves in which two people (a man and a woman) were buried, and collective burial places where dozens of people were interred. The dead include people of various ages and either sex. For the first time in Vietnam, archeologists have been able to spot pathological signs on some of the bones: tumours, rickets, malformations...

Have also been dug up from the graves thousands of ceramic fragments and hundreds of stone implements. Among some of the cremated remains there have been found animal bones, fish bones and mollusc shells. Study is being undertaken to clarify some aspects of ancient funeral rituals: burying of utensils and implements with the dead, mixing of animal bones with cremated human remains, removal of the flesh from the dead, etc.

The Co Ngua finds are vestiges of human settlements in the basin of the Ma river 5,000 — 6,000 years ago. Those people were in the process of moving from the highlands to the valleys and coastal plains.

INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN VIETNAM

(Except those run by the Ministry of Defense)

Editor's Note: In addition to their teaching and cadre-training functions, our institutions of higher education have been conducting scientific and technical researches and studying their application to production. We give below the list of existing institutions published in the review Hoat dong Khoa hoc.

No.	Names of Universities and Colleges	Department in charge	Location
1	Hanoi Polytechnic	Ministry of Higher Education and Secondary Vocational Education	Bach Mai — Hanoi
2	Ho Chi Minh City Polytechnic	— id —	286 Ly Thuong Kiet, Ho Chi Minh City
3	Da Nang Polytechnic	— id —	Hoa Vang (Quang Nam — Da Nang province)
4	Thai Nguyen College of Industrial Technology	— id —	Thai Nguyen, Bac Thai province
5	University of Hanoi	— id —	Thuong Dinh, Dong Da district, Hanoi
6	University of Hue	— id —	Hue, Binh Tri Thien province
7	University of Ho Chi Minh City	— id —	227 Nguyen Van Cu, Ho Chi Minh City
8	Construction College of Hanoi	— id —	Huong Canh, Vinh Phu province
9	Geology and Mining College	— id —	Pho Yen, Bac Thai province
10	Economics and Planning College	— id —	Nam Bo Street, Hanoi
11	Ho Chi Minh City College of Economics	— id —	17 Duy Tan, Ho Chi Minh City
12	Foreign Languages College	— id —	Me Tri, Dong Da district, Hanoi
13	Can Tho University	— id —	Can Tho, Hau Giang province
14	Da Lat University	— id —	Da Lat, Lam Dong province
15	Technical Instructors' Training College of Thu Duc	— id —	Thu Duc, Ho Chi Minh City
16	University of Tay Nguyen (Central Highlands)	— id —	Buon Me Thuot, Dac Lac town
17	Telecommunications College	General Postal Department Ministry of Education	Mo, Ha Dong town, Ha Son Binh province
18	Teachers' Training College No. 1 (Hanoi)	— id —	Mai Dich, Tu Liem district, Hanoi
19	Teachers' Training College No. 2 (Hanoi)	— id —	Xuan Hoa district, Hanoi
20	Foreign Languages Teachers' Training College	— id —	Mai Dich, Tu Liem district, Hanoi
21	Teachers' Training College of Viet Bac Region	— id —	Thai Nguyen, Bac Thai province
22	Vinh Teachers' Training College	— id —	Vinh, Nghe Tinh province
23	Hue Teachers' Training College	— id —	Hue, Binh Tri Thien province
24	Quy Nhon Teachers' Training College	— id —	Quy Nhon, Nghia Binh province
25	Teachers' Training College of Ho Chi Minh City	— id —	222 Nguyen Van Troi, Ho Chi Minh City

1	2	3	4
26	Road and Rail Transport College	Ministry of Transport and Communications	Cau Giay, Hanoi
27	Maritime Navigation College	— id —	Cau Dat, Hai Phong City
28	River Transport College	— id —	Cau Tre, Hai Phong City
29	Fishery and Sea Products College	Ministry of Sea Products	Nha Trang, Phu Khanh province
30	Forestry College	Ministry of Forestry	Dong Trieu, Quang Ninh province
31	College of Commerce	Ministry of Home Trade	Mai Dich, Tu Liem district, Hanoi
32	Foreign Trade College	Ministry of Foreign Trade	Lang, Hanoi
33	Water Conservancy College	Ministry of Water Conservancy	Dong Da district, Hanoi
34	Banking College	Central Bank	Dong Da district, Hanoi
35	College of International Relations	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Lang, Hanoi
36	Law College	Ministry of Justice	Thuong Tin district, Ha Son Binh province
37	Physical Training and Sports College	General Department of Physical Education and Sports	Tu Son district, Ha Bac province
38	College of Finance	Ministry of Finance	Phuc Yen district, Hanoi
39	College of Finance of Ho Chi Minh City	— id —	229 Dong Khoi, Ho Chi Minh City
40	College of Agriculture No. 1 (Hanoi)	Ministry of Agriculture	Trau Quy, Gia Lam district, Hanoi
41	College of Agriculture No. 2 (Hanoi)	— id —	Viêt Yen district, Ha Bac province
42	College of Agriculture No. 3 (Thai Nguyen)	— id —	Thai Nguyen district, Bac Thai province
43	College of Agriculture No. 4 (Ho Chi Minh City)	— id —	Thu Duc, Ho Chi Minh City
44	Conservatoire of Hanoi	Ministry of Culture and Information	O Cho Dua, Hanoi
45	Conservatoire of Ho Chi Minh City	— id —	112 Nguyen Du, Ho Chi Minh City
46	Cinematography and Drama College	— id —	Mai Dich, Tu Liem district, Hanoi
47	College of Architecture of Hanoi	Ministry of Construction	Kilometre No. 7, Hanoi — Ha Dong Highway
48	College of Architecture of Ho Chi Minh City	— id —	196 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Ho Chi Minh City
49	Medical College of Hanoi	Ministry of Public Health	Khuong Thuong, Dong Da district, Hanoi
50	Medical College of Viet Bac Region	— id —	Thai Nguyen, Bac Thai province
51	Medical College of Hue	— id —	Hue, Binh Tri Thien province
52	College of Pharmacy of Hanoi	— id —	13 Le Thanh Ton, Hanoi
53	College of Medicine and Pharmacy of Ho Chi Minh City		217 Hong Bang, Ho Chi Minh City

CHRONOLOGY

(July 16 — August 15)

JULY

17. A delegation of the Vietnamese Government, headed by Dong Si Nguyen, alternate member of the CPV Political Bureau, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers, leaves for Nicaragua to attend the fourth anniversary of the Nicaraguan revolution.

18. The Council of Ministers issues a directive on "educational work in the coming years."

19. Holding in Phnom Penh of the 7th regular conference of the foreign ministers of Laos, Kampuchea and Vietnam (19 — 20 July). A joint-communiqué is published.

20. Signing in Phnom Penh of a treaty on the principles for the settlement of border questions and an agreement on border status between Vietnam and Kampuchea.

21. The first sixty-six students of the Party History School under the Vietnam Institute of Marxism — Leninism have graduated.

23. Signing of a protocol on cooperation and exploitation of the Dong Hen gypsum mine in Savannakhet (Laos) between Vietnam and Laos.

25. Signing in Vientiane of an agreement on financial cooperation for 1983 — 1985 between Vietnam and Laos.

28. Signing in Havana of a protocol on maritime transportation cooperation between Vietnam and Cuba.

29. A Vietnamese National Art Troupe visits Italy.

30. Signing in Hanoi of an agreement on non-

commercial payments between Vietnam and Kampuchea.

— Promulgation of the general part of the Penal Code which was adopted by the National Assembly on June 30, 1983.

AUGUST

1. Closing in Vientiane of the sixth conference of the Interim Mekong Committees of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, begun on July 29.

— A Vietnamese delegation, led by Tran Hoai Nam, member of the Presidium of the Vietnam World Peace Committee, leaves for Tokyo to attend the 1983 International Conference Against A and H bombs.

4. The Vietnamese Foreign Ministry issues a statement demanding that the US immediately end all acts of military intervention and provocation against Nicaragua.

6. A spokesman for the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry issues statements supporting the correct stance and attitude of goodwill of the Afghan Government expounded in its July 31, 1983 statement and condemning the US threats of aggression against Libya.

9. A Vietnamese delegation, headed by Vice-President of the Council of State Huynh Tan Phat, attends the 20th National Day of the Congo.

— The Council of Ministers issues an instruction on further consolidation of the contingent of cadres at district and grassroots levels.

12. Closing of a course on administration for 210 cadres from 164 districts, provincial capitals, and cities in various provinces south of Binh Tri Thien.

14. A delegation of provincial Party secretaries of the Communist Party of Vietnam ends its visit to the Soviet Union, begun on August 5.

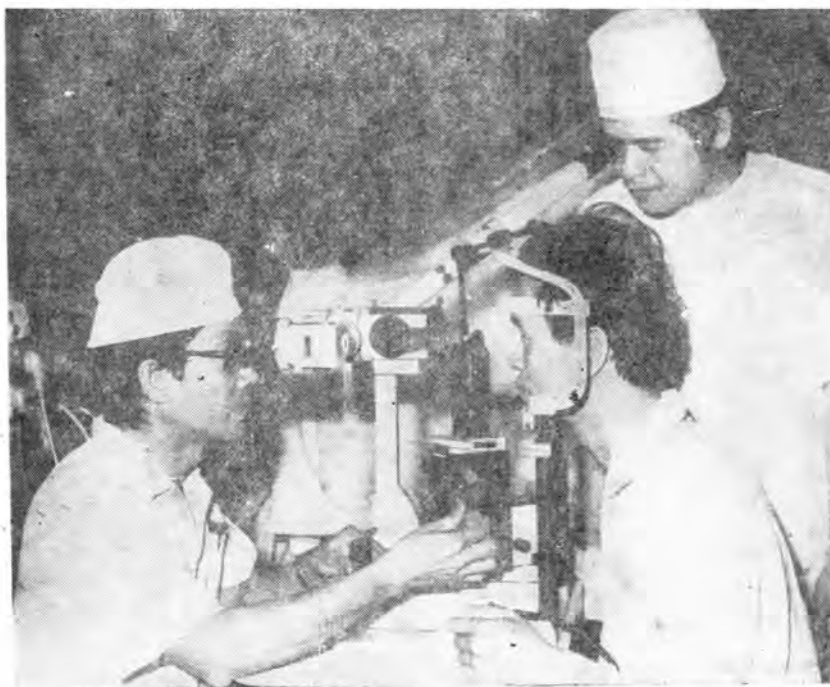
**Woollen carpet-making in Kien Xuong,
Thai Binh province.**
(See article on page 18)

Photo: CAM BINH



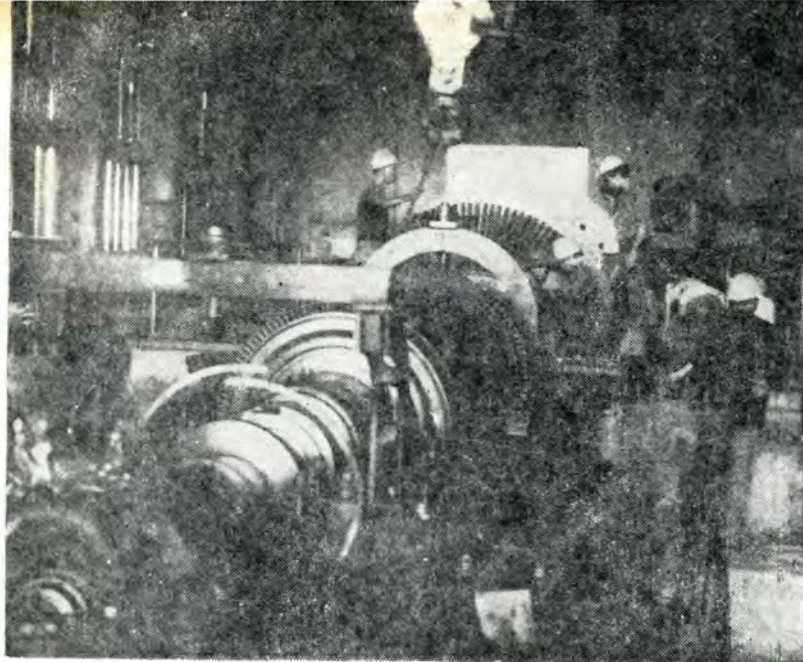
**Dr Nguyen Trong Nhan anh his patient,
Le Tiep.**
(See article on page 27)

Photo: THU HOAI



One of the two mummy statues at Dau pagoda.
(See article on page 26)

Photo: MUSEUM OF HISTORY



VIETNAMESE INDUSTRY

Installation of the first power generator
at the Pha Lai thermo-power plant.

Photo: VAN SAC

Machines being assembled at the Hanoi
spinning mill.

Photo: CAO PHONG



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