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VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE **FOR GENERAL** **EDUCATION** **SCHOOL**

A mechanical-engineering class at the general-technology educational centre of Ha Nam Ninh province.

Photo : TRAN PHAC



An embroidery class at a work-and-study complementary education school for adults in Ba Dinh district, Hanoi.

Photo : TRINH LIEM



A metal-work class at the general-technology educational centre in Hue City.

Photo : LE GIA NINH



ECONOMIC SITUATION IN 1983

Editor's Note : At the meeting commemorating the August Revolution and marking National Day (2 September), To Huu, member of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee and Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers, delivered an important speech. We give below excerpts from its Part One, in which an assessment was made of the socio-economic situation in Vietnam since early this year.

This year, we observe National Day in a seething revolutionary atmosphere pervading the whole country, with new achievements recorded and new progress.

The most outstanding achievement is the fact that, following a bumper harvest in the autumn of 1982, we brought in another good harvest in winter-spring in spite of prolonged cold spells and serious drought, the food grain output being the highest so far. For the first time, we have solved, through our own efforts and in the main, our food requirements for the whole country, and need no longer import food grain.

Over the last three years, food grain output has constantly increased at the yearly rate of 10%; this is a notable achievement. Most encouraging is the fact that from north to south, in all regions of the country, hundreds of cooperatives and dozens of districts have achieved paddy yields of 8—10 tonnes per hectare per year; many cooperatives have brought in 15 tonnes per hectare while some have attained yields as high as 20 tonnes per hectare. Efforts to reap 8—10 tonnes of paddy per hectare in whole districts have become a broad mass movement. And we should congratulate ourselves on the fact that the coastal provinces of the Centre and the Central Highlands, which have been chronically short of food, now produce not only enough for their own needs but are also able to contribute their share to the country as a whole.

This success assumes a very deep significance. First of all, it is a vivid manifestation of the consciousness of being the collective master and the spirit of diligent and creative labour shown by the peasantry, especially the collective peasantry. This is the result of the tremendous assistance provided by the working class, the combined action of many branches: water conservation, electricity, chemicals, equipment and materials, mechanical engineering, etc. This is the brilliant consequence of the research and wide-ranging application in the field of science and technology resulting in the creation of high-yield rice strains. This success is also evidence of the great effectiveness of the new

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Front Cover: Opening a new gallery at
Mong Duong coal mine.

Photo: QUANG CAN

**Vietnam
Courier**

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economic policies promulgated by the Party Central Committee and the Government, especially the product based contract system which in agriculture is applied down to the individual farmer.

However, we must continue our efforts on the food-grain front and pay greater attention to subsidiary food crops, which are still made light of in many regions.

Industrial crops: In the first eight months of this year, output has increased by 10% compared with the same period last year. Everywhere in the country a trend has developed of promoting the large-scale planting of such high-value industrial crops as groundnuts, soya, sugar cane, tobacco, jute, coconut, cashew, castor-oil plant, tea, coffee, rubber, cinnamon, lacquer, etc.

Livestock breeding: There has been notable progress in the raising of cattle, especially that of oxen for meat; with regard to the raising of pigs and poultry, progress continues in the family sector, but results have not been good in the State and collective sectors.

Forestry: There have been initial positive changes, showing a 35% increase compared with the same period last year. The handing over of forestland to the care of cooperatives and farmers has given a strong boost to afforestation and forest protection, resulting in wasteland and barren hillslopes now being covered with verdure, and in the combination of agriculture with forestry in the uplands, highlands and coastal regions. In some provinces a new form of organization of production has been devised: districts and communes in areas in the plain have been associated with those in hilly areas with a view to promoting forestry and procuring materials for small industry and handicrafts.

However, on the whole, forest protection is still inadequate. Burnings of forest and forest fires are still frequent in some areas.

Aquatic products: The progress started several years ago continues. In the first eight months of this year there has been an increase of 23.6%. There is good progress in fresh-water products. Large-scale shrimp breeding has begun in several coastal provinces.

Together with agriculture, industry has continued its advance. Total output in the first eight months of this year has increased by 8.2% compared with the same period last year. Production has increased in almost all regions and branches. Worth mentioning is the recent higher rate of progress in State-run industry.

In spite of serious drought, which greatly affects the major hydropower plants, electricity production has been maintained. Besides the major projects, medium and small-sized hydropower plants have been built in many places with local manpower and investments and some assistance from the central administration. The electricity branch has focused on serving agriculture: food grain production has been maintained, natural calamities overcome and a bumper harvest brought in. However, there is a serious shortage of electricity for industrial production. There has been laxity in the management of power plants and sluggishness in our efforts to do away with disorderly distribution and utilization of electricity.

Coal: Much effort has been exerted in the exploitation and building of new mines, but we

have run into many difficulties concerning equipment, materials, transport, and the workers' life, which we must urgently solve. At the same time we must vigorously improve management so as quickly to increase coal production with which to supply our national economy.

The engineering industry has turned out new products: spares, medium and small-sized machinery serving agriculture and various industries. However, the very great requirements of the various localities and branches have not been adequately met.

Cement: There has been progress. The Bim Son works, built with Soviet assistance, has begun production. In the first eight months of this year, output has increased 35% compared with the same period last year.

Chemicals: The production of phosphates and insecticides has shown much progress in both organization of production and supply of raw materials.

Geological prospection has scored new achievements in both exploration and exploitation of a number of essential minerals. This has contributed to ensuring supply of materials to some important industrial branches.

Consumer goods industry, on the whole, has been producing more than previously. The various branches and localities have made important progress in making use of locally available materials, turning to account local potentials and bringing about economic integration with a view to giving a boost to production.

In the **textile industry,** output has increased by 10.3% compared with the same period last year. As a number of new mills have been commissioned, yarn production has increased noticeably and the textile industry may be able to redress to a great extent the imbalances in its production.

With the Bai Bang pulp and paper mill going into production together with smaller units in various localities, the production of paper has made progress. Regrettably, however, due to inadequate supply of materials, the new productive capacity has not been made the most of.

Sugar production has increased. Besides the products of handicraft facilities, the output of major refineries has increased by 17% compared with last year. As we are building more large-sized sugar mills together with small and medium-sized processing facilities in the localities, sugar production bids fair to increase rapidly in the coming years.

Tobacco production has increased 20% compared with last year. The major factories should be supplied with enough materials so as to use equipment to full capacity and turn out high-value products.

In short, industrial output — heavy industry, light industry, small industry and handicrafts — has made new progress. This is highly significant in the present circumstances when we are running into great difficulties in materials, equipment, and energy.

However, the most important problem at present is the fact that our factories are running much below capacity. We must re-arrange production and devise measures to overcome difficulties in energy, materials, and spares, in order to turn to full account the productive capacity of our industrial units and develop small industry and handicrafts. Another urgent problem is to check the

decline in product quality with regard to a number of industrial products, including some export items.

In *transport and communications*, initial progress has been recorded, especially in rail and water transport. This has reduced our difficulties in goods circulation, promoted production, and improved the people's living conditions. Compared with the same period last year, the volume of goods transported has increased 22.4% in tonnage and 25.7% in tonne/km. terms. Progress continues with regard to unloading capacity at our ports, especially Hai Phong.

Capital construction has recorded noticeable progress in both quantity and quality. Investments have focussed on key projects, hence building has gone apace at these sites: the Pha Lai thermopower plant, the Hoa Binh hydropower plant, the Tri An hydropower project, the Thang Long bridge, the Vung Tau oil and gas project, the cement works at Bim Son, Hoang Thach and Ha Tien, the Lam Thao superphosphates factory, the Song Cong diesel-engine factory, the Pha Rung repair shipyard, the spinning mills in Hanoi, Vinh, Hue and Nha Trang, the sugar refineries in Lam Son and La Nga, the Bai Bang and Tan Mai paper mills, the Dau Tieng and Thach Han water conservation projects, etc.

This year, more than 40 major projects and parts of projects in industry, agriculture, transport and communications, culture and society, will be commissioned and will add an important part to our productive capacity.

In the localities, acting upon the watchword: "Parallel efforts by the State and the population", a seething movement has started for the building of public-interest works: schools, hospitals, roads, bridges and culverts, etc.

Import and export work has been developing ceaselessly these last few years and is becoming one of the essential economic tasks of the localities and branches, which have tried to procure part of their materials and equipment and thus reduce their reliance on the central administration.

The various localities and branches have worked out plans to promote the production of cash crops and marine products, which will provide them with valuable export items.

An urgent requirement at present is to raise the quality of exports and reduce home consumption in order to produce more high-value export items. We must streamline organization and management so as to ensure centralized and unified management by the State while encouraging initiative by the localities, branches and production units. At the same time, there should be strict control of imports and a resolute stop must be put to smuggling of foreign goods, especially luxury goods.

In the field of *goods circulation and distribution*, advances have been made. The greatest achievement over the past period is the fact that we have procured more farm products, food grain in particular, than ever before. The target for food grain procurement is likely to be surpassed. Likewise, the State has been able to obtain other farm products in larger amounts than before.

Product delivery by State-run enterprises has made progress: many items have been better managed.

However, in a number of places, especially in local trading and industrial units and in small-industry and handicraft units, products have been freely disposed of by the productive units. The store of commodities available for exchange in regions

of industrial crops is still insufficient, hence the difficulties in obtaining the crops.

The most burning question remains that of the *market and prices*. The socialist trading network is being expanded but is still insufficiently active, accounting for only 50% of wholesale trade and 45% of retail trade. Market management has made recent progress in two major cities: Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, and in a number of localities as well. However, the "free" market remains too extensive. Prices have undergone violent fluctuations and introduced many difficulties into everyday life.

Financial and monetary management has shown initial progress. The implementation of legislation on agricultural tax and industrial and commercial taxes has brought positive results. Budget management and cash management have improved; budget deficit and excess cash expenditure have been effectively overcome.

However, financial and monetary stabilization remains a major problem, which calls for stricter management. Tax collection must be improved, especially with regard to industrial and commercial taxes; financial management must be ameliorated in order to ensure more revenues. Strict management must be applied with regard to the cash in circulation. The experience recently drawn in food grain procurement must be turned to account: in this work the use of cash must be reduced to a minimum while two-way contracts should be extended between the State and the farmers.

The socialist transformation of private industry and trade and small industry, handicrafts and small trade, which has slackened over the past period, has now made progress. The *re-adjustment of land holdings and agricultural cooperativization* in Nam Bo have gradually expanded. The socialist relations of production have been further consolidated and perfected throughout the country.

In the *cultural and social fields*, the past school year was the first one for the implementation of the educational reform. Initial good results have been reaped.

Cadre training has experienced a new advance: attention has been paid to the recruitment of youth in the localities with a view to their economic and cultural development.

Cultural and artistic activities have developed; new talent has blossomed in the mass movement; more cultural projects have been completed in the localities.

In health care, epidemics have been checked in time; traditional medicine has been combined with modern medicine and local materia medica have been turned to account.

Besides the above-mentioned achievements, there remain cultural and social problems requiring better solutions.

In general education and cadre training, standards must be raised further. The quality of mass cultural activities must be heightened, especially at the grassroots. More attention must be paid to hygiene and disease prevention; the quality of medical treatment must be raised and the patients should receive better care.

In spite of the enemy's efforts aimed at sabotage, our *national defence and security* has been firmly maintained. Heir to our patriotic traditions, young men in all regions have enthusiastically fulfilled their military-service duties.

VIETNAM'S DRAFT PENAL CODE

Following the August 1945 Revolution, in successive periods, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam has promulgated penal legislation which has contributed to the maintenance of public order and security, and to the socialist transformation of society and the building of socialism.

Generally speaking, however, these are but disparate provisions. Many of them are not laws but only rules enacted by the Council of Ministers. A smaller number are decrees signed by the President of the Republic, and ordinances of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly and, more recently, of the State Council since the adoption of the Constitution of 1980 (see the article "38 Years of Legislative Activities in Vietnam" — *Vietnam Courier*, No. 9, 1983).

The requirement arising from this situation is to revise all those documents, systematize them and elaborate a Penal Code which will deal in a condensed and uniform manner with all problems pertaining to offences against the law and attendant penalties, thus ensuring the cohesion of our socialist penal law.

Right after the liberation of South Vietnam in 1975 and the reunification of the country, and later, within the framework of the five-year (1981-1985) plan for law-making, legislative bodies set about elaborating a Penal Code. After more than seven years of work, a draft was submitted to the National Assembly in June 1982. At its meeting on 30 June, 1983, the National Assembly provisionally adopted the General Part of the Penal Code, which contains provisions of a general character. The Assembly will meet again some time in future to consider the part dealing with the specific offences and the attendant penalties. The adoption was provisional because after considering the part dealing with specific offences, the Assembly will re-examine the General Part and then adopt the code as a whole.

The General Part of the code has been published in all newspapers

and periodicals and the people have been invited to give their opinions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CODE

While enjoying peace, Vietnam now has to cope with a multifaceted war of sabotage conducted by the Chinese hegemonists in collusion with the US imperialists and other reactionary forces, and must stand prepared for any possible large-scale war of aggression triggered by the enemy.

In this context, the Penal Code pays especial attention to such offences as violations of the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam, violations of the socialist system and offences against the State of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. It will help maintain political security, punish the enemy's acts of sabotage and suppress counter-revolutionaries. It will contribute to building and strengthening national defence, and to enhancing the discipline and fighting power of the people's armed forces, by preventing and sanctioning military offences.

Vietnam is going through the early stage of the period of transition to socialism. The Penal Code takes into account the present concrete historical features and economic policies. Vietnam's economy, though going through heartening changes, still meets with many great difficulties. The struggle between the two roads—socialism and capitalism—is tense. Socialist property is being gravely infringed. Many flaws have been found in economic management. The distribution and circulation of goods is a burning problem and quite a few people are taking advantage of the difficulties facing the country.

The Penal Code has the task of protecting socialist property, contributing to re-establishing socialist order in economic management, especially in the domains of distribution and circulation of goods, and

the stabilization of prices, currency, and the market.

It will contribute to promoting the scientific and technological revolution and the ideological and cultural revolution, eliminating the social evils left by the former regimes and the vestiges of the neo-colonialist culture, and combating all influences of reactionary and decadent ideologies and cultures.

The Penal Code will help protect the working people's right as the collective master of society, protect human rights (the lives, health, dignity, honour of the citizens...), see to it that the citizens enjoy and correctly exercise their democratic freedoms (the right to vote and stand for election, the right to work...), protect the citizens' legitimate right of ownership and their rights concerning marriage and the family.

To ensure effective State management, the code will punish offences against the State organs, social order and the people's security.

To help fulfil the Vietnamese people's internationalist obligations, the code contains provisions against offences against socialist States and other progressive States, and particularly crimes against peace and humanity.

The code takes into consideration the national traits, customs and habits, and fine traditions of the Vietnamese people. It continues the experience gained by Vietnam in preventing and combating criminal offences while selectively assimilating the experience accumulated in other socialist countries.

In short, the code will effectively serve the two strategic tasks of the Vietnamese people in the present revolutionary stage: to build socialism successfully and to stand prepared to fight in defence of the Homeland.

The Penal Code, once promulgated, will mark a new step in implementing the policy of strengthening socialist legality, which has been affirmed in the Constitution: "The State manages society in con-

formity with the law and constantly strengthens socialist legality..." (Art. 12)

GENERAL PART OF THE CODE

Apart from the part dealing with the tasks, that is, the objectives of the Penal Code, as mentioned above, the draft makes clear that the responsibility for combating and preventing infractions of the law rests not only with State organs but also with social organizations and with all citizens.

The State organs and social organizations have the duty to educate people under their management in order to heighten their revolutionary vigilance and foster their sense of safeguarding and observing the law respecting the rules of socialist life, and to take timely measures to eliminate the causes and conditions leading to infractions of the law in their respective organizations.

To urge the citizens to combat and prevent infractions means to heighten the working people's sense of socialist collective mastery over society with the aim of uncovering infractions, discovering the culprits and taking part in educating and reforming them. For their part, the citizens must of their own free will abide by the law.

Basis of Penal Responsibility

A person shall be held penally responsible and be punished only when he commits an infraction formulated by the Penal Code and only after a verdict has been given by a tribunal.

A number of penal rules now in force authorize the application of the "principle of analogy". With regard to an action which is dangerous to society and should be punished but which has not yet been ruled to be an infraction by any legal provision, the tribunal may apply legislation concerning an infraction of the same nature and committed by using similar means. Pending the completion of our penal law, the application of the principle of analogy has been, to a certain degree, necessary.

The present Penal Code is relatively comprehensive. The law-

makers have studied the present situation and future developments in the domain of violations of the law and have not omitted any infractions, especially serious ones. The above-mentioned provision on the basis of penal responsibility means that the principle of analogy is no longer applied.

Penal Policies

All infractions must be discovered in time, promptly dealt with in an appropriate manner and in conformity with the law. Severe punishment must be meted out to certain offenders such as the main culprits, the gang leaders... Clemency is given to those who sincerely repent, and voluntarily report their offences... Those guilty of light infractions... can benefit from penalties less severe than imprisonment (see the part on penalties). Those sentenced to prison terms must do manual labour and reform themselves in order to become useful citizens. Those who have served their terms of imprisonment are given help to earn an honest living.

Scope of Application of the Penal Code

The Penal Code is applied to all breaches of the law taking place on the territory of Vietnam and, in certain cases, to infractions committed outside Vietnamese territory.

It is applied to all citizens of Vietnam, to persons without a nationality, and to foreigners, except those enjoying diplomatic privileges or favoured treatment and consular immunity in conformity with Vietnamese laws, with international agreements signed or recognized by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, or in keeping with international practice.

A foreigner committing an infraction outside Vietnamese territory may be prosecuted in accordance with the Penal Code of Vietnam if that infraction is laid down in the international agreements signed or recognized by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

The legal basis for dealing with an infraction is the penal provision in force at the time of the infraction. It can have a retroactive effect only if this is clearly formu-

lated in the rule. However, a legal provision cancelling an infraction or stipulating a lighter penalty is applied to an infraction which had been committed before it was promulgated. That is the essence of the principle of "non-retroactivity" of penal laws.

Infractions

An infraction is an action dangerous to society and laid down in the code, committed either deliberately or involuntarily by a person subject to penal responsibility, and infringing social relations protected by penal laws.

Infractions fall into two categories: major offences or felonies, and minor offences or misdemeanours. Depending on the degree of dangerousness to society, penalties range upwards of 5 years' imprisonment, to life imprisonment or death (major offences), or downwards of 5 years' imprisonment (minor offences).

A person who commits an action dangerous to society but only because of overpowering force of circumstances or because of mental derangement, or in legitimate self-defence, or due to emergency circumstances, is not penally responsible. With regard to persons suffering from mental derangement, compulsory measures for medical treatment are applied (more details are to be found under the heading: Judicial Measures). People committing offences when under the influence of alcohol or any other intoxicating agent, are not exempt from penal responsibility.

With regard to an action preparatory to an offence or an abortive offence, the penalties are provided for in articles of the code dealing with the corresponding offences, depending on the character, the degree of dangerousness to society of the action, the extent of execution of the offence and the facts which had caused the culprit to be unable to commit it thoroughly. A person who voluntarily refrains from committing an intended offence is exempt from penal responsibility.

A person who intentionally commits an infraction together with another person is the latter's accomplice. So is a person who

executes the culprit's orders, organizes the offence, or instigates, or assists the culprit. An accomplice or a person who covers up an infraction or refuses to denounce it, is penally responsible.

Penalties

Penalties are aimed not only at punishing the culprits but also at educating and reforming them, and at the same time at educating other people to make them respect the law, and at combating and preventing infractions of the law.

The main penalties are: warning, fine, reformation without detention, house arrest, prison terms, life imprisonment, and death penalty. Accessory penalties (applied in addition to the main penalty) include: forbidding the offender to assume certain public functions, to engage in certain occupations, denying him the right to reside in certain places, depriving him of certain civic rights, confiscating his private property. Two forms of penalty — fine and house arrest — if not applied as main penalties, can be applied as accessory penalties.

Reformation without detention is a new penalty, applied for a period of from 6 months to 2 years, to any person who commits for the first time a minor infraction, an offence which causes only a minor damage, or commits a grave but involuntary offence, and for whom a public organ or organization stands guaranty. The offender must discharge a number of obligations and may have to pay from 5 to 20% of his income, to be put in the public funds. This penalty creates conditions for the offender to be reformed without being kept away from society. The State does not have to organize his detention and can thus avoid attendant complications. In case that person gravely violates his pledges, the tribunal, upon the proposal of the organ or social organization that stands guaranty for him, may decide to turn the remaining period of reformation without detention into a gaol term, with every three days of reformation without detention converted into one of imprisonment.

The death penalty still has to be maintained. It is a special penalty applied to a culprit in particularly serious cases (to traitors to the

Homeland, to those who violate national security, to speculators and smugglers who gravely disrupt the market, to those who seriously infringe socialist property, and so on). The penalties of death and life imprisonment are not applied to minors. Women who are in the family way when committing the infraction or when undergoing trial are not liable to the death penalty. Only in special cases and under special provisions, can the death penalty be executed immediately after the trial.

A person sentenced to death may apply for clemency. In practice, not a few cases of death penalty have been commuted into life imprisonment. If, during his detention, a person serving a life term behaves properly, his prison term may be reduced. As a matter of fact, so far no detainee in Vietnam has spent more than 15 consecutive years in prison — at most, between 12 and 15 years.

Judicial Measures

Judicial measures are not penalties, but only measures that have to be taken against an offender in certain cases. They are: confiscation of the materials and money directly connected with the offence; return of the stolen property, compelling the offender to mend the damage done or to compensate the victim, compelling him to make public apologies, or to provide medical treatment to his victim.

A person suffering from mental derangement is not penally responsible. However, in view of the need to maintain public order and social security, he is not to be let free and it is necessary to compel him to undergo medical treatment. This is a new provision in the penal law of Vietnam similar to that adopted in other socialist countries. The difference is that in Vietnamese penal law, depending on the stage of prosecution, not only the tribunal, but also the prosecutor's office, may decide on the application of this measure.

Application of and Exemption from Penalties

When deciding on a penalty, the tribunal, proceeding from the provisions of the Penal Code, carefully

considers the character and degree of dangerousness of the infraction, the offender's character, and the extenuating or aggravating circumstances.

The code only deals with common extenuating circumstances. In the course of the trial, the tribunal may regard other circumstances as extenuating ones, but it must make this clear in its judgment.

The code explicitly lists the aggravating circumstances. The tribunal may not consider other circumstances as aggravating ones.

An offender may be acquitted or exempted from penal responsibility if, at the time of investigation or trial, the infraction or the offender is no longer considered dangerous to society, or if, before the infraction is discovered, that person has already confessed his guilt. The offender may be acquitted or exempted from penal responsibility or from penalty in case he benefits from many extenuating circumstances, and deserves special leniency.

When giving a prison term of less than 5 years, if the tribunal does not deem it necessary to have the penalty inflicted right away, it can give the offender a suspended term and may set the time for probation at from 1 to 5 years. The tribunal can entrust the probationer to the organ or organization where he works or resides, to be watched over and educated.

The Penal Code further lays down penalties to be inflicted in case of repeat offences, dangerous repeat offences, and multiple offences or when the penalties given in several judgments, or different penalties, are to be combined.

A new provision in the Penal Code is that on the cancellation of sentences. If the offender, after a certain period (the duration of which depends on the nature and degree of gravity of the penalty), meets certain requirements, he may have his sentence automatically annulled, or annulled by decision of the tribunal. This provision expresses confidence in the possibility of reforming people. It has the effect of encouraging offenders to reform themselves and return to an honest life. It helps eliminate the causes and conditions of relapse into crime.

The question of the time lapse of penal responsibility and execution of a judgment is also a problem newly dealt with in Vietnamese penal law.

With regard to particularly serious cases, however, the Supreme People's Prosecutor's Office and the Supreme People's Court may not consider a time lapse as applicable. Besides, in accordance with international law, the Penal Code of Vietnam does not apply a time lapse to crimes against peace and against humanity.

Penal Responsibility of Minors

Persons aged 14 and upwards but not quite 16 are penally responsible for grave infractions intentionally committed by them. Persons aged 16 and upwards but not quite 18 are penally responsible for all infractions committed by them, except otherwise stipulated.

In dealing with minors the main aim is to educate them by such measures as compelling them to undergo appropriate trials, putting them in reformatories, etc.

Only when necessary are penalties to be applied, such as reformation without detention and limited terms of imprisonment. However, these penalties are governed by distinct provisions and are different from those applied to adult offenders.

Penal Responsibility of Military Men

Apart from the provisions applicable to all citizens including military men, the Penal Code also contains separate provisions on the latter's penal responsibility.

A member of the armed forces is not penally responsible for an action done on orders from his commander. If the execution of that order turns out to be an infraction of the law, then the person who gave the order is to be held penally responsible. A military man is responsible penally if he fully knows that by executing the order he will have committed a grave breach of the law.

PHAM THAI and VU QUY VY

« PILGRIMAGE » TO HOA HAO LAND

"Come and see my soya!"

I had hardly emptied my cup of tea when my hostess—septuagenarian but still very active—eagerly took me to a storehouse where newly harvested soya was drying. The old lady tirelessly talked about her fields of soya, how she had grown and looked after it, harvested it, how much profit she had made, then when the subject seemed exhausted, said:

"Excuse me, I still have work to do in the fields, so I'll leave you with my son and my nephew."

Her son, about forty, explained: "My mother is infatuated with soya. It's the first time this crop is grown in our region. The production collective has allotted to our family more than a hectare to be worked following the 'khoan' (contract) system. This has brought us a substantial extra income this year."

I would not have told this story if my septuagenarian hostess had not been the elder sister of the "Prophet" Huynh Phu So, founder of the Hoa Hao religious sect. In the month of July 1983, when the waters of the Mekong began to swell, soya was still being harvested here. The peasants in the region had never before dreamt of planting it. As for me, I was astounded to see that the prophet's family had become active members of the production collective, bringing their adhesion to the socialist regime. For I know the story of the Hoa Hao sect.

*
* *

In 1939, Huynh Phu So was twenty years old. Following a sudden enlightenment, he began to preach. He proclaimed himself to be Buddha's incarnation, coming to save the world. Those were the

days of great calamities, but the Great Festival (Hoi Long Hoa) was awaiting those who, invoking Buddha's name, would comply with the rules and follow the cult practices laid down by Huynh Phu So himself, in the form of sayings and poems easy to remember. Hoa Hao village, where the prophet was born, is located in a region flooded by the Mekong each year from July to October. In these conditions, the rice sown in April-May, when the first rains began to fall, was always submerged, as slow-growth rice was the only species known in former days. The rice plant, rising at the same pace as the water, managed to survive, and the ears developed after the water receded. It was floating rice, of low yield (from 1 to 1.5 tonnes per hectare, at most 2 tonnes), with a single yearly crop. After the rent was paid to the land-owners little remained for the peasants. And the severe, prolonged economic crisis which began in 1930, together with the threats of war, brought gloomy prospects to the life of peasants in the years preceding World War II.

In the 19th century, when remote areas of the Mekong delta were being reclaimed, several religious sects had come into being, which had promised to the peasants happiness in a supernatural world. In the credo of these sects, the expectation of a blissful Peace was mixed with anti-colonialist patriotic aspirations, and magical beliefs mingled with practices or ideas inspired from Buddhism, Taoism, Brahmanism, and moral notions drawn from Confucianism. A mixture of religious beliefs was found in nearly all doctrines and creeds of the many sects and schools, flourishing throughout the delta.

Huynh Phu So continued this tradition of the Mekong delta prophets. World War II, by further

aggravating the misery of the illiterate peasant masses, created a particularly favorable ground for his religious action. He began by miraculously curing some people stricken by reputedly incurable diseases, and the movement spread from village to village, to reach its apex in 1945 when the Japanese overthrew the French colonial administration in a military coup. The movement leaders then claimed to have one million followers in the western provinces of the Mekong delta. In 1946, Huynh Phu So founded the Democratic Socialist Party, with a programme of national independence and social renovation.

Hoa Hao armed groups appeared. The movement, initially of a millenarian character, then took the form of a politico-religious sect.

During the years 1940—1945 when the Hoa Hao movement was expanding, the Communist Party, as a result of the failure of the insurrection of November 1940 and the ruthless repression which had followed, had lost many of its militants and base organizations. These circumstances favoured the development of religious sects among the peasant masses in the South, contrary to what happened in the North where the influence of the Communist Party among the population was much greater. For this reason the immense movement of the masses which rose up in 1945 to reconquer national independence comprised, besides a majority led by the Viet Minh, several other groups, among them the Hoa Hao politico-religious sect with fanatical peasant members who blindly followed the Great Master's orders. While the peasants and people of good faith practised the cult and applied the rules prescribed by the prophet, adventurers availed themselves of the situation to form armed groups flaunting the Hoa Hao banner.

The Nam Bo Resistance Committee under Viet Minh leadership decided to enter into an alliance with the Hoa Hao movement, and Huynh Phu So became a committee member, with a special status. However, at the base, various parties, sects, organizations clashed with one another, defying orders and injunctions by higher authorities. They were divided by local, personal rivalries. In those circumstances, an armed Viet Minh group killed Huynh Phu So in 1947. This aroused great anger among the Hoa Hao followers, and the adventurers who controlled the armed groups, in collusion with the French, exacerbated the believers' hatred

of the revolutionary militants. With arms supplied by the French and support by Huynh Phu So's followers, the Hoa Hao armed groups almost totally liquidated the revolutionary bases in the region.

But Ngo Dinh Diem could not tolerate the existence of a pro-French Hoa Hao fief with autonomous armed forces. In 1955-1956, with money and favours Diem succeeded in buying over a number of Hoa Hao leaders, while his troops dispersed the armed groups. The sect was reduced to an almost clandestine existence until Diem's death in 1963. The American services in 1964 realized that it was in their interest to maintain the sect, as the repression carried out by Diem had driven the Hoa Hao groups into an alliance with the "Viet Cong". Two CIA agents shaved their heads, adopted the sect's vegetarian diet and cult practices and came to live in the very house of the prophet which had become the sanctuary of the sect. The Hoa Hao movement was restored, great processions periodically gathered tens of thousands of followers, particularly on the day of Great Hatred, to commemorate the death of the prophet. The Hoa Hao armed groups were reequipped and expanded. A "Central Administrative Committee" was set up, which controlled a vast organization reaching down to the villages. With American money, a huge building was erected to house the headquarters of the Administrative Committee and armed groups, as well as a Hoa Hao "University".

The Phu Tan district lying between the two branches of the Mekong, the Tien and the Hau rivers, where the village of Hoa Hao was located, became the main base of the sect. Apart from a small group of Muslim Cham, nearly the entire population was willy-nilly integrated into Hoa Hao ranks. At nightfall, as related by witnesses, all families, without exception, would light a small lamp on a tiny altar erected in front of each house, and everybody would begin to pray. For kilometres along the Tien River, small lights beside burning incense sticks were seen, and prayers rose in unison in the silence of the night. All entertainments — cinema, theatre, song, dance — were forbidden. The evening was spent in listening tirelessly to the *sam giang* (prophecies and teachings) of the Great Master, recited by a man, or coming through

a loudspeaker. The population finally knew them by heart.

Saigon politicians predicted: The communists could never seize Phu Tan, never would the population accept communist rule. In fact, Phu Tan was liberated on May 3, 1975, after all other places in South Vietnam, the whole of the Mekong delta having been liberated on May 1st. But it was liberated without bloodshed. The Hoa Hao armed groups, reputedly fanatical, surrendered without a fight.

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Night was falling on the main street of the Phu Tan district town, formerly the village of Hoa Hao. On the altars in front of each house, the tiny lights looked like glow-worms in the night. Old women said their prayers while the young people, in white shirts, leisurely strolled in groups, chatting merrily or singing popular songs. T., one of the principal responsible Party cadres in the district, whispered to me:

"My elder brother and my father-in-law were murdered by the Hoa Hao. It's the same thing with all the Party members who are now in the leading posts: we all have a 'blood debt' to settle. The population was apprehensive when we came here to take over the district administration. But the Party's directives are very strict: it is absolutely forbidden to evoke past hatred. One of our cadres, during a family feast, having drunk a few cups too many, could not restrain himself, and uttered a few words of hatred against the sect. He was later expelled from the Party. But such measures are not enough: we have to improve the peasants' living conditions."

With the help of agronomists and cadres from the North and learning from the experience of old peasants, the responsible Party cadres at Phu Tan had worked out a bold project: to totally replace the crop of slow-growth, low-yield floating rice by more profitable crops. This was all the more urgent as US aid had been cut off, the population growth rate had reached 3 per cent a year, and the district had to provide for refugees from Kampuchea. The soil is excellent, enriched yearly by the silt left by the high waters of the two branches of the Mekong, which also bring fish and shrimps in abundance. How to preserve these riches while protecting the rice plant against prolonged immersion?

Fortunately, here the high waters never reach such fantastic levels as those of the Red River — 10, 12 metres. They do not come suddenly as in the North, but gradually rise over a period of several months, from July to October, to a maximum height of about 3 metres. A bold formula was decided upon:

- replace slow-growth floating rice by quicker growth varieties — 3 months, 3 months and a half.

- speed up irrigation at the end of the dry season (February-March) to plant a rice crop in spring.

- immediately begin a second rice — the autumn rice crop. This rice variety which ripens in July — August, when the waters are still moderately high, will be protected by dikes 1 to 1.50 metres high.

- after the harvest of the autumn rice, let the waters overflow the dikes, bringing in silt and an important quantity of fish and shrimps. The culture of floating rice was abandoned.

The first thing to do was to mobilize the population for the dredging of irrigation canals, and chiefly, the construction of a system of protective dikes. The old folk shook their heads: after all, one could not act against Heaven's will. This massive mobilization of peasants for the construction of dikes, an ancient practice in the North, was here without precedent. The militants set an example, the authorities exerted some pressure and the population followed suit, at first grudgingly. The dike network was gradually built, and the State gave some assistance by building a number of pumping stations. Dikes, irrigation canals, pumping stations have gradually changed the face of Phu Tan district, and the region now looks like many districts in the North where agricultural water-conservation work has been done for years.

The spring and autumn rice crops give on an average 3 tonnes per hectare against 1.5 — 2 tonnes with floating rice. Within a few years, rice production in the district has trebled. Being realist-minded, the Hoa Hao peasants have now been convinced of two things:

- floating rice can be safely abandoned to adopt new agricultural techniques;

- the Party members have come back not to avenge themselves, but to help the population to improve their living conditions.

There are no more US aid goods, but there is rice in abundance.

New schools, medical stations and maternity homes have been built. One can now go to the cinema, watch shows and particularly attend "*cai luong*" (renovated opera) performances by art troupes from the provincial town, and even from Ho Chi Minh City.

Huynh Phu So's family has contributed to this transformation. Citing texts left by the prophet, members of his family have told the population: the Master taught that the Hoa Hao religion must have no church, no pagoda, no solemn processions, no offerings; worship must be a strictly personal matter; the essential thing being purification of the heart through adoration of Buddha. Those who have passed themselves off as priests, leaders, officers under the cloak of religion, only to sell themselves to the French and the Americans, have betrayed the Master.

This reaffirmation of the personal, inward character of the religion has greatly contributed to restoring peace in the minds. It has been readily accepted by the majority of peasants who are sincere believers, without personal ambition. In the families, altars are still seen, and Huynh Phu So's house where his family are still living remains the sanctuary of the sect and is carefully kept, like the mausoleum where his parents are resting. At the main pagoda of Phu Tan, built long before the appearance of the Hoa Hao by an ancient sect, Buu Son Ky Huong (Marvellous Perfume of the Sacred Mountain), Huynh Phu So's remains are carefully preserved. Big portraits of the Master are seen hanging on the pagoda columns. One can also see the motor-car formerly used by the prophet in his peregrinations through the country. Pilgrims from other provinces can always come to pay homage to the prophet at one of these three sacred places (house, mausoleum, pagoda).

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"The difficulty now," continued T., "is to collectivize agriculture. Big water control works, mechanization, the introduction of scientific techniques, all that will not be possible with these small family plots. At first, we made the mistake of trying to force people to go too fast. The loudly announced victory of such or such village

where 100 per cent of the land is said to have been collectivized was in reality an utter failure. We have changed our method, and are now proceeding slowly, passing through intermediary forms, taking into account the legitimate interests of the farmers, the machine owners, creating small collectives. Then the '*khoan*' (contract) system has come and saved us. I had the chance of making a visit to the North to see how it was done, and have managed to apply it here, before all other districts. That's why our district is in advance of all others."

In talking with T., I saw that many of our militants in the Mekong delta had come to a turning-point in their way of thinking. They had set out in 1975 with great ideas about socialism, eager to transform in a matter of a few years their native land into an eldorado where goods would be produced in abundance and where everyone would enjoy the fruits of his labour, in a most equitable manner. The communist militant, himself a poor peasant like the Hoa Hao believer, longed for the coming of the 'Great Festival', still ill-informed about all the material, historical, human limitations that hamper the realization of such a dream. Now enlightened by practical experience and by the directives and analyses of higher authorities, our militants can better analyse concrete situations. A number of them have seen the necessity of seeking the collaboration of scientific cadres in order to progress, more slowly, but more surely.

No-doubt, a painful past cannot be effaced in the short span of a few years. Secretly, some of the former Hoa Hao leaders, acting in collusion with other reactionary forces, seek to avail themselves of all possible occasions to revive superstitions and past hatred. Our militants, even experienced ones, continue to make mistakes; a number of cadres allow themselves to be corrupted, others display humiliating authoritarianism towards the population. Traffickers from the towns maintain around Phu Tan a vast network which disrupts the local economy. But it may be said that at Phu Tan, the era of religious creed is gradually fading away, to make place for an era of conscious efforts and confidence in human strength.

July 1983
NGUYEN KHAC VIEN

THE UNITED STATES

MUST TAKE

FULL RESPONSIBILITY

The louder the shindy it kicks up over the South Korean airliner incident, the more the Reagan Administration reveals the warlike and aggressive nature of US imperialism, the number one enemy of peace, independence, democracy and socialism, the perpetrator of many crimes against mankind.

However meticulous its stage-directions, however crafty its slanders and whatever amount of fake documents it may produce to lay the blame on the Soviet Union, the Reagan Administration cannot wash its hands of this odious crime. As has been convincingly asserted in the September 6 Statement of the Soviet Government and the Statement of the Ministry for National Defence and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the USSR made public by Marshal N. Ogarkov on September 9, this was a carefully prepared act of espionage engineered by the United States jointly with Japan and taking place over a key strategic area of the Soviet Union.

The extreme callousness of the Reagan Administration lies in the fact that it has used a civilian airliner to camouflage the spying operations of its military aircraft. As rightly remarked by the *Manila Daily Mirror*, the South Korean aircraft had actually been used as an expendable pawn.

The shameful cynicism of the Reagan Administration lies in the fact that after the Soviet Union had been forced to take the ultimate

measure to defend its security, the thief immediately cried Stop thief! and tried to turn the incident into a world-wide political campaign against the Soviet Union.

It is an undeniable fact which was admitted by the United States itself that the US had sent an RC-135 military spy plane of a model similar to the South Korean airliner into an area near the Soviet border and flying at the same altitude. As has been substantiated by a host of evidence adduced by the Soviet Union, the RC-135 at one time flew parallel with the airliner and its blip on the radar screen was confused with the latter's.

It is an undeniable fact that the South Korean airliner has intruded as deeply as 500 kilometres inside Soviet air space and for more than two hours without the United States control stations doing anything to correct its flight even though they were technically entirely capable of doing so. Neither did they sound the alarm after they had been informed, as they later admitted, that reports from the flight were not coming. These questions remain unanswered by the United States.

It is also an undeniable fact that though it had identified the plane as a spy plane, the Soviet Union acted with utmost caution and only at the last minute when the plane insolently ignored all contact and warning signals did the Soviet pilots fire the missiles to stop its

flight in defence of the security of the Soviet borders and in complete conformity with international law. During their action, they could not know that it was a passenger airliner.

It should be pointed out that this was not the first time the United States used a passenger aircraft for spying purposes. For many years now, US intelligence agencies have used not only American but also allied civilian planes and even the special plane of the US president for spying ends. This was disclosed by Gerald Teheurster, a former press officer of the White House, and R. Olbersti, a former pilot of the presidential plane, in a book entitled "The Flying White House".

It should be pointed out that at any time and in any region of the world the US imperialists are wont to stage provocative acts and use them to deceive public opinion in America and the world with a view to carrying out their plans of intervention and aggression. History has recorded the so-called "Mad-dox incident" in August 1964, entirely stage-managed by the Pentagon to serve as an excuse for launching a direct and brutal aggression in which so many crimes were perpetrated against the Vietnamese people and so many sufferings caused to the American people. History has also recorded the "evidence" cooked up by the US against the Soviet Union and Cuba to further its intervention and aggression plans in Central America and the Middle East.

What is Reagan aiming at in whipping up frantic anti-Soviet hysteria at this juncture? As has been underlined in the Statement of the Soviet Government, the campaign is being conducted just at a time when the question has arisen whether the arms race could be halted or not, and whether the danger of a nuclear war could be reduced or instead would increase. By this vicious piece of stage-craft Reagan hopes to mislead public opinion and play down the Soviet peace initiatives in order to continue his confrontation policy in

disregard of the protests of the American people and all peace-loving peoples on our planet.

There is no doubt that the passengers on the South Korean airliner were victims of an extremely callous act of cold war provocation. US imperialism has committed and goes on committing monstrous crimes against mankind. Not only is it trampling upon the sovereign

rights of nations and opposing peace but it is even planning to wipe out life from this planet. It has absolutely no right to speak of civilization, human rights or international law. Incontrovertible facts have pulled down the hypocritical mask of the Reagan Administration. They have also shown that not only have the NATO countries and Japan toed the line

of the Reagan Administration but the Chinese authorities have also faithfully echoed Washington's allegations.

We energetically support the correct stand of the Soviet Union. The US Administration must take full responsibility for the tragedy it caused.

NHAN DAN
12 September 1983

BALANCE-SHEET OF THE WINTER-SPRING CULTIVATION CAMPAIGN

(This article is based on data supplied by the General Department of Statistics)

This campaign was successful on three planes: areas planted, yields, and output. The cultivated areas totalled 1,648,000 hectares, less than the targets set by the State Plan

but showing an increase of 1.5% compared with the same period last year (plus 25,000 hectares). The provinces in the North surpassed the plan's targets by 0.5% (plus

6,000 hectares). In the South, although showing an increase of 3.5% over the last campaign (plus 20,000 hectares), the areas planted were 54,000 hectares short of the plan's targets.

Yields were the highest obtained so far:

Place	Average yield (quintal/ha)	Compared with plan's targets	Compared with 1982
For the whole country	30.6	+ 1.1 q/ha	+ 2.7 q/ha
1. Northern provinces	28.87	+ 1.67 q/ha	+ 2.97 q/ha
- Red River delta	34.28	+ 5.1%	+ 9.8%
- Uplands	25.62	+ 13%	+ 25.5%
2. Central provinces (in spite of adverse weather conditions)	24.41	+ 3.4%	+ 9.9%
3. Southern provinces	33.81	+ 0.5 q/ha	+ 2.29 q/ha
- Eastern provinces of Nam Bo	26.5	+ 12.2%	+ 18%
- Mekong delta	39.98	+ 1.98 q/ha	+ 4.34 q/ha

Thus, in the whole country, 28 provinces obtained yields higher than the plan's targets (except Cao Bang, Son La, Binh Tri Thien, Quang Nam—Da Nang, An Giang, Ben Tre, Tay Ninh and the special zone of Vung Tau—Con Dao). Thirty-one cities (rural suburbs) and provinces obtained yields higher than those of last year's winter-spring campaign.

The record is held by Thai Binh: 38.48 q/ha., +2.6% compared with

the plan and +2.3% compared with 1982.

The following provinces in the South obtained high yields: An Giang (44.8 q/ha.), Dong Thap (44.1 q/ha.), Tien Giang (42.8 q/ha.) and Hau Giang (41.7 q/ha.).

Thirty-two districts and cities (13 more) obtained yields higher than 40 q/ha. and hundreds of cooperatives and production collective reaped more than 50 q/ha.

Total food-grain production increased 4.7% compared with the same campaign in 1982 (+3% for the northern provinces and 7.9% for the southern provinces).

However, with regard to subsidiary food crops, output decreased by 23.8% compared with last year (minus 24.3% for the northern provinces and minus 20.9% for the southern provinces).

YEARLY RICE YIELDS IN DAI PHUOC COOPERATIVE: 22 TONNES PER HECTARE

Dai Phuoc cooperative in Dai Phuoc commune (Dai Loc district, Quang Nam — Da Nang province) was founded in 1979 with only 105 ha. of cultivable land for 3,250 people, about 330 sq. m. per capita. In such conditions, the only way out for the commune is to practise intensive rice cultivation and crop multiplication. Now, 78 of the 84 ha. of ricefields can give three crops a year.

During the past, the local people grew only two rice crops a year — called the third-lunar-month and eighth-lunar-month rice crops. Three years ago, a third crop called spring-summer rice was introduced here as in many other places, in the province. However, as it is very hot and dry in summer in this province of central Vietnam, Dai Phuoc first had to think of improving its irrigation works. Three diesel-and steam-powered pumping stations complete with a system of canals, culverts, and sluice gates have been built. The drainage and irrigation system is now in the charge of a specialized team.

Pest-resistant, high-yield and short-growth rice strains have been selected, and the total length of time for the three rice crops do not exceed 330 days, so as to avoid the annual flood season around November. As a result of the weather conditions, the rice varieties used for the winter-spring crop must be resistant to the cold; those used for the spring-summer crop must be able to withstand the heat; and those for the summer-autumn crop must be resistant to

submersion. The cooperative has its own seed-selection team. Meanwhile, co-op members are required to use the recommended seeds and strictly abide by cultivation schedules.

Thanks to the use of organic fertilizer Dai Phuoc was able to obtain very high rice yields. Every year, 42 tonnes of organic fertilizer altogether are used for the three rice-crops: winter-spring, 15 tonnes; summer-autumn, 10 tonnes; and spring-summer, 17 tonnes. To encourage people to make manure, the cooperative will give 50 kg of paddy for every tonne of manure. This measure has triggered a mass movement to make organic fertilizer not only among co-op members but also among non-agricultural families in the commune.

In collaboration with other co-ops Dai Phuoc tries to create a safe zone well protected from plant diseases and pests. It also pays attention to soil preparation and considers it an important measure for intensive farming. When the summer-autumn harvest is over, people plough under the stubble so that the fields can retain all the alluvium left by the coming flood. Before transplanting the winter-spring rice seedlings, power cultivators work the fields 2 or 3 times so as to spread the alluvium evenly over the whole surface of the fields. It is usually very hot at the beginning of the spring-summer and summer-autumn crops, the cooperative has to plough and hoe the fields right after the previous harvests have been brought in

Vietnam's population is expected to grow to about 60 million by 1985, which poses a great task for our textile industry: to "solve the problem of our textile requirements as needs require and conditions permit", as pointed out by Chairman of the Council of Ministers Pham Van Dong at the Fifth Congress of the Communism Party of Vietnam.

How to produce annually 380 — 400 million metres of cloth by then?

First of all, let us see our capacities for cotton production.

At present, our textile mills are operating below capacity. Handicraft cooperatives and even some industrial enterprises are not supplied with enough materials.

Thus the problem of raw materials is both an urgent and long-term one.

Now we have a zone specialized in cotton-growing in Phu Khanh, Thuan Hai and Lam Dong with a planned planted area of 28,650 hectares by 1985. It is our hope then to get 600 kilogrammes of cotton seeds (as against only 400kg in 1980), that is 200kg of cotton fibre, per hectare. Total output will be 5,730 tonnes — covering about 10% of our needs.

To weave 400 — 500 million metres of cloth requires 200,000 tonnes of cotton seeds i.e. 70,000 tonnes of cotton fibre, to be obtained from an area of 300,000 hectares.

in order to dry the soil and allow useful micro-organisms to develop and toxins to be eliminated.

In 1982, Dai Phuoc obtained an average annual yield of 20.2 tonnes of paddy per ha. In the last winter-spring harvest, in spite of unfavourable weather conditions, Dai Phuoc still led the country in rice yield: 7.8 tonnes per ha. (10 tonnes by some production brigades). In some plots planted with spring-summer crop, it has brought in 8 tonnes per ha. The target of 22 tonnes of paddy per ha. which Dai Phuoc sets for this year is likely to be reached.

VU THUY

VIETNAM COURIER

Experience gained by cotton growers in the world shows that any increase in area and yields is bound to be limited and slow. Within the space of 25 years, one can only hope to increase the area planted by 1.5—2.5 times and double productivity.

Therefore, by the nineties we can at best supply 20% of our cotton needs.

Despite a great many difficulties in the fields of capital investment and technique, *cotton growing* should remain the long-term strategy.

Besides the above specialized zone, cotton growing in family gardens is a traditional way — particularly in the Southern districts — of getting 1 — 2 metres

leaves of cassava and castor-oil plants. In many places of our country, people are well acquainted with silk weaving.

Scattered silk production by individuals, cooperatives, and production collectives, can satisfy part of the local needs or produce silk cloth to be exchanged for other fabrics to be supplied by the State.

Silk production in specialized areas according to State plans and aimed at export is a good way to cover our cotton fibre imports.

A developed silk industry can supply materials for making pongee using sub-standard cocoons and silk yarn. We still have no pongee-weaving mills, and valuable raw materials have thus gone to waste.

over 50,000 hectares in 13 provinces and cities for mulberry planting. With an average yield of 600kg of cocoons per hectare we shall get 30,000 tonnes of cocoons, that is 10,000 tonnes of raw silk — equal in value to 40,000 tonnes of cotton fibre.

Compared with cotton growing, mulberry growing and silk-worm raising require seven times as much labour, but we have the advantage of holding the initiative by developing both specialized areas and scattered ones, and of developing good export possibilities. We should devote more capital and technique to the specialized areas and adopt a price policy which stimulates production¹.

Synthetic fibres occupy an important place among textile materials in the world for their excellent qualities. In our country, however, their share in the textile industry should be carefully weighed because fabrics woven with synthetic fibres, either wholly or partly, for home consumption must suit our humid tropical climate and the differences in temperature and humidity between the North and South of our country.

In step with the development of our economy we shall study the production of chemical fibres. This, it should be remembered, is a fairly complex question. The production of artificial fibres depends on large-scale afforestation; that of synthetic fibres on oil, coal and natural gas production and reserves, and requires big investments. Moreover, the production of chemical fibres can only come with the emergence of a relatively comprehensive heavy industry, the availability of abundant electrical energy, and the existence of a powerful chemical industry.

TRAN NHAT CHUONG

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(1) See Vietnam Courier No. 2, 1982.

TEXTILE PRODUCTION IN VIETNAM

of cloth per capita a year. So long as the State cannot satisfy the people's minimum requirements in textiles this tradition has to be restored wherever it was well established.

If we take a long-term view of the problem, our potentials in cotton are far from meeting our needs. What can we export to cover our textile imports?

Raw silk is a valuable export item. Practised in our country since long, silkworm raising can satisfy part of our needs for home consumption and export. In this matter we have very great potentials. Mulberry can be grown along river banks and on hillslopes. Moreover, silkworms can feed on

A. study should be made of this question in the silk-production areas, both specialized and scattered, and pongee-making mills or semi-mechanized shops be set up.

We shall have a new source of wealth if we produce good silk by making the proper investments and paying adequate attention to technique. We must build silk-weaving mills, raise the quality of our products, and broaden their variety. Indeed, the price of silk is very high in the world market — three or four times that of good synthetic silk in Western Europe.

Areas where people specialize in growing mulberry and raising silkworms are scattered throughout the country. An initial plan has allotted

COTTON GROWING:

A CARDINAL MEASURE IN OUR TEXTILE PRODUCTION

For the next twenty years cotton will remain the major textile material in Vietnam. At present its share in our textile production amounts to 87%, the same as in other Afro-Asian developing countries like India, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Indonesia. Twenty years from now, our cotton needs may reach over 120,000 tonnes a year, even if per capita share is only 1.5—1.8 kg (8—10 m of cloth), or 30% of average world consumption per head.

We cannot solely rely on imported cotton fibre to produce fabrics for home consumption and export. First, because the quantity of cotton exported in the world is limited: about 12 million bales (over 4 million tonnes) mostly from the United States, the Soviet Union, Egypt, Sudan, Mexico and Pakistan (the Soviet Union exports nearly 800,000 tonnes of raw cotton a year, mainly to Eastern European, Asian and African countries). Second, in the coming years, the major cotton-growing countries, including the Soviet Union, can no more increase their cotton areas and will have to rely on intensive farming hoping to bring their present yield of 420 kg/ha. to 570 kg/ha. in the nineties.

Therefore, if right now we do not adopt efficacious measures to meet, at least partly, our needs, our textile industry will continue to run into difficulties. It will suffer instability and will not be able to provide jobs for hundreds of thousands of working people.

What now stands in the way of developing cotton growing in our country?

First of all, it is the problem of land and intensive farming. At present in the world 33—35 million hectares are devoted to

cotton growing (2% of the cultivated area). Average yield reaches 420 kg of raw cotton per hectare on 60% of the total area. India for its part has to allot 7.9 million hectares (6% of the cultivated area) to cotton growing.

Once our country planted nearly 20,000 hectares of cotton in 1906—1920 and exported over 3,000 tonnes of raw cotton to France each year. After the restoration of peace in the North in 1954 we still had thousands of hectares under cotton with an average yield of 5.9 quintals (maximum yield: 13.79) of cotton seeds per hectare in Dinh Tuong (Yen Dinh district, Thanh Hoa province) between 1962 and 1968. Since the liberation of the South in 1975 we have set aside 70,000—100,000 hectares in regions enjoying favourable climatic conditions in Thuan Hai, Lam Dong and Phu Khanh provinces for cotton growing. However, owing to inadequate attention to questions of water supply, pesticide, fertilizer and labour, we have only reaped 3 quintals of cotton seeds per hectare or even as little as 0.9 quintal in some years.

In these areas, we nevertheless still maintained about 1,500 hectares under cotton in 1981 with a yield of up to 4.1 quintals per hectare. In the past 20 years, with climatic conditions similar to our own and the help of world research organizations, Thailand has expanded its cotton area 2.5 times, from about 40,000 to 117,000 hectares, and nearly doubled its yield, from 243 to 470 kg of raw cotton per hectare.

Regarding cotton strains, the Nha Ho Experimental Cotton Farm¹ in Thuan Hai province has recently developed a strain dubbed TH1 with a short growth cycle (150 days) and strong resistance to disease and suited to our

climate. The yield is 8—10 quintals/ha. on an extensive experimental field; the proportion of fibre is 42%, fibre length over 30 millimetres. After test-spinning, the Textile Industry Institute has concluded that Vietnamese cotton can stand comparison with Soviet first- or second-quality cotton. Moreover, as it is gathered by hand, our cotton contains fewer impurities and is whiter and finer. Thus we have good reasons to expand our cotton areas, both specialized and scattered. In the past, there was a tradition in many provinces to grow cotton to partly meet their textile needs (Thanh Hoa, Nghe Tinh, Ha Son Binh, Thai Binh, Ha Bac...). Should each region devote 1,000—2,000 ha. to cotton planting we would get between 5,000 and 10,000 more tonnes of cotton. This can be supplied to factories or handicraft looms thus creating additional jobs for members of farming co-ops. If the State invests enough capital to build water conservancy works (1 hectare under cotton needs 6,500—10,500 cubic metres of water), supplies enough pesticide (50 kg/ha), fertilizer (280—300 kg/ha) and labour (500 work-days/ha) in twenty years' time we can bring the area under cotton up to 100,000—150,000 hectares (80,000—100,000 hectares in specialized zones and 20,000—30,000 hectares in scattered zones) and obtain 40,000—60,000 tonnes of cotton, thus satisfying 35—50% of our cotton needs (at the rate of 1.8 kg per capita).

NGUYEN DUC THANH
Engineer, Textile Industry
Institute.

1. See "The Nha Ho Experimental Cotton Farm", Vietnam Courier No. 7, 1982.

FISH AND SHRIMP REARING IN UPLAND AND HIGHLAND PROVINCES

Many years ago, fish and shrimps were scarce in the uplands and highlands. Supplies of fish and shrimps to these areas came mainly from the delta and coastal provinces, often in small quantities and as dried products.

In recent years, especially after the "Uncle Ho's fish-pond" movement was launched, fish rearing in these areas have seen much progress. The main difficulties encountered such as the shortage of ponds and fry have been gradually overcome. To enlarge and make full use of fish-rearing facilities, many offices, enterprises, army units and families have dug ponds, built dams and blocked streams for this purpose in addition to using reservoirs connected with irrigation and hydro-electric projects. People in the uplands and highlands not only rear fish in ponds, ricefields, but also in terraced fields, small running-water ponds or even in weirs and cages placed in rivers or streams. In addition to gudgeons, carps, other kinds of fish are raised such as grass pikes, anabas, stench... In a word, all sources of feed such as rubbish, vegetal debris, leaves... are turned to account.

By now, 80 per cent of the families in many districts of upland and highland provinces have begun to rear fish. There are fish-ponds dug near the people's houses-on stilts in many districts of Ha Son Binh, Son La, Hoang Lien Son, Ha Tuyen, Quang Ninh, Vinh Phu,

Binh Tri Thien provinces... as well as fish cages placed in rivers and streams or even fish-ponds dug on hilltops where border-guard units are stationed. Thanks to this, the local populations are now supplied with enough fresh fish.

Almost all army units in the border areas, upwards of platoon size, have their own fish-ponds. Certain divisions have built as many as 1,200 large ponds and small ponds totalling hundreds of hectares in places where their troops are stationed.

Many ponds yield 3—5 tonnes of fish per hectare on an average. The 7-hectare Tuoi Tre (Youth) lake in Son La town produces 16—20 tonnes of fish per year. The Chieng Cang co-op (Song Ma district, Thanh Hoa province) gets 1.5 tonnes of fish a year from its 1,000-sq.m. pond. The Dien Bien State farm (Lai Chau province) catches 15 tonnes of fish from nearly six hectares of water areas. Fish output is more than 2 tonnes per hectare in Son Duong district, and 5 tonnes per hectare at the refractory-clay mine in Ha Tuyen province.

In the uplands and highlands both water areas and fish output are not so great as in the delta provinces. But in every region fresh fish and shrimps contribute to increasing the food rations for many offices, enterprises, army units and families. Thanks to these fish-ponds, many industrial and population centres in the mountain regions and army units in border areas are supplied with fresh fish and the burden of the State Trade services which have to bring fish from the delta and coastal provinces has been lightened. Fish rearing has brought in additional incomes for offices, factories and families.

The results obtained so far confirm that the upland and highland provinces can raise enough fish and shrimps for their own consumption if provincial fish-breeding stations can supply enough fry to farming cooperatives, army units and individual families.

TRAN VINH

STORMS AND FLOODS IN VIETNAM

Storms and floods are twin natural phenomena. In Vietnam, not a year has passed without storms and floods which have caused damage in one way or another.

The spate season occurs chiefly in the last six or seven months of the year. In North Vietnam it begins in about June and ends in September or October. In the Central Highlands and South Vietnam, it begins in July or August and ends in November or December, and sometimes lasts until January. Over many years, it has been observed that the beginning of the flood season varies very little on the major rivers. On the small rivers it depends on how soon the rains in the catch basin begin. The difference may be one month or more. The flood season lasts from five or six months a year on most rivers but only three or four months on others.

The rains in the flood season are shorter than those in the dry season but they account for 70—80% of the total yearly precipitation. Rainfall in the flood season forms the main determinant of the water regime of the rivers. The spate season usually lasts about three months in each region. These months are June, July and August in the mountainous region of North Vietnam and July, August and September in the rest of North Vietnam. In the region of Thanh Hoa, the northern part of Nghe Tinh and the western ridge of

the Truong Son range and in South Vietnam these are August, September and October. The spate season comes one month later in the southern part of Nghe Tinh and Binh Tri Thien and another month later on the eastern ridge of the Truong Son. The rainfall in these three months accounts for between 50—70% of the total in the year. Of these three months, one has the highest rainfall. It is usually August in North Vietnam accounting for 15—35% of the yearly total. Elsewhere it is September or October with rainfall accounting for more than 30% of the yearly total. Especially for the southern part of Nghe Tinh province and the northern part of Binh Tri Thien province, October is usually the wettest time with rainfall accounting for half of the yearly total.

During the spate season the water may rise more than two metres and sometimes seven metres a day on a small river. The daily rise in the Red River usually exceeds two metres. In many parts of the Red River the difference of the water level before and after a big spate exceeds ten metres. At the town of Son Tay it usually exceeds eleven metres. This difference varies according to the size of the rivers but generally it ranges from five to ten metres and the flow during the spate season varies from three to four metres per second.

While in the mountainous regions, water in the rivers may rise abruptly and flow tempestuously after a heavy rain, in the plain due to the small inclination of the river beds and the influence of the sea tide, it rises more slowly and the flow is also much weaker. That is why, if the spate season coincides with a high tide the flood water has no outlet and causes prolonged floods like the one in September and October 1978 in the Mekong delta.

Rainfall in Vietnam ranks among the highest in the world, sometimes attaining 730—790 millimetres per day and occasionally

exceeding 1,500 millimetres in two days. Sometimes rainfall over a large area reaches several thousand millimetres in a drive. Heavy showers usually cause big floods in small catch basins. With regard to the major basins, during the flood season when the degree of humidity has reached saturation, rains which are not particularly heavy but cover a large area may cause big floods such as the one in 1971 in the Red River basin.

Usually several floods succeed one another on the same river during the spate season, 5 or 6 and even 7 or 8 on a small river and 3 or 4 on a major river. The biggest flood usually happens in the biggest spate month. The water flow at the peak of a major flood on a small river is usually hundreds of times bigger than the average in the year and ten thousand times that of the lowest point in the dry season. The corresponding difference on the major rivers is ten and two hundred times. This explains the occurrence of very big floods called "sweeping floods" on the small rivers in some localities seldom seen elsewhere in the world. During these floods the water flow reaches scores of cubic metres per second on a square kilometre causing considerable damage which, fortunately, is confined to small areas. On the contrary, such floods on the major rivers usually cause serious and extensive damage to the economy. Up to the present time, the occurrence of especially big floods seems to obey no definite law with regard to their frequency nor to their intensity.

The spate season for the Red River and the Mekong is July, August, September and October. In the Red River the biggest flood usually happens in August and in the Mekong it is September and October. The Red River has a wide ramification and a huge system of dykes at its lower reaches while in the middle and upper reaches no significant embankment or water dispersion works have been built, so that when heavy rainfalls occur in its

basin, water quickly rushes down and swells the river, threatening the dykes and the whole plain. The floods on the Mekong are not so violent because its catch basin is widened on the upper reaches and in particular, the flood water is mostly absorbed by the Tonle Sap Lake in Kampuchea. Accordingly, during the spate season, the water level in the Mekong rises slowly at the rate of a score or so centimetres per day. However, big floods of the Mekong usually cause serious damage because the flood water quickly spreads on the flat plain and inundates large areas, causing prolonged flooding of millions of hectares of ricefields and gardens.

In view of this situation, to prevent and fight against floods has long been a permanent and long-term preoccupation of the Vietnamese people. This work requires an elaborate study of the law of the rainfall in the river basins in order to work out a program for regulating the water on these rivers, especially the Red River and the Mekong, the two main rivers in the country. However, since most of their catch basins lie outside Vietnam, any comprehensive program of water control must be done in co-operation with neighbouring countries.

To prevent and combat floods requires the combination of many measures: to build appropriate reservoirs; to plant trees and protect the forests on the upper reaches of the rivers; to divert and regulate the flow of the rivers; to strengthen the dykes, embankments and roads, to build stores and houses on high grounds along the river; and to dredge the river beds — all these works require large sums of money and a lot of manpower in both the North and the South of Vietnam yearly, and it will be a long time before Vietnam can institute a systematic program of prevention and successful fight against this age-old natural scourge.

HOANG NIEM

THE MEKONG RIVER DELTA

A CENTURY OF FRENCH COLONIZATION

As we all know, the French colonialists were miserly rulers: they bled white the colonial peoples without thinking of developing the local economies, even though this would eventually have brought fat profits to the French capitalists. Their policy was to "limit the role of the colony to that of supplier of whatever products the mother country lacks."¹ In 1887, even when the French rule was still unstable, a French parliamentarian said in the Chamber of Deputies: "We have made great sacrifices in the interest of Indochina; our soldiers have shed their blood there for two decades, the money of our tax-payers has been spent; it cannot be that no profit comes from their sacrifices."²

From 62 million *piastres* at the beginning of this century, Indochina's export rose to 228 million *piastres* in 1929 (the year before the great world economic crisis). They derived chiefly from three products: rice, coal and rubber, which were lacking in France (representing 75% of the total export value).

Reviewing the economic situation of our country before the August 1945 Revolution, Le Duan wrote: "Because they want to

make Indochina entirely dependent on the French economy, the French colonialists never thought of developing heavy industry in Indochina, and even sought to check the growth of light industry.

"The French carried out a political-economic policy which prevented indigenous capitalist accumulation from growing large enough to promote any important commercial or industrial activities. This, added to the bankruptcy of agriculture, reduced the local bourgeoisie to being mere agents of the French capitalists in the hope of maintaining their dominant position over the toiling masses."³

In pursuance of this policy, the French colonialists relied on two products: rice and rubber, which thanks to the immensity of virgin land, favourable climatic conditions and dirt cheap labour in Nam Bo, bade fair to become two major branches of production.

"Bureaucratic Landlords"

The French colonialists' local agents served them devotedly and oppressed the people. They relied on support from their masters to grab lands from the peasants and occupy communal lands. They

were the first big landlords, who colluded with the aggressors and caused profound economic and social disturbances.

In order to understand the land question in Nam Bo, it is necessary to briefly examine the means used by those traitors to grab land.

Topping the list was Le Phat Dat, also known as Huyen Si. In his youth, Dat was sent by the Society of Foreign Missionaries to study in Penang (Malaysia). After returning to the country, he served as an interpreter at Tan An. It was there that he bought at auction sales, at very cheap prices, lands belonging to people who had refused to collaborate with the French or had taken part in the resistance. As a result of successive bumper crops, he became immensely rich. He had a church built in Saigon called "Huyen Si church" in the hope that his name—that of a lackey of the French who profited from the sufferings of the people—would be remembered by posterity.

The second richest man was Do Huu Phuong who even outdid Si in his devotion to the French.

At the time of the occupation of Saigon by the colonialists, Phuong

was only eighteen years old. At the fall of Chi Hoa citadel, he was introduced by a canton chief to Francis Garnier, governor of Cho Lon, who employed him to spy on the insurgents and persuade them to surrender. In July 1866 he was among the troops which battled at Ba Diem against the insurgents commanded by Truong Quyen (Truong Dinh's son). At the end of 1867, together with Ton Tho Tuong, he went to Ben Tre to call on Phan Thanh Gian's two sons to surrender. The following year, he accompanied the French to Rach Gia to give battle to Nguyen Trung Truc, and was promoted *doc phu su* (district governor) of Vinh Long province after the death of a cruel French agent at Vung Liem.

He had a long record of crimes against the population. It was he who arrested Quan Thien and Quan Viet, two leaders of the insurrection at Lo Gom. On orders from the French, Phuong stamped out a popular uprising at Cho Lon in 1866 and collected intelligence on an insurrection at Can Giuoc in 1871 and 1875. He gave the French a list of revolutionary leaders and nipped in the bud an uprising in the western provinces. He frustrated many plans for insurrection at Soc Trang, Tan An and That Son.

In recompense for his services, the French colonialists sent him to France where he got French citizenship. Back to the country, he was appointed *tong doc* (provincial governor). Paul Doumer, the

Governor-general of Indochina, deigned to come to his house to attend the ceremony marking his promotion. In his memoirs, Paul Doumer was to write: "Just as his house looked different inside and outside, Phuong followed French ways when dealing with foreigners, but stuck to local ways in his family life." Phuong did not fail to take advantage of the visit of the French Governor-general to get a concession of 2,000 hectares of land.

The third on the list was Tran Ba Loc. He was twenty years old at the time of the occupation of Saigon by the French. He killed the resistance members who fell into his hands in cold blood. That is why from a simple policeman, he rose to be *doc phu su* in charge of Cai Be district, a prosperous region lying at the gate of the Dong Thap Plain (Plain of Reeds).

His name was closely associated with the repression of the rebellions led by Thien Ho Vuong in Dong Thap Muoi, Nguyen Trung Truc on Phu Quoc island and Thu Khoa Huan in My Tho. The French also sent him to stem a big uprising led by Mai Xuan Thuong in southern Central Vietnam. For this repression he recruited over one thousand policemen, and used a seal marked "Tong doc of Thuan Khanh" (governor of Binh Thuan anh Khanh Hoa provinces). He then suggested that the French annex these two provinces and make them part of colonial Cochinchina.

Loc also carried out land surveys, built roads and dug canals

in Dong Thap Muoi for land clearing. After purchasing Nam Thon island and Rong island from French concessionaires he became the biggest landlord in My Tho province.

Loc, Phuong and Dat were representative of the first big landowners in Nam Bo, whom Le Duan calls "bureaucratic landlords".

Those lackeys of the French relied on the brutal policy of their masters to cause permanent disturbances in the countryside. The landed properties of the members of the resistance were auctioned off. But few people would bid for the lands of the patriots. So, finally, they all fell into the hands of the valets of the French.

Soon after the occupation of the first three provinces of eastern Nam Bo the French colonialists had issued regulations on the exploitation of land. Six years later, when they had got control of the whole of Nam Bo, they issued a decree on the determination of the area and ownership of lands. In principle, all lands which had no owners or had not been cleared were to return to the State, just as they had formerly belonged to the King. To get back possession of lands which had been registered in the reign of Tu Duc and were now occupied by others, the owner would have to make a claim, and report to the authorities within three months from the date of publication of the decree. Past that date the lands would be given to others or sold by auction.

Under the prevailing circumstances, would people who had taken part in the resistance report to the authorities? Even those who were not involved in the struggle would not venture to protest when their lands were placarded as "without known owners" for they were illiterate or had fled to other localities or had allowed the deadline to pass. Sometimes there was no placarding at all, as the rural authorities preferred to hush up the matter in order later to receive land allotments from the French for "services" rendered to the mother country, or to buy these lands at cheap prices.

Cases of land grabbing were innumerable. The area of virgin land was immense. It was during the process of consolidation of the colonial administrative apparatus that the land was more and more concentrated into the hands of the landlords, some of whom also became capitalists. Land grabbing by the French colonists was even more brazen. In November 1879, the Governor of Cochinchina signed a decree allowing Europeans to exploit land without having to pay any tax. Ten years later, another decree was issued exempting European land-owners from tax for five years; from the sixth to the tenth year they had only to pay 20% of the annual tax.

Agriculture Developed on the Sweat and Tears of the Peasants.

Jean Chesneaux, a French historian, wrote: "Cut from the rest

of Vietnam in 1862, Nam Bo (Cochinchina) continued on its own course, even after Bac Bo (Tonkin) and Trung Bo (Annam) were placed under French protectorate."⁴

In the agricultural field this would mean a concentration of land in a scale quite different from that in the two other parts of the country. This radical change, which took place in the Nam Bo countryside from the eighteen sixties to the end of the last century, caused great sufferings to the people, who were bent under two or three yokes. "Peasants in Nam Bo were subjected to harsh exploitation at the hands of three kinds of monopolists: the landlords who held monopoly over land ownership, the commercial capitalists who held monopoly over trade, and the financial capitalists who held monopoly over money lending"⁵. Objectively speaking, the enlargement of the cultivated area, together with the concentration of land, the building of the Nam Bo rice bowl, and the export of rice contributed to the development of this region.

In relations among themselves the French capitalists had different interests to defend, which could not always be settled by a compromise. But they all were governed by the same economic laws. The first canals dug by the French in Nam Bo were not for the purpose of developing production, but of facilitating communications and the repression of popular uprisings.

Of course, these waterways contributed to the development of agriculture, too. But as Paul Bernard observed: "This effect was not part of the initial aim of the promoters. Of the 250 million cubic metres of earth moved to build canals under the colonial regime 200 million were handled by a single enterprise: the French company of canal building and public works"⁶. Where canals were to be dug did not depend on the requirements of economic development, but on the short-term interests of various colonial groups.

However, the area of cropland continued to expand, the land continued to be concentrated in the hands of a few, and this was an important element in the economic development of Nam Bo. Whereas the total area of cropland was 522,000 hectares in 1880, it rose to 1,175,000 hectares in 1900 and 2.4 million hectares thirty years later. While, in the thirties of this century, in the North, none of the 870,000 peasant households (90% of the population) owned more than five *mau* (1.8 hectares) of land, in the South those owning less than 5 hectares accounted for only 15% of the total area of cropland. Worth noting was the fact that the large estates (exploiting upwards of 50 hectares) were in the hands of 6,500 people (2.5% of the population) who possessed nearly half the total area of land (45%). Naturally, millions of peasants were not mentioned in the statistics because they had no land. It was the process of land concentration and the exploitation by the

big landlords, capitalist traders and financiers which quickly turned Nam Bo's rural economy into a mercantile economy.

The exploitation of land was carried out in the following way: priority was given to land that was easy to farm, and the more powerful groups got the more fertile land. Legislation existed regarding land clearing and rice trade, but it, too, was part of the above law.

From the end of the last century to the world economic crisis which began in the late twenties of this century, great changes were wrought on agricultural production in Nam Bo. In 1880 the total rice output was estimated at 650,000 tonnes of which 300,000 tonnes were for export. Fifty years later, in 1928, this production had risen to 2,750,000 tonnes and exports to 1,900,000 tonnes.

This export figure was indeed a large one. Indochina, particularly Nam Bo, had become the second rice exporting country in the world at that time. This figure was the consequence of excessive exploitation of the fertility of the land and the toil of the poor peasants, and the insufficient food rations of people living in other parts of the country.

Agricultural production was carried out through extensive farming. Even in favourable climatic conditions the rice output was only 1.2 tonnes per hectare. In 1938 Henri Lanoux, a French author, drew these conclusions from the official statistics: from 1900 to

1937, total rice production in Vietnam increased by 47%; meanwhile the part reserved for consumption rose by 24%, but the population had grown by 77%, from 13,000,000 to 23,150,000. As a result, the yearly rice ration per head of population dropped from 262 kg to 180 kg or nearly one-third less.

Early in this century, two important events took place in the agricultural situation in Nam Bo: the extension of the canal system and the introduction of floating rice into the region submerged in the rainy season.

Irrigation work played a decisive role. From 1880 to 1930, nearly 1.7 million cubic metres of earth were moved. Dividing this period into ten-year stages, we can make the following remarks:

— From 1880 to 1890, 2,110,000 cubic metres of earth were dug leading to an increase of 169,000 hectares, to 932,000 hectares in 1890.

— In the following decade, 8,100,000 cubic metres of earth were moved, and an increase of 280,000 hectares was obtained.

— In the first decade of the 20th century, 27,491,000 cubic metres were moved bringing the farming area up to 1,542,000 hectares in 1910, an increase of 331,000 hectares over 1900.

— From 1910 to 1920, the volume of earth moved was 66,104,000 cubic metres, and the area of cropland increased by 410,000 hectares.

— From 1920 to 1930, 72,042,000 cubic metres were dug and the

planting area reached 2,452,000 hectares, having increased by nearly half a million hectares in ten years.

The canal network broadened gradually. In the last decade of the 19th century, it was four times its size in the preceding decade, and the volume of earth moved was 35 times that moved in the decade ending 1890. The area of land rose, too, but at a slower tempo. In the first decade, to put one more hectare of land under cultivation, it was necessary to dig 12 cubic metres of earth; the figure rose to 27 cubic metres (or 2.3 times) in the following decade; 83 cubic metres in 1900 — 1910; 161 cubic metres in 1910 — 1920; and 144 cubic metres in 1920 — 1930;

Obviously the farther one got from sources of fresh water, the more efforts were needed. In this half century, the area of land in the fertile provinces along the Tien river such as Ben Tre, My Tho, Go Cong, Vinh Long, Cho Lon⁷, or on the edge of the delta as Gia Dinh, increased only 40%. But, along the Hau river, it expanded at a much quicker rate. In the space of a half century, the land newly brought under cultivation accounted for from two-thirds to three-quarters of the total planting area in the region. Bac Lieu and Rach Gia were two cases in point. In 1880, these two provinces had only 20,000 hectares of cultivable land; fifty years later the total area of their cropland had risen to 600,000 hectares, or thirty times over.

The canal system irrigated the parched fields, drained water from the submerged ones, and washed aluminous soil of acidity. But with regard to half a million hectares deeply submerged in the rainy season, the canal network did not give the expected result.

The way-out was to grow floating rice. According to some researchers, the raising of floating rice was experimented in Nam Bo in 1895, first at Nang Gu (now part of An Giang province). It is a long-growth strain, sown at the beginning of the rainy season and able to grow above the water level in the flood season. It produces poor quality grain and gives low yields (about one tonne per hectare), but grown extensively, (half a million hectares) it can give a substantial output and thus meet local food requirements, and be used for barter with other regions.

With the extension of the area of cropland by digging canals and growing floating rice in the submerged plains, the Nam Bo rice bowl took shape. The centre of this rice-rich region shifted gradually from the lower reaches of the Tien river (near the Vam Co river) at the time the French set foot in Nam Bo, to the region lying between the Tien river and Hau river at the beginning of this century, then to the region along the right bank of the Hau river (in the southwest) and finally to the Ca Mau peninsula.

In 1873, Cho Lon took pride of place with 37,340 hectares. It was the most important rice producing

province in Nam Bo at that time. Next came My Tho, Vinh Long, Go Cong. The right bank of the Hau river was exploited only at the beginning of this century with the digging of the Xa No canal, 40 kilometres long. It was followed by the Ca Mau — Bac Lieu canal (65 kilometres), Quan Lo — Phung Hiep canal (86 kilometres), Quan Lo — Canh Den canal (26 kilometres). The canals were gradually lengthened. They crossed one another and were joined together, and new regions were opened up for rice cultivation.

Who were the owners of those immense fields? Take for instance Xa No, the first big canal dug by mechanical means. The digging of this canal was the initiative of two Frenchmen, Duval and Guéry, who, realizing that the soil along the Hau river was fertile, wanted to exploit this region which was devoid of irrigation facilities. Paul Doumer, the then governor-general, authorized them to dig a canal to bring water from the Hau river to the western coast, to irrigate the fields of that region, drain surplus water away, and wash away acidity from the soil, and also to serve as a waterway.

The digging of the Xa No canal, done by mechanical means, began in 1901 and was completed in mid-1903, at the cost of 3.5 million francs. It was a major work for the time! The inauguration ceremony at Can Tho was attended by Paul Doumer in person.

As soon as the work began, Duval and Guéry received a concession of 2,500 hectares of land

free of all charge. In the following years, while other fields were submerged and gave poor crops, these two Frenchmen netted substantial profits as their fields, lying along the canal, were easily irrigated, drained and the soil washed of acidity.

Thanks to this canal the rice produced at Rach Gia could now be sent direct to Cai Rang market, near Can Tho city, where it was husked and transported to Cho Lon without having to use roundabout ways.

Large economic possibilities were at hand. Technically speaking, irrigation by the canal system produced important results. In the social field, land grabbing and expansion of cultivable area were noted everywhere. Indeed, those immense fields were watered by the sweat of the toiling people.

PHAN QUANG

In Our Next Issue:

The Mekong river delta:

LAND REFORMS UNDER BAO DAI AND NGO DINH DIEM

1., 2. See Contribution to the History of Vietnam, *Jean Chesneaux*.

3. *Le Duan*, The Proletariat and the Peasant Question on the Vietnamese Revolution.

4. See *Jean Chesneaux*, op. cit.

5. *Le Duan*, The Proletariat and the Present Question in the Vietnamese Revolution.

6. See *Jean Chesneaux*, op. cit.

7. Formerly Cho Lon comprised part of Long An province; it was not the Cho Lon as it is known today.

POPULATION GROWTH AND FAMILY PLANNING

I — Population Growth in Vietnam: In shape in the Hung kings period, more than 4,000 years ago. Population data in the remote past are unavailable, but those recorded since the 19th century show rapid growth.

Before the August Revolution (1945)					Population
Reign of King		Gia Long	(1802 — 1819)		4,290,000
—	—	Minh Mang	(1820 — 1840)		5,023,000
—	—	Thieu Tri	(1841 — 1847)		6,894,000
—	—	Tu Duc	(1847 — 1883)		7,171,000
1926:	Tonkin:	6,650,000	+ Annam:	5,581,000 + Cochinchina:	4,077,000 = 16,308,000
1936:	Tonkin:	7,850,000	+ Annam:	5,656,000 + Cochinchina:	4,561,000 = 18,060,000

In the period between 1926 and 1936 the population increased by only nearly 2 million despite a high birth rate, because of the hard living conditions, high morbidity rate and infant mortality under the imperialist and feudal regimes. The growth rate was about 1%.

1939 and since the August Revolution of 1945

Population (million)	1939	1945	1960	1970	1974	1976	1-10-1979	1980	1981	1982 (estimates)
North	10.8	14	15.9	21.3	23.8	24.6	27,427,630	27,974,211	28,597,661	29,231,386
South	7.2	11	14.1	17.0	20.5	24.4	25,324,136	25,886,650	26,329,007	26,963,927
Whole country	18	25	30	38.3	44.3	49	52,741,766	53,853,620	54,926,688	56,195,313

Since the August 1945 Revolution our population has increased 2.23 times (in 37 years), a rapid growth due to a high birth rate coupled with better health care.

Year	Birth rate	Death rate	Population growth	Average life expectancy
North	‰	‰	‰	Years
1957	46.7	12.2	34.5	34
1960	46.1	12	34.1	
1965	37.8	6.7	31.1	49
1970	34.6	6.6	28.0	
1974	34.4	7.2	27.2	(Male: 57; Female: 59)
1975	31.3	5.6	25.7	
Whole country:				
1976	39.5	7.5	32.0	
1978	31.4	7.1	24.3	Male: 63; Female: 66
1980	29.3	7	22.3	(Population census 1-10-1979)

II — Family Planning

Our Party and State have realized the importance of the problem of population growth and family planning. In 1963 a Government decision set up a Committee for Family Planning with Prime Minister Pham Van Dong at its head. At the conference of 13 key provinces on birth control (20 Nov. 1972) the Prime Minister said: "The present situation is not only serious and dangerous but also

urgent..." and: "Birth control must be conducted for it will bring very great benefits to all regions, particularly to those with a big population. It will bring very great benefits to each family — both immediate and long-term. If the present birth rate is allowed to go unchecked, innumerable difficulties will face our country, our region, our community, our family, our children and also future generations."

In 1976 the Fourth Party Congress adopted a resolution to improve mother and child welfare, and to boost the campaign for family planning. Then in October 1978 the Prime Minister's Office issued directive 265/CP to step up birth control so as to reduce the population growth rate to a little over 2% by 1980. Below are the results achieved in five years (1976 — 1980):

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Birth ‰	31.3 (North)	39.5 (whole country)	36	31.4 (North)	30.1 (whole country)	29.3
Death ‰	5.6	7.5 (whole country)	7	7.1	7.1 (whole country)	7
Growth ‰	25.7	32 (whole country)	29	24.3	23 (whole country)	22.3

At the conference held to review the campaign for family planning (April 1981) Prime Minister Pham Van Dong stressed: "The movement for birth control has to be continued for many years, because it aims at making everybody thoroughly understand that family planning accords with the requirements of our economic development and revolutionary work."

On 12 August 1981, the Council of Ministers issued Directive 29/HDBT "To intensify the campaign for family planning during 1981—1985 with the following objectives: Women should experience few and long-spaced pregnancies. They should not bear children until they are mature physically, at around 22 years of age. The newly-weds should postpone having children. They should have no more than two, separated by an interval of at least five years."

In March 1982, the Fifth Party Congress stated, with regard to the orientations, tasks and main

socio-economic targets for 1981—1985: "To give further education and firmly apply a number of administrative and economic measures while creating all favourable conditions for the population to carry out the movement for birth control so as to lower the annual growth rate for the whole country from 2.4% to 1.7% by 1985."

In the light of these resolutions all responsible bodies, from the central organs to grassroots bases, have made progress. Co-ordination between various branches of activity and mass organizations has been strengthened in order to unify guidances, extend the movement to the whole country and deepen it in every respect: motivation, planning, organization for implementation, working out policies and technical measures.

Many Party committees, people's committees, branches and mass organizations have taken decisions on the campaign for family planning, reinforced steering commit-

tees from provincial down to grassroots levels, linked targets for birth control and population growth to targets for economic development, impelled propaganda and explanation work, resorted to both persuasion work and enforcement of policies to encourage the carrying out of birth control and contraceptive measures...

Up to now more than 1,500,000 women have been fitted with IUDs. Each year over 10,000 people resort to ligature of the vas deferens or Falloplan tube, nearly half a million take the pill or use condoms. A lot of people wave aside contraceptive measures but accept curettage, hence the increasing number of such operations: almost 30,000 in 1982.

Many families share the belief that it is best to have two children at most. Quite a few intellectuals want only one child. In town very few people still set more store by boys than girls, which would cause them to have four or five

children as a result of their effort to get a male descendant; and in the countryside the custom is declining of wanting to have many children, but many people still want to have three or four, at least two of them boys.

Compared with women in other countries in Southeast Asia, our women are the object of better government policies of birth control, which are aimed at emancipating them, protecting their health and that of their children, and raising their living standards. Besides being provided with contraceptive devices free of charge, they are entitled to periods of rest and to money allowances when having IUD fitted, undergoing curettage... At present, about 20 provinces and cities have taken measures to encourage families to have two children at most and reward activists in the campaign for family planning.

As a result, the movement for birth control has brought the birth rate down from 36‰ in 1970 to 30‰ in 1981—1982.

III—Difficulties and Problems

Achievements, however, have not been uniform because many Party committees, people's committees and mass organizations (youth in particular) have not paid due attention and still hold erroneous views: family planning, in their opinion, is not an urgent problem and is not so important as fulfilling economic targets; it is the business of doctors and women; guidance, organization and implementation work is loose, lacking supervision and co-ordination. Propaganda and education are incoherent and inadequate; a number of cadres and Party members are not yet exemplary (many female factory and office workers still have many children, those having their fourth child still account for 16.48%, and even 30% of yearly total number of births).

The figures for 1981 show that of the 1,647,535 mothers delivered that year (2.9% of the population):

1. *Many are precocious:*

— Under 18 years of age: 5,214

— Between 18 and 19 : 33,040 (2.38% of total; some having their 3rd or 4th child).

2. *Many are multiparous:*

— 545,714 have four and more children, accounting for 33.2% of total—14,402 of them having 10 or more children.

— If those giving birth to their third child are taken into account (314,344), the figure will add up to 860,058—that is 52.42% of total.

3. *Many are advanced in age:*

— 142,238 are over 40 years old (8.67% of total)—among them 7,036 are past 50.

Fecundity rate is high. The statistics for sterility drawn up by the Institute for Mother and Child Welfare in 1982 reveal that 70% of the newly-weds have a child in their first year of marriage; 20% in the second year, and most of the others in the following years, while less than 3% need treatment for sterility. Once treated half of the latter can bear children. Without contraceptive measures, pregnancies will happen once a year or twice every three years. In the South many women have been delivered 24—25 times, whereas those having upwards of 10 children are not rare.

If propaganda and education are better conducted in schools, army units, factories, government offices, communes, city wards, among all strata of people and groups of age..., if knowledge in the social, economic, demographic and family planning fields is raised, if scientific notions on health and contraceptive measures are widely disseminated, then the campaign for birth control aimed at reducing the population growth rate to 1.7% by 1985 will bear fruit.

However, the movement for family planning has not been maintained and closely guided by Party committees and people's

committees at all levels; co-ordination with the mass organizations has been loose at times so that in some provinces and cities the population growth rate although reduced at one time, has again increased: in Hai Phong it went down from 2.53% (1976) to 1.74% (1978) then up again to 1.8% (1980), 1.9% (1981) and 2.03% (1982); in Ho Chi Minh City, from 1.66% (1980) up to 1.82% (1981).

This explains why in many places despite an increase in production the average income has decreased and more difficulties have surged up in daily life and the economy.

Propaganda and education are still poorly conducted, while books, newspapers, slides, exhibitions on demography... still give insufficient coverage to the campaign for birth control aimed at bringing down population growth rate to a rational level. Owing to the lack of close and continual cooperation between various branches—culture, information, propaganda and education, the press, the medical service—documents and means made available to the movement are not yet brought into full play.

— A number of policies have not yet been amended, completed and sufficiently propagated (such as the undue persistence of the allowance granted after the third child, and of the allotment of housing space according to the number of children...), thus causing difficulties to the campaign for family planning.

— The work of information and statistics gathering on population growth and birth control is still inadequate, and close cooperation between the statistics and medical services is lacking.

These weaknesses and shortcomings must be redressed if the movement for birth control is to be properly conducted and to reap the expected results.

NGUYEN CONG THANG and
NGUYEN THI XIEM

FOOD AND POPULATION BY THE YEAR 2000

Ranking Among the Lowest in Food and Income Levels

After thirty years of war against three successive aggressions, especially the war against US imperialism and that against Beijing expansionism, ours is among the lowest food and income levels in the world.

Our way out is to rapidly and steadily raise the production of food grain and other foodstuffs and per capita income. These tar-

gets show inter-relations between countries, the geographico-economic regions of a given country, and the sub-regions of a given region. They develop in inverse ratio to population growth.

In 1979 our per capita food level is only 1,800 calories (2,590 being the world average; 3,373 for the developed countries and 2,282 for the developing ones). According to preliminary estimates we could strive to reach 2,400—2,500 calories by 1995—2000 with the following rations:

	1979	1985 - 1990 (estimates)	1995 - 2000 (estimates)
- Calories per capita per 24 hours	1,820	2,100	2,470
- Starch (kg per year)	150.00	164.30	180.20
- Beans (kg per year)	0.57	3.35	7.20
- Vegetables and fruit (kg per year)	57	100	146
- Sugar, treacle (kg per year)	1.32	2.50	12
- Meat (kg per year)	5.7	13.3	30
- Fish, shrimp, crab, mollusc (kg per year)	6.6	13.3	36.5
- Eggs	21	50	100
- Milk (kg per year)	0.65	1	10
Estimated population (million)	52.8	60(1985)	75(2000)

This table shows how great are the efforts to be made in the production of food grain and other foodstuffs: compared with 1979, consumption per capita of starch by 2000 will increase 120%, beans 12.6 times, vegetables and fruit 2.5 times, meat 5.2 times, fish 5.6 times, eggs 5 times, milk 15 times. They must go along with efforts to reduce population growth, which should be no more than 75 million by 2000. Right from now each couple should have only 2—3 children at most (2 being the optimum), and after 2000 our population must be stabilized, because per capita arable land available is only 1,200—1,300 sq.m. At the same time we must carry out intensive farming and stockbreeding, and exploit to the full our potentialities in land, water, climate, labour, the biological capacities of plants and animals. Even so, we shall not have caught up with world food levels as recorded in 1975—1977.

Two Forecasts Based on Scientific Investigation

Preliminary studies of food and population in a number of districts in various geographico-economic regions, based on social conditions over the past ten years and future evolution, have led to the two following forecasts:

Forecast I: With regard to populous districts in the Red River delta such as Nam Ninh, Hai Hau (Ha Nam Ninh province), Hung Ha (Thai Binh), in the uplands such as Tam Dao (Vinh Phu): These districts have 12—15 people per hectare of cultivated land, their population growth rate is 2.4—2.8%—an increase of 5,000—6,000 people per year; their paddy contribution to the State ranges between 10,000 and 15,000 tonnes and their meat contribution from 1,200 to 1,500 tonnes. Tam Dao, which has a high proportion of barren land and low yields of paddy (3.8 tonnes per hectare), sweet potato, cassava and maize, contributes

only 750 tonnes of paddy and 600 tonnes of meat.

If food production and population increase at the same tempo as in the past ten years or with a slight improvement in the former, these districts will have 50,000—60,000 more people by 1995 (consuming 12,000—15,000 tonnes of food) and will have no more surplus to contribute to the State. By the year 2000 they will meet with serious food shortages. This will come even sooner if an end is not put to such negative practices as illicit distillation of alcohol, forest destruction, felling of trees without re-planting, digging up arable land to get clay to make bricks and tiles, building houses and stores on arable land, unsanctioned embezzlement, and waste.

Forecast II: A much better solution, leading to a food level of over 2,500 calories, balanced farming and stockbreeding, and progress to large-scale production, could be found if the following conditions are met:

1. To improve the structure of plants and animals, combine farming, forestry, fishery and stockbreeding wherever possible, thoroughly carry out intensive farming and stockbreeding so as to obtain the highest agricultural output per unit of cultivated area with the lowest production costs. Regarding stockbreeding, particular attention should be paid to animals which feed on grass and leaves in regions along river dikes or on hillslopes.

2. By a combination of measures to lower the population growth rate to under 2% by 1983—1985; 1.5% by 1986—1990; and 1.2%—1% from 1990 onward.

3. To protect and enrich the ecological environment, plant timber trees and firewood trees to solve the problem of fuel, propagate the example set by Ly Nhan district (Ha Nam Ninh province) where tree planting is combined with biogas making. Strictly to protect forests and fields, not to build houses and public offices on arable land, and not to dig arable land up to get clay to make bricks and tiles.

4. To improve the composition of meals, combine the food program with the VAC¹ program and the rural development program. In the framework of the family-collective-State economic system, the VAC program bids fair to rapidly increase per capita food level, along with low production costs and low State investments.

Moreover, we should apply scientific and technical achievements to production, redeploy the labour force in each branch and locality, and fully implement the policies aimed at improving economic management, streamlining the administrative apparatus, practising thrift and strengthening socialist legality as stressed in Party and State resolutions.

TRAN VAN HA

1. VAC: the initials of the Vietnamese words *vuon* (garden), *ao ca* (fish-pond) and *chan nuoi* (stockbreeding).

According to the national census of 1 October 1979, Vietnam's population stood at 52,700,000 (in round figure) with an average population density of 158 inhabitants per square kilometre. But it is very unevenly distributed. This is the legacy of an age-old history.¹

The disparity between the urban and rural populations stems from a variety of factors.

As everybody knows, Vietnam has long been an agricultural country of which the population chiefly consists of farmers. At the turn of this century, after French colonialism had completed its conquest, though the peasantry still

formed the majority of the population, a portion of them, either because they had been impoverished or dispossessed of their lands by the colonialist and feudal rulers, had to move to the urban centres in quest of a living. This resulted in a significant rise of the urban population. However, almost all the major cities were formed not for reasons of economic development but rather for administrative purposes, serving as nerve centres for the colonial administration. Besides, it was a traditional trait of French colonialism to limit industrialization of the colonies to a minimum. This is manifest in the following chart:

Population Distribution under the French Rule

Areas	Years	Total population	Rural areas	Urban areas	Percentage of urban population
Cochinchina (South Vietnam)	1936	4,483,000	4,146,000	337,000	14
Annam (Central Vietnam)	1936	5,644,000	5,484,000	160,000	3.5
Tonkin (North Vietnam)	1931	7,000,000	6,600,000	400,000	4.6

During the resistance against French aggression (1945—1954) there was some demographic movement as a result of the evacuation of the town population to the rural and mountain areas, which led to the formation of a number of small townships of a temporary character. After 1954, a reverse trend took place in the North when a large number of resistance cadres

and townspeople returned to the cities. Also in those years, many new industrial centres, State farms, construction sites and factories were set up, drawing tens of thousands of workhands accompanied by hundreds of thousands of their relatives and other people. This resulted in a significant growth of the urban population.

Population Distribution in Northern Vietnam (1960—1975)

Years	Total population	Rural areas	Urban areas	Percentage of urban population
1960	16,100,000	14,699,000	1,401,000	8.7
1965	18,630,000	16,731,000	1,898,000	10.2
1970	21,575,000	19,146,000	2,492,000	11.3
1975	24,547,000	21,533,000	3,014,000	12.3

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS OF VIETNAM

Meanwhile, in the South, the prolonged aggression and the neo-colonialist policy of the United States caused constant disturbances in the demographic situation and a serious imbalance in the population distribution. A look at the distribution of the population according to age groups through the years 1962, 1967, 1970 and 1971 in a number of towns and rural areas of the South shows that about 48% of the population were under 15 years of age and 60% were under 20 while the active population (in the 15-64 age group) accounted for only 48% of the total. In other words, every 100 working people had to support 108 depend-

ents. There was also a growing disproportion between the male and female populations. In Saigon, for instance, the female-male ratio was 103/100 in 1962, 106/100 in 1967 and 112/100 in 1972. In the 20—25 age bracket, this ratio rose from 98.6% in 1962 to 150 in 1967. In the space of ten years (1962-72) the proportion of single men and women from 15 years upward rose by 24%, (33% among women).

In the urban areas of the South, two parallel phenomena took place in that period. On the one hand, there was the continual growth and extension of a series of towns in an inordinate urbanization process. This was the result of a massive

exodus of the peasants to the towns, partly because of their impoverishment and partly because of the forcible urbanization policy of the US and the Saigon puppets.

In ten years, from 1965 to 1974 more than 12 million people out of a total of 19 million had to leave their native villages for urban centres. The population of Saigon which stood at 1,219,500 in 1958 rose to 1,736,880 in 1967, or a 42% growth within a decade. In the city proper it went up from 1,400,000 in 1960 to 1,845,000 in 1972, or a 31.8% rise. On the whole, the urban population in the South increased from 21.9% in 1960 to 33% of the total in 1970. However, the newly formed or expanded towns were not all industrial centres but remained chiefly commercial and service centres, which is a common trait of all underdeveloped and dependent countries. This has further widened the gap between the urban and rural areas in the South.

Since liberation, the uneven distribution of the population has been remedied to a large extent and on a national scale with a visible change in the proportion of the urban and rural populations as shown in the following chart:

Population Distribution of Reunified Vietnam

Years	Total population	Rural areas	Urban areas	Percentage of urban population
1975	47,638,000	37,396,000	10,242,000	21.5
1976	49,160,000	39,033,000	10,127,000	20.6
1977	50,413,000	40,305,000	10,108,000	20.1
1978	51,421,000	41,291,000	10,130,000	19.7
1979	52,462,000	42,368,000	10,094,000	19.2
1980	53,772,000	43,421,000	10,301,000	19.1

KHONG DIEN

1. About the first century A.D. Vietnam comprised three districts: Giao Chi, Cuu Chan and Nhat Nam. Giao Chi had 746,257 inhabitants, against 166,015 in Cuu Chan and 89,486 in Nhat Nam.

PATTERN OF URBAN SETTLEMENT IN VIETNAMESE HISTORY: THE CASE OF HANOI

Hanoi was not the first capital of Vietnam, but it certainly is her most typical city, having existed for nine centuries as the hub of the country. A study of its history from its foundation to the 19th century may give a general idea of the emergence and development of urban areas in Vietnam.

Being rice-planters, the ancient Viets usually settled in riparian areas, for easier access to water and greater mobility. The first settlement, at the confluence of the Red and Lo rivers, gave birth to a neolithic culture some four thousand years ago.

Towards the end of the Bronze Age, the Viets moved further down into the plains, as far as the confluence of the Thien Duc river (now the Duong river) and the Hoang river, a tributary of the Red River, where King An Duong built the fortress of Co Loa (257—179 B.C.).

In the thousand years of domination by feudal China, many other politico-administrative centres were set up after the Chinese model. Those were towns surrounded by walls and moats and defended by soldiers living in barracks, which could also give shelter and protection to Chinese camp-followers. Most of those towns were located on hilltops, far from rivers and swamps, thought to be the sources of diseases much dreaded by the Chinese occupiers.

With the restoration of independence late in the 10th century, the Viets returned to their habitual

riverine settlements. A new capital was built at Co Loa by Ngo Quyen (939—965). The next capital was Hoa Lu, built by Dinh Tien Hoang (968—1009) further south on the bank of a branch of the Red River and at the foot of a mountain range.

In 1010, the first king of the Ly dynasty moved north and settled in Thang Long, at the intersection of the Red River and the To Lich river. Throughout the Ly dynasty this place remained the heart of the country. From Thang Long one could travel by boat to all the places washed by the Red River, to the highlands in the north, or to the basin of the Ma and Ca rivers, which formed the country's southern boundary in those days.

Instead of picking an elevation which would be a suitable site for a stronghold or feudal domain, the builders of Thang Long, whose primary objective was not of a military character, chose a low-lying area dotted with lakes and ponds—vestiges of former rivers—in which to construct the political centre of a full-fledged State. To defend themselves, the Viets relied on a close-knit system of villages, rather than towns or fortresses. In the wars against foreign aggressions in later centuries, they never dug in behind fortifications, but would withdraw to the swamps or mountains to fight, as in the three wars against the Chinese invaders of the Yuan dynasty in the 13th century and the war against the Chinese Qing invaders in the 18th century. Indeed, King An Duong

who shut himself in Co Loa was defeated in the 11th century B.C., and Ho Quy Ly was beaten in the 15th century A.D. for having relied for defence on his Tay Do (Western Capital) in Thanh Hoa province.

To protect the city from floods and also for security reasons, a system of dykes called *la thanh* (network of ramparts) was erected, not after a pre-determined plan, but where topographical conditions were found suitable. Vestiges of similar constructions can be seen at the ancient capital at Hoa Lu and Son Nam (now the town of Nam Dinh), Son Tay, and other places. The *la thanh* in Thang Long consisted of a portion of the dyke along the right bank of the Red River on the eastern side of the city. In the north, it curved past *Ho Tay* (West Lake) and ran along the left bank of the To Lich river, as far as the Kim Nguu river, before turning east to join the Red River dyke again. This was the outer limit of Thang Long, but not a rigid boundary. Later on a number of out-lying areas were integrated into Thang Long, but the dyke system remained the same, whereas in feudal Europe, a city could not be expanded without altering the location or its outer wall. Moreover, *la thanh* was not meant to be a solid fortification capable of withstanding a long siege. In fact, during a peasant rebellion in 1389, the insurgents were able to occupy the capital within three days, and the court had to withdraw from the city.

Not until the last years of the 16th century, after the House of Mac had taken over from the House of Le, was the dyke system strengthened to cope with attacks from the rival House of Trinh. In 1585, three eastern walls were built outside the dyke system, each reinforced with a moat and bamboo hedges¹. Yet, according to a description given late in the 18th century, after the civil war had ended, what was left of the former structure was only a rather low, carriageable embankment topped with a thin wall and protected on the far side by a thick bamboo hedge and a moat bristling with spikes². At different places, it was interrupted by wooden gates, where guards kept watch day and night. Markets were held nearby where people inside and outside the city exchanged their produce.

The imperial city was built inside the civilian city, on a rectangular area surrounded by a brick wall and moat. It was exclusively reserved for the king, his family, and the imperial guards. All court officials lived outside it, among the commoners. The imperial city was extended late in the 15th century, but even so it was of a modest size. In the 17th century the powerful Trinh Lords, who had helped the Le dynasty to regain the throne, and who had reduced the king to the status of a mere figurehead, began to build their own palaces on a large area further south. The imperial city remained as a mere symbol of royalty, rather than a place of military or political importance.

Another characteristic of urban areas in Vietnam, which is no less important, is their agricultural origin. To turn low-lying land into ricefields, the Vietnamese spent centuries building dykes, to keep the fields from being flooded by overflowing rivers and also to conserve sufficient water for planting. Thang Long, a low-lying place surrounded by dykes, was obviously a rice-planting area.

In fact, agriculture had always been the main occupation of the people living within the limits of the city, and only when their land was taken from them by the State for the construction of palaces did these people leave their villages and hamlets. One example was the evacuation of An Xa villagers from inside the city to an area on the bank of the Red River where they formed Co Xa, a community specializing in fishing and sericulture. On the other hand, the court, in the early days when the capital was just taking shape, had had to gather people from other places to swell the population. *Thap Tam Trai* (The Thirteen Farms) in the western part of the city was first peopled by peasants from Le Mat village on the other side of the Red River in the 11th century, and was later divided into many villages: Lieu Giai, Giang Vo, Vinh Phuc, Dai Yen, Thu Le, Cong Vi, Van Bao, Ngoc Ha, Huu Tiep, Kim Ma, etc. Under successive dynasties, attention was paid to the development of agriculture within the city. Under the Ly, servants of the king were sent to Dai Yen to grow medicinal herbs. In 1362 a farm was set up at Toan Vien by the Tran to produce garlic and other aromatic herbs. The Le in 1429 issued an ordinance encouraging kitchen gardening by both commoners and court officials. Thang Long, for these various reasons, presented but very little similarity to the "poleis" of ancient Greece or the "medinas" of the times of the Muslim conquests. It was very different from the fortified cities in China which were built following a chess board pattern or in concentric circles. Thang Long was first of all a collection of villages clustered around walled royal palaces. For this reason, population growth has never been a leading factor in determining the relative importance of an urban centre in Vietnam.

The groundwork for handicrafts was probably laid by the court's

workshops, which were operated by labour conscripts. Under the Ly and the Tran, palace maid servants were employed to weave brocade (11th century) and make fans (14th century). Under the Trinh Lords in the 17th century, out-of-favour maid servants were banished to a place on the West Lake, now known as Truc Bach village, where they engaged in making a kind of silk fabric which became famous in the whole country for its beautiful sheen. The Court also sent for artisans from other places, e.g. bronzesmiths from De Cau canton in Ha Bac province, who worked in the mint, and later founded the bronze-casting community at Ngu Xa. Likewise, silversmiths from Chau Khe village, Hai Hung province, settled at Dong Cac, now Hang 'Bac (Silver) Street. Other guilds were formed when more artisans flocked to the city in search of outlets to their products, like the Hang Dao Guild of dyers from Dam Loan village, Hai Hung, known far and wide for their special red dye, or the Hang Tien Guild of wood turners from Nhi Khe village, Ha Son Binh province. Different guilds usually occupied different quarters, but not necessarily so. Anyway, members of an occupational group tended to stay close together and to maintain contact with their native village. Each guild had its own communal house, where the tutelary genie of the original village was worshipped. Many such houses can still be seen in present-day Hanoi. Skills were handed down from one generation to the next—leatherware-making among former inhabitants of Cham village, Hai Hung, bronze-casting by artisans from Cau Nom area, Ha Bac, etc. Natives of Quat Dong, Chuyen Nghiep and Ha Vi villages (Ha Son Binh) stuck to their respective specialities: embroidery, mother-of-pearl inlaying, and lacquerware. Traditional processes were preserved, production was on a small scale, and rested on the tradi-

tional relationship between master craftsmen and journeymen. As it was, in Thang Long, while in the countryside handicraft production never completely separated from agriculture, it operated within the framework of a self-sufficient economy, with the producers also selling their own products and not making up a distinctive stratum of craftsmen.

At the beginning, tributes and taxes in kind were sufficient to meet the needs of the court. Then, with the development of the capital, more products were brought in from different parts of the country. This gave rise to markets, which were first set up only at the four main approaches to the city, then in many other parts of the city as well. According to 18th century records, there were eight principal markets, besides many smaller ones, which only met briefly in the morning or at dusk. These were the hubs of economic activities. On market-days—the first and fifteenth days of the lunar month—the city became alive with the influx of traders from far and wide. Trade was periodical and seasonal, as it was in the countryside, and did not constitute a permanent aspect of the city, despite the existence of several trading guilds, like Giang Khau (River Mouth) which was set up at the mouth of the To Lich river—now Cho Gao (Rice Market) Street as early as the 11th century. Later, a guild called Duong Nhan was formed by Chinese merchants. Then came Phat Loc, formed in the 18th century by traders from Thai Binh province.

While in Europe, and even in China under the Song dynasty in the second half of the 11th century, cities were gaining ever greater autonomy, a trend in the opposite direction developed in Vietnam. Before the 15th century, trade was favoured by the monarchical State, which adopted a liberal policy in Thang Long. In the last years of the 13th century Tran kings used to roam the city at night, riding in a palanquin surrounded by guards. This suggested that there was night life of some sort for the rich and the powerful. Foreign merchants were allowed to take up residence in the city. Beginning with the 16th century, however, regulations became stricter. Fences were erected around wards, with gates that were closed at night. Foreigners were not allowed to leave their boats and live in the city, and a new city—Pho Hien—was built southeast of the capital city for the specific purpose of doing business with foreigners. In 1746, even native traders were forbidden to stay overnight. New trading areas were set up only to be replaced by others, leaving no traces, except a mention here and there in historical records.

Despite a history of several centuries, commerce in Thang Long retained all the traits of rural trade. Merchants dared not risk their money expanding business. Instead, they would spend their gains buying more land in the country, in the belief that "agriculture is the base of society". This attitude was upheld till the first half of this century. Rich traders in Hanoi were also big land-owners in their native villages.

This situation accounted for the lack of a class of entrepreneurs with long-standing experience, the forerunners of a real capitalist class.

This also gave rise to permanent shifts in the population in two opposite directions: the influx of artisans and of poor peasants—most often in whole families or large groups—fleeing banditry or famine, and the outflow of former residents wishing to return to their native places. The latter group included retainers whose masters had retired from official life and no longer needed them.

In fact, urban life in feudal times had little appeal for the people of the countryside, because the towns were administered by mandarins, who represented the monarchical State. Unlike in Europe, it was neither democratic nor liberal. On the other hand, rural villages still maintained a certain degree of autonomy and, because of their relative remoteness, were safe from autocratic interference. This conformed to the famous formula advanced by Max Weber concerning urban areas in China: "town = seat of mandarins without administrative autonomy; village = locality with administrative autonomy and without mandarins"³. In fact, there were little statutory difference between city-dwellers and country people, and the cities never saw the emergence of a new class. No records were kept of any riots or insurgencies being staged in the capital city.

The rural character of Thang Long was also clear from the way the city was organized. It was divided into wards, which existed alongside villages and hamlets. In

addition to guilds formed by merchants and artisans, there were gardening and fishing communities, and villages specializing in handicrafts, like the silk-making village of Truc Bach. Under the Tran, there was one specific administrative unit called *Binh bac ty*, but when the Le took over, the city was re-organized along traditional lines into two districts — Tho Xuong and Quang Duc — within a prefecture called Phung Thien.

Architecturally, Thang Long was not impressive judging from descriptions in 15th-century writings. Nguyen Trai, in one of his poems, spoke of his "hut". Another poet, Nguyen Nhu Do, mentioned his "thatch-and-board cottage with moss-covered steps and a weed-grown courtyard." Houses, as suggested by those 19th-century constructions, which still stand today, were of the rural model, with this difference that size was reduced to fit cramped city space. The traditional lateral arrangement of bays was altered, and rooms were now built end to end at right angles to the street. Frontal width was from five to six metres (3-compartment house) or three to four metres (one-compartment house). Each house was provided with one or more narrow open courts, and some had a small attic used as a storeroom⁴. Drawings made by foreign visitors in those days show narrow streets crowded with low dwellings. It was also ruled that attics should not look out into the street and should not be higher than a mandarin's palanquin.

Cultural life was not a distinctive one either, because of the

unstable population. Festivities mainly consisted of planting or religious rituals, each ward or village having its own festivals, which were closely related to the worship of its tutelary genie. There were no permanent places of recreation, and life only lost its customary drabness on market days or during the annual Court examinations. Printed literature aimed at city dwellers, such as novels, only made its appearance in modern times, when the city came under the direct influence of Western civilization. Dramatic arts, though a tradition of long standing, were either performed seasonally (like the periodical *cheo* festivals), or staged exclusively for Court officials (like the *tuong* opera), and performers more often than not were folk artistes.

The intellectuals, though regarded by other people as "metropolitans", did not consider themselves to be city people. Pham Dinh Ho, Ho Xuan Huong, Nguyen Van Sieu, Nguyen Thi Ninh (wife of a one-time governor of Thanh Quan district), and other literary figures in the 18th and 19th centuries all thought of their residences in the capital city as mere *pieds-à-terre*. They were feudal intellectuals, members of the ruling scholar-official class, and did not have to depend on research or writing for a living. They did not form a stratum totally devoted to intellectual endeavours and living in cities. Moreover, the capital city was not always a pole of attraction, and many well-known scholars never lived there. Intellectuals, therefore, exerted very little influence on social progress, and many were

hardly known outside their areas of residence.

A comparison of Thang Long and today's Hanoi may give an idea of urban settlement in feudal Vietnam, which, though an eastern society, was different from others in the region. The most salient feature was the restriction and stagnation of commerce, hence the absence of a clear-cut distinction between the cities and the countryside until recently. As Marx put it, "opposition between cities and countryside began with the passage from barbarism to civilisation, from the regime of tributes to the State, from the locality to the nation, and was found throughout the history of civilisation, up to our times"⁵. Cities in feudal Vietnam, unlike those in Europe and other parts of the East, were not economic or cultural centres. Thang Long began as a politico-administrative centre, and remained so for nine centuries, and fundamental changes only came with the advent of the 20th century.

TO LAN

1. *Viet su thông giám cương mục* (Essentials of Vietnamese History), 19th century.

2. Le Huu Trac, *Thường kinh ký su* (Journey to the Capital — Travel Notes), 1871.

3. Max Weber, *Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen. I. Konfuzianismus und Taoismus*, quoted by E. Balazs, *La Bureaucratie céleste*, (Celestial Bureaucracy), Gallimard, Paris, 1968.

4. Tao Trang and The Hung, *Thang Long: The City and Its People*, Vietnamese Studies, No. 48.

5. Karl Marx, *German Ideology*, 1846.

CHRONOLOGY

(August 16 — September 15)

AUGUST

16. A Vietnamese table-tennis team visits Burma for a friendly tournament.

17. Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach pays an official friendship visit to Cuba. A joint communique is signed by the two sides.

18. The Vietnamese Foreign Ministry sends a note to its Chinese counterpart proposing that the two sides agree to refrain from all armed and hostile activities from August 30 to November 8 on the occasion of the national days of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Sept. 2) and the People's Republic of China (Nov. 1).

— Holding in Ho Chi Minh City of a conference to review the activities in Vietnam in connection with the International Year of the Elderly.

22. A delegation of the Denmark — Vietnam Friendship Association, headed by Wilfred Gluud, its chairman, pays a friendship visit to Vietnam.

24. Under the auspices of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Institute of Nutrition of the Public Health Ministry holds a symposium on mother's milk in Hanoi (more than 30 reports are read).

— The Council of Ministers holds a conference on water conservation and control in the Mekong delta to review the situation there during the past few years and discuss development plans for 1984 — 85 and 1986 — 90.

30. A delegation of the Albanian Women's Union led by Lumturi Rexha, alternate member of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania, pays a friendship visit to Vietnam.

SEPTEMBER

1. A Vietnamese Party and Government delegation, headed by Tran Xuan Bach, member of the Secre-

tariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, attends the 35th founding anniversary of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

— Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach pays a friendship visit to Grenada. A joint communique is signed by the two sides.

2. A television station with a radius of action of 35 km is commissioned in Quang Ninh province.

— Henri Pigeat, President — Director General of the French news agency AFP, pays a visit to Vietnam.

3. A conference on the development and processing of three industrial crops: coconut, sugarcane and tobacco in Southern provinces is held in Ho Chi Minh City.

5. The 1983 — 1984 school year begins: nearly 14 million pupils attend school, among them 1.6 million kindergarten children.

6. Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach pays an official friendship visit to Nicaragua.

— At a session in August of the sub-commission on particles and fields of the Executive Committee of the World Physics Federation, Professor Nguyen Van Hieu is elected to the International Committee for the development of accelerators.

9. A delegation of the Communist Party of Vietnam, headed by Vu Quang, member of the Party Central Committee and head of the External Relations Commission of the Party Central Committee, pays a visit to Japan.

— Ho Chi Minh City: Opening of the 18th session of the Interim International Mekong Committee (Vietnam, Laos and Thailand) to discuss its program of work for 1984.

10. A delegation of the newspaper **Nhan Dan**, headed by Hong Ha, its editor-in-chief, attends the annual festival of the French Communist Party newspaper "L'Humanité".

— A delegation of the Vietnam Federation of Trade Unions, led by Duong Xuan Nghien, member of the Executive Committee of the Vietnam Federation of Trade Unions, attends the Congress of the General Federation of Trade Unions of Iraq.

12. Joao Havelange, President of the International Federation of Football Association (FIFA) pays a visit to Vietnam.



THE MOUNTAIN
DISTRICT
OF MAI SON,
SON LA PROVINCE

▲ Cotton growing and cloth weaving a family sideline occupation.

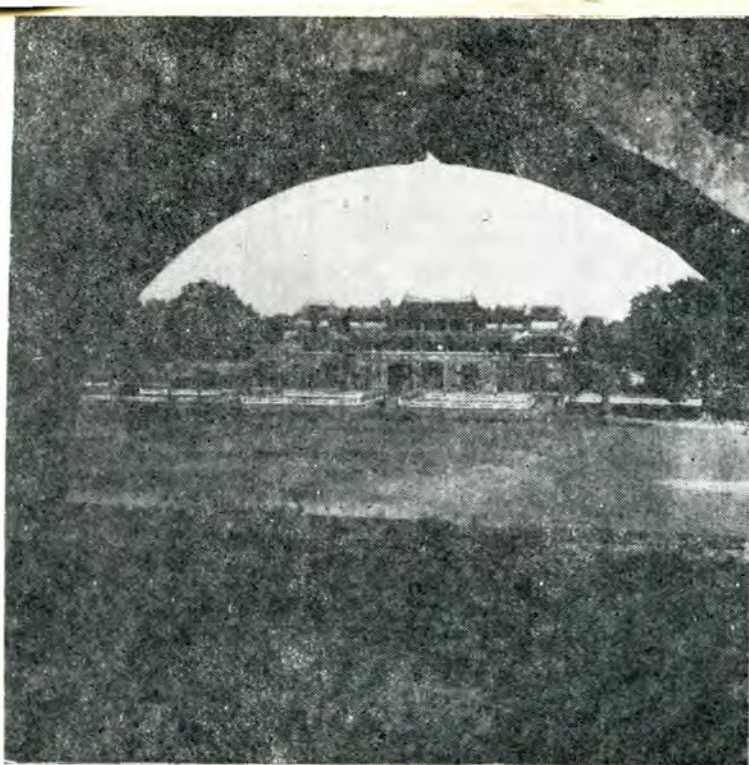
(See article on page 14)



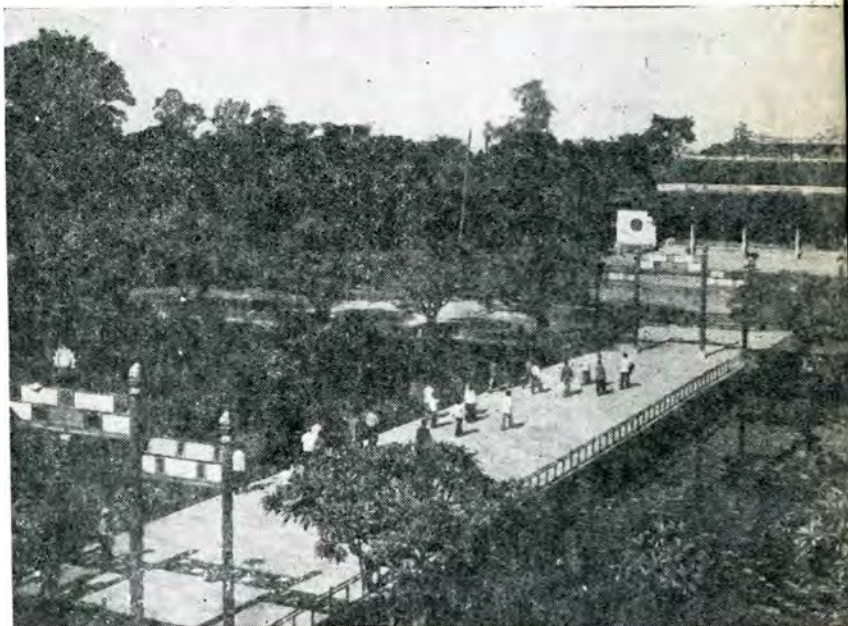
▲ family fish-pond.

(See article on page 15)





With financial assistance from UNESCO, the restoration of historical - cultural relics in Hue, Vietnam's old imperial capital, began early this year



**Vietnam
courier**

**Le courrier
du Vietnam**

**НОВОСТИ
ВЬЕТНАМА**

**El Correo
de Vietnam**

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