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The World Should Know
MAU THAN 1968 MASSACRE

Michael Do, March 14, 2008

About the Presenter

- Michael P. Do born Vietnamese Do Van Phuc
- Served 2 years for US Embassy - Counter-Terrorism Program (1965-1966)
- Graduated from Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Political Warfare College (1966-1969)
- Rifle Company Commander, 5th Infantry Division (1969-1971)
- Chief Political Education, 2nd Air Division (1972-1974)
- B.A. in Political Science- Van Hanh University, Saigon, Vietnam
- B.S. in Electrical Engineering, University of Texas at Austin
- M.S. in Engineering Management, NTU, Colorado
- Detained in Communist Concentration Camps (1975-1985)
- Admitted to the U.S. as Political Refugee
- President of the Vietnamese American Veterans Association at Austin
- Founding member of the Vietnamese Writers in Exile
- Writings: The End of Hell, Homeland and Reminiscence, The Garden of Paradise (Translation)

Major Crimes Against the People Committed by the Communists

- 1953-1956: Land Reform Campaign, millions of people affected (Nixon's news conference of July 27, 1972, that appeared the following day in the *New York Times*. 50,000 had been executed and 500,000 had died in slave labor camps)
- 1968: General Offensive in 44 provinces and major cities in South Vietnam (30,000 South Vietnamese soldiers and civilians, 100,000 NVA and VC Killed in Mau Than General Offensive)
- After 1975: The So-Called Re-Education (500,000 South Vietnamese officers, civil servants, priests, businessmen in hundreds of concentration camps. Tens of Thousands died of starvation, illness, torture, execution)
- After 1975: Boat People. Hundreds of thousands killed, raped, vanished in East Sea.
- Today: Human trafficking. Women sold to neighboring countries, men as labor slaves

Tet Mau Than, 1968

- Tet (New Year Day) is the most important holiday in Asian Countries
- A Sacred Celebration
- Family Reunion
- Honor the Death
- Clean and Decorate Ancestral Graves



Communist Winter-Spring Campaign

- The Battle of Hue was part of the Communist Winter-Spring campaign of 1967-68.
- **Phase I:** Oct. to Dec. 1967. (fairly large, set-piece battles against important fixed installations or allied concentrations. The battles of Loc Ninh in Binh Long Province, Dak To in Kontum Province, and Con Tien in Quang Tri Province, all three in the mountainous interior of South Vietnam near the Cambodian and Lao borders, involving NVA)
- **Phase II** From Jan. to March, 1968. Independent fighting methods. (large numbers of attacks by fairly small units, simultaneously, over a vast geographic area and using the most refined and advanced techniques of guerrilla war. Involving both NVA and Viet Cong). Tet offensive (80,000 troops attacked 36 of South Vietnam's provinces and 6 major cities, 72 district towns and the capital Saigon)
- **Phase III, Second Wave, From April to June, 1968, In reality, there was no Second Wave, because the phases 1 and 2 failed. (The siege of Khe Sanh in late summer.)**

South Vietnam in Tet Mau Than Offensive



What Happened

- Hanoi suggested a Cease Fire in 7 days
- Saigon OK'd a truce of 3 days
- 50% of South Vietnamese Forces were on leave to be with family to celebrate the New Year
- January 30, 1968, VC suddenly attacked major cities in South Vietnam
- (about 12,000 VC in Hue battle)
- March 2, 1968, last VC resistance

Casualties (Battle of Hue)

- North Vietnamese forces: between 2,500 and 5,000 killed and 89 captured in the city and in the surrounding areas.
- U.S.: 216 U.S. Marines and soldiers had been killed during the fighting and 1,609 were wounded.
- South Vietnam: 421 ARVN troops were killed, another 2,123 were wounded, and 31 were missing.
- Civilians: More than 5,800 killed and 116,000 were left homeless (Hue's population: 140,000.)

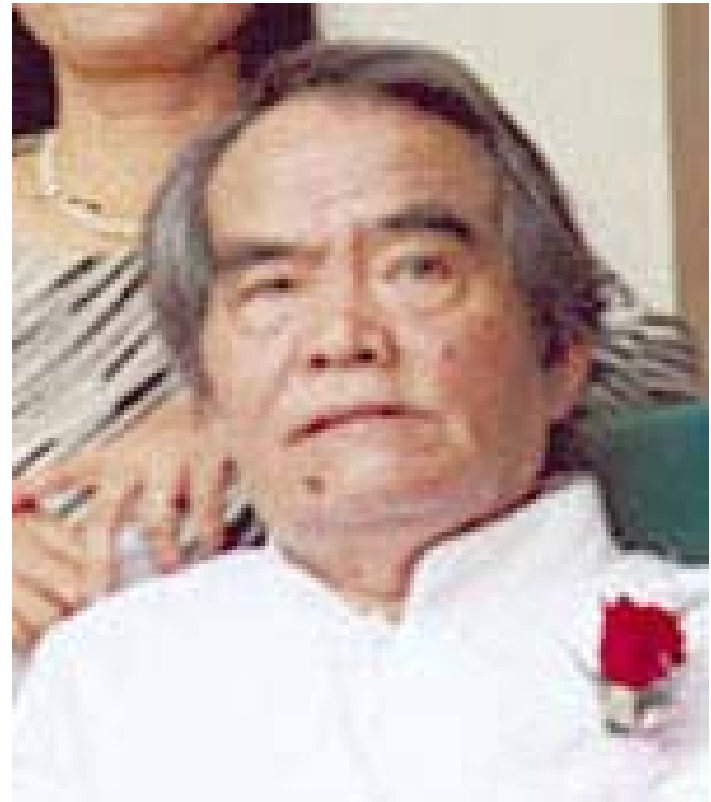
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tet_Offensive#Hu.E1.BA.BF

**Vietnamese Troops Raised the Flag
over the Citadel
after 26 Days of Fierce Battle
(Feb. 24, 1968)**



Sleeping Cells

- About 1500 Communist Civilian Cadres operating within the City. They are: Hue University Professors and Students (Le Van Hao, Hoang Phu Ngoc Tuong, Tieu Dao Bao Cu, Nguyen Dac Xuan...)
- VC spies, sleeping moles in the ARVN...



Hoang Phu Ngoc Tuong, the Executioner

Who Were The Victims

- South Vietnamese soldiers, civil servants
- High school and College Educators and Students
- Priests, Monks, young men of the Churches
- Foreigners (Professors, Volunteers in Humanitarian Organizations, employees of American Contractors)
- Ordinary people: Young men and women, even children

Source: Elje Vannema *The Vietcong Massacre at Hue. Vintage Press, New York, 1976*

According to Nguyễn Trân, of 2.800 killed in Hue, there are 790 members of the Province/City/Village Councils, 1.892 civil servants, 38 policemen, hundreds of young men in the drafting age... (Source: "**Công Và Tội. Những sự thật lịch sử**" Xuân thu, 1992 (p. 642).

Who Were The Victims

- Communists intended that their prisoners should be re-educated and returned, but with the turnover, matters passed from his control.” Sometime within the following several weeks, the communists decided to kill the individuals under their control. (Douglas Pike)
- During the NVA withdrawal from Huế the NVA summarily executed anyone in their custody who resisted being taken out of the city or who was too old, too young, or too frail to make the journey to the camp. (Manhard, a U.S. Senior Adviser who was taken to a [POW camp](#) by the [North Vietnamese Army](#) (NVA) and held until 1973.
- The planned execution of government officials and their families, [political](#) and civil servants, and [collaborators](#) with Americans; and those civilians not connected to the government who ran from questioning, spoke harshly about the occupation, or the occupiers believed “displayed a bad attitude” towards the occupiers ([Don Oberdorfer](#) and Paul Vogle, an American English professor at the local Huế University by interviewing witnesses of the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong occupation.) Oberdorfer reported that in the [Catholic](#) area of Huế, Phucam, virtually every able bodied man over the age of 15 who took refuge in the [cathedral](#) was taken away and killed.
- In an interview with Ho Ty, a Viet Cong commander who took part in the advanced planning of a general uprising, Oberdorfer reported Ty's statement that the Communist party "was particularly anxious to get those people at Phucam... The Catholics were considered particular enemies of ours."

How Could the Communists Cheat Too Many People

- Provisionary authorities (Revolutionary People's Committee).
- First call and release with promise of safety.
- Second, third... call and safely release.
- Finally, thousands reported and... vanished

How They Killed People

- Tied 2 persons back to back (using electric wire, telephone cable, barbed wires)
- Tied a bundle of every 20 persons
- Rags stuffed in mouth
- Execution type (shot to the head)
- Buried alive
- Head blown with rifle butts or shovels
- Body sprayed with machine gun bullets
- Grenades

Civilian Casualties Resulting from Battle of Hue (estimated) 7,600

- **Wounded (hospitalized or outpatients) with injuries attributable to warfare : 844**
- **Estimated civilian deaths due to accident of battle : 1173**
- **Bodies discovered immediately post battle, 1968 : 809
(Gia Hoi HS Yard: 170; Tang Quang Tu Pagoda: 67; Bai Dau 77; Cho Thong 100; Imperial Tomb Area 201; Thien Ham 200; Dong Gi 100)**
- **Bodies found from March-July (including Sand Dune) 1969 (est.): 428**
- **Bodies found at Da Mai Creek (Nam Hoa district) September, 1969 : 428**
- **Bodies found at Phu Thu Salt Flat, November, 1969 (est.) : 300 – 1000?**
- **Miscellaneous finds during 1969 (approximate): 1946**
- **Total yet unaccounted for : 1900**
- **Total casualties and wounded in Hue: 7600**

How Communists Explained the Killing?

Traitor of the Revolution?

- People served in South Vietnam Armed Forces and Administration (In VC terms: Blood Debt, cruel elements)
- Reactionary elements
- People who posed threat to their causes
- Other explanations:
 - ✓ At the Paris talks: not the work of Communists but of "dissident local political parties".
 - ✓ Hanoi's Liberation Radio April 26, 1968, "Victims were only "hooligan lackeys who had incurred blood debts of the Hue compatriots and who were annihilated by the Southern armed forces and people in early Spring."
 - ✓ Elimination of witnesses
 - ✓ Get rid of people as VC retreated from the battle. (According to ex-Communist Colonel Bui Tin)

From Hanoi

Hanoi Radio on February 4: "After one hour's fighting the Revolutionary Armed Forces occupied the residence of the puppet provincial governor (in Hue), the prison and the offices of the puppet administration... **The Revolutionary Armed Forces punished most cruel agents of the enemy** and seized control of the streets... **rounded up and punished dozen of cruel agents** and caused the enemy organs of control and oppression to crumble...

The Hanoi official party newspaper, Nhan Dan, echoed the theme: "Like a thunderbolt, a general offensive has been hurled against the U.S. and the puppets... The U.S.-puppet machine **has been duly punished**. The puppet administrative organs... have suddenly collapsed. The Thieu-Ky administration cannot escape from complete collapse. The puppet troops have become extremely weak and cannot **avoid being completely exterminated**."

ADDED REASONS TO HUE MASSACRE

- Elimination of witnesses, for the prisoners and VietCong are Hue residents and may know each others and killing these witnesses reduced future problems for Vietcong
- Revenge killing in the name of the Communist party or settle old scores.
- Many Hue residents believe that the execution orders came directly from Ho Chi Minh. More likely, however, the Communists simply lost their nerve. They had been led to expect that many South Vietnamese would rally to their cause during the Tet onslaught. That did not happen, and when the battle for Hue began turning in the allies' favor, the Communists apparently panicked and killed off their prisoners (The Massacre at Hue, *Time Magazine*, October 31, 1969)
- The last phase began when it became evident that the communists could not hold the city and was designed to “leave no witnesses”. Anyone who could identify individual VC members who participated in the occupation was to be killed and their bodies hidden (source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massacre_at_Hu%E1%BA%BF)

Reaction of International Communities

- Times (London, UK). Article by Stewart Harris on front page accused the mass killing at Hue, and confirmed the burial sites'
- Minute (A French Weekly Magazine): Article by Yves Gautron stated that no one on this planet could forgive the heinous act of killing people by Communist troops.
- Demonstration of the French Youth at Ternes Square (Paris – France)

How Mau Than Event was Misinformed by the U.S. Media

- 40 of 354 news correspondents reported the battle (according to journalist Braestrup (ex-US Marine))
- Anti-War Movements in the US
- *“The public perceived it as a defeat, and therefore it was a defeat”* Robert Northshield, NBC’s executive producer.
- *“In a sense, newsmen and their editors may have been as mentally unreceptive to reports of the Hue massacre as was much of the U.S. public later to reports in 1969 of the My Lai massacre.”* Peter Braestrup, Washington Post
- The pressure to withdraw the US troops
- Communist Propaganda

Why Was the Massacre Covered up?

- Communist Propaganda
- American Mass Media
 - American Public
 - Anti-War Movements
- US Congress Approaches
- The Tendency to End the War

The Truth about our Victory

- VC casualties: 85,000 during the Winter-Spring Campaign (killed or permanently disabled). In Hue: 2500 killed during battle. Estimated 2500 killed while retreating beyond Hue.
- After Tet Mau Than: VC Infrastructure in South Vietnam was almost totally destroyed.
- Allied Forces: 357 KIA's (Hue)
- Declining of US Casualties after MauThan
 - 1968: 15,000
 - 1969: 9,414
 - 1970: 4,221
- Increasing of South Vietnam Government's control of the population:
 - Before 1968: 42%
 - In 1969: 70%
 - 1970-1971: 90% (estimated by Ambassador Bunker)

IMPACT

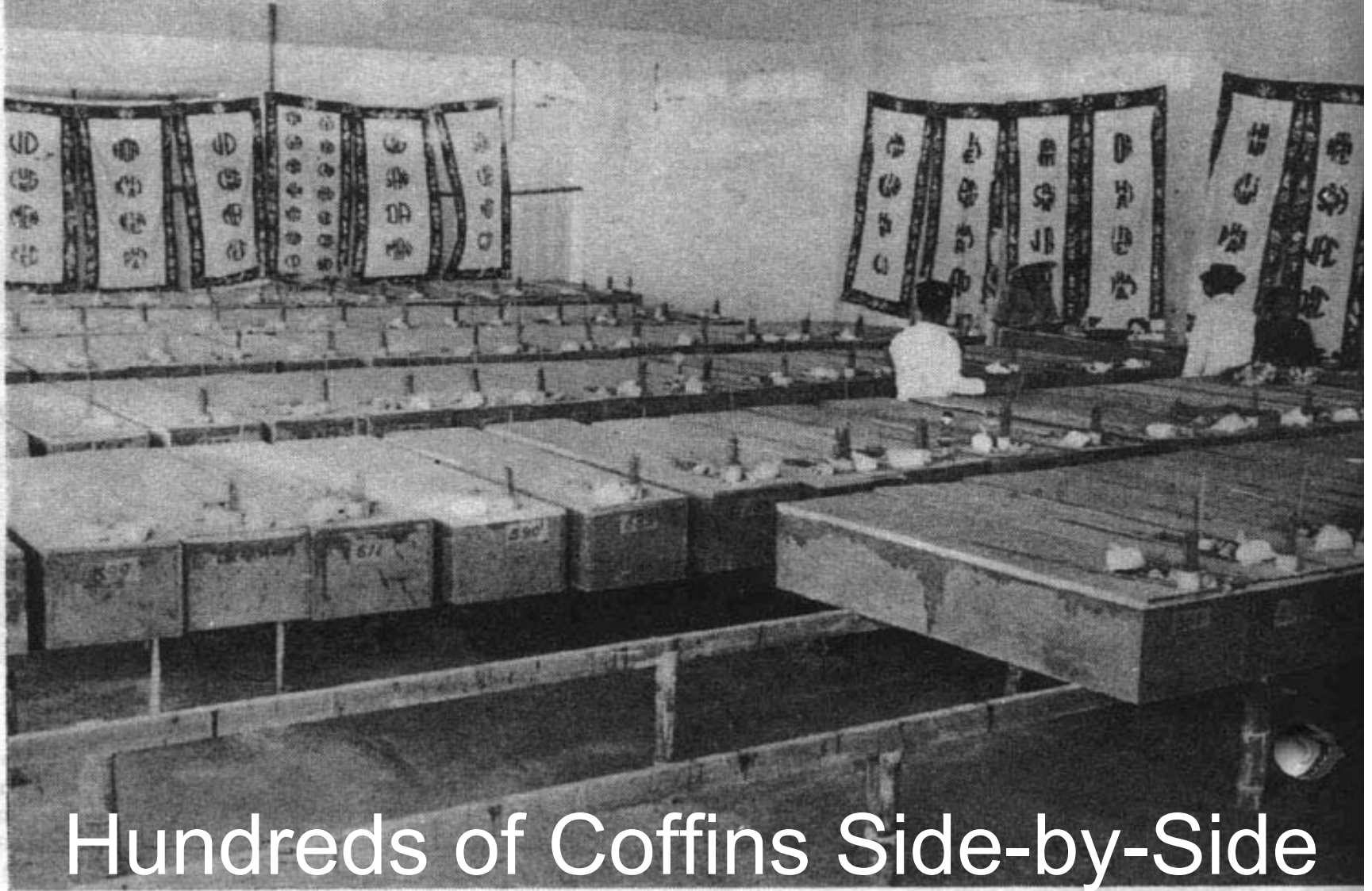
- Almost every family in Hue has at **least one relative**, close or remote, who was killed or still missing.
- Besides more than two thousand persons whose deaths were confirmed after the revelation of the mass graves, the fate of the others, amounted to several thousands, are still unknown.
- Exhumed bodies showed **teenagers and women** as victims of this horrible massacre.
- A great number of pre-68 anti-war activists, pro-communists people **took side with South Vietnamese government**.
- After April 30, 1975 when South Vietnam fell into the hand of the Communist Party, it seems that the number of boat people of **Hue origin takes up a greater proportion** among the refugees than that from the other areas.



How Can We Count?



Hàng trăm hòm của những xác chết chưa được nhận diện xếp hàng dài trong trường học.



Hundreds of Coffins Side-by-Side



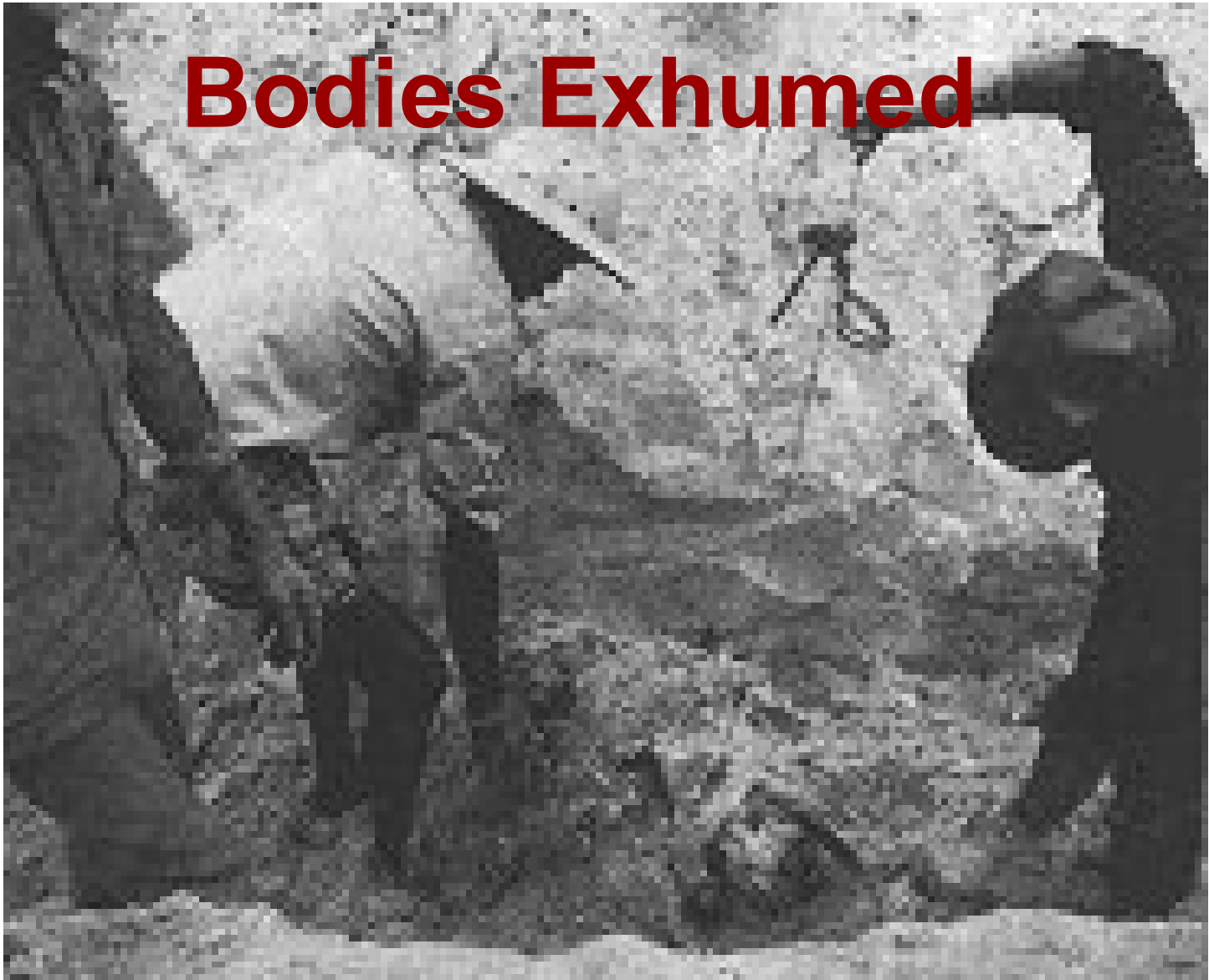
A Young Woman and Her Husband's Remains

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Mau Than Massacre

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Bodies Exhumed



At one of the
Burial Sites

Who
Killed our
Father?



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Mau Than Massacre

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Is this the Way Communists Liberate People?



A soldier mourned
his baby slain by the
Vietnamese Communists



A Viet-Nam soldier
prepares to bury
his infant son,
slain
by the Viet Cong

'liberation' or conquest ?

THE STRUGGLE IN SOUTH VIETNAM

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Praying for the Loved Ones



The Whole City Mourns



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Mau Than Massacre

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Why Killed My Husbands? My Sons?



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Mau Than Massacre

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Collective Funeral in Hue



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Mau Than Massacre

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Hue Town People Mourned the Dead



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Mau Than Massacre

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A Memorial was built at Da Mai, where more than
400 bodies were found

This year, someone dared to secretly conducted a rite to
pray for the dead and wrote a slogan to accuse the
Communists of killing innocent people



Read on the wall:

40 Years after the VC Massacre

Hue, 40 Years After Mau Than Massacre

- People mingled the New Year Celebration with the Commemoration of the Massacre so that the Communist authorities cannot forbid.
- Assuming more than 50% of population had been born after the War who know nothing about the massacre, Communists celebrated Mau Than Offensive as their victory, distorted the true history, indifferent to the misery of their people

Please, Never Forget!

- **Hundreds of Books, Movies, and Memorial Sites for**

Hiroshima (Kill to Save)

Nan King Rape (Kill for Fun)

Nazi Holocaust (Hate Crime)

Kampuchea (Killing Field)

Ethnic Cleansing in Serbia, African Countries

- **Still Ignored or Less Known:**

Land Reform Campaigns in China, Vietnam

Mau Than Massacre

Boat People Episode



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Thank you

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