RESOLUTION

Resolved, by the Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, that the testimony of Daniel E. Teodoru taken in executive session on January 5, 1973, be released from the injunction of secrecy, be printed, and made public.

JAMES O. EASTLAND, Chairman.

THE HUMAN COST OF COMMUNISM IN VIETNAM—
THE MYTH OF NO BLOODBATH

FRIDAY, JANUARY 5, 1973

U.S. Senate,
Subcommittee To Investigate the
Administration of the Internal Security Act
And Other Internal Security Laws
Of the Committee on the Judiciary,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:45 a.m. in room 2300,
New Senate Office Building, Senator James O. Eastland (chairman),
presiding.

Also present: J. G. Sourwine, chief counsel; David Martin, senior
analyst.

The CHAIRMAN: The committee will come to order.

Mr. Sourwine. Mr. Chairman, we have as our witness this morning
Mr. Daniel E. Teodoru, a student of Vietnamese affairs, who has
prepared a very carefully researched reply to some of the criticisms
that were leveled against the subcommittee’s compendium on The
Human Cost of Communism in Vietnam, which was published last
February.

The CHAIRMAN. We are grateful to you for the research you have
done, and for taking the trouble to come before our subcommittee to
give your testimony.

Would you raise your right hand and swear that the testimony you
are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
the truth, so help you God?

Mr. Teodoru. I do.

Mr. Sourwine. Mr. Teodoru, we understand that you have taken the
trouble to prepare a carefully-researched reply to the allegations made
by Mr. Gareth Porter of Cornell University against a recent subcom-
mittee study entitled “The Human Cost of Communism in Vietnam”
and, more specifically, against an excerpt from the writings of the
Vietnamese scholar, Hoang Van Chi, which appeared in this study.

We have decided to take your testimony on this matter, firstly be-
cause it is of direct interest to the subcommittee and secondly because
we have heard from several sources that you are exceptionally knowl-
edgable about Vietnamese matters. First of all, I believe it would be
helpful for the purpose of the record if you provided us with some
background information for the purpose of establishing your com-
petence to deal with this issue.

(1)
Mr. Teodoru. I have no academic credentials on the Vietnam issue per se. My training is in physiology, a physical science, which I am pursuing both professionally and academically. But I believe I stand before you as living proof that any citizen who cares enough can get all the facts for himself rather than having to rely totally on biased sources, hiding behind professional degrees.

Since 1964 I have made an intensive study of the subject. I sought to build up an adequate library—some people consider it massive—which has enabled me to study virtually all of the available literature on the subject in both French and English. I might add here that fluency in the French language has made available to me many documents that are not available in English. For example, the French Communist Party and Hanoi's own diplomatic mission in Paris have served as invaluable outlets for major documents indispensable to the study of Vietnam.

Mr. Sourswine. Do you also know the Vietnamese language?

Mr. Teodoru. I will answer in an unqualified no. I had to learn a number of languages migrating from country to country, and have learned to distinguish between knowing and not knowing a language. Until I can sit across from a native, speaking to him in his tongue with the same fluency with which he speaks to me, I can never be sure whether something slips by me or not. Nothing causes more confusion than inadequacy in a language passed of as proficiency. I only wish some other self-styled linguists, particularly in as difficult a language as Vietnamese, would do the same.

To avoid the possibility of linguistic controversy, I have tried to limit myself to Hanoi documents printed in French and English by North Vietnam's Foreign Language Publishing House, whenever possible. Unlike Porter's study, any reader can go and doublecheck my references.

Mr. Sourswine. You have for a number of years now been the Eastern Regional Secretary of the National Student Coordinating Committee for Freedom in Vietnam and Southeast Asia?

Mr. Teodoru. Yes, I have held that position since 1968. Our organization has sought to carry on a campaign of education on the Vietnam situation through "meaningful dialog."

Mr. Sourswine. You have traveled to Vietnam a number of times in connection with your research and your activities?

Mr. Teodoru. Yes; I visited Vietnam on behalf of our committee and also as a journalist in 1968-69, in 1970 and again in 1971. My stays in each case were quite lengthy.

While in Vietnam I had ample opportunity to meet with South Vietnamese officials, with non-Communist opponents of the Government, with Vietcong political cadres, with Communist defectors and prisoners, and with Communist supporters in the refugee camps. I also met with many refugees from the North, most of whom had fled in 1954-55 but some of whom had fled as recently as 1967.

Mr. Sourswine. You were the author of a report issued in the name of the National Student Coordinating Committee after your study group returned from Southeast Asia in 1970?

Mr. Teodoru. I was the principal author. The report was entitled "Vietnam and Cambodia—A Report to President Nixon."
Mr. SOROWINE. Is it accurate that you had a long talk with President Nixon after your report was made public in February of 1971?

Mr. Teodoru. Yes; President Nixon gave us almost an hour of his time and he seemed quite attentive to what we had to say.

Mr. SOROWINE. Is it accurate that you command a considerable reputation as a campus debater on Vietnam?

Mr. Teodoru. I don't know how considerable my reputation is, but it is accurate that I have, since 1964, participated in literally hundreds of debates on the subject of Vietnam—all the way from Berkeley to Columbia. I have debated most of the leaders of the anti-Vietnam movement, including David Dellinger, Robert Scheer, Allard Lowenstein, and others.

Mr. SOROWINE. Have you ever debated Mr. Gareth Porter?

Mr. Teodoru. Yes, I debated Mr. Porter recently at Cornell University.

Mr. SOROWINE. Tell us about that.

Mr. Teodoru. I was neither impressed nor unimpressed by his debating style—though I did feel that Porter does not listen to his opponents and often goes off debating some imaginary opponent in his head. What shocked me, however, was his apparent ignorance of the subject. He seemed more interested in accusing dishonesty, those who concluded that a bloodbath did take place during the North Vietnamese land reform than in discussing the land reform itself. This isn't surprising because, in fact, Porter is not a scholar but, rather, a dedicated and self-avowed Hanoi advocate. That is his privilege, but what is regrettable is the fact that Cornell, one of our Nation's great universities, is lending its scholarly reputation as a cloak for propagandists. It is much too easy to become an authority upon which Cornell does not stand alone. I would say that most of our universities seem to lend themselves to such abuse.

There was one exchange that took place at the outset of our debate which may be worth recounting. When Porter first stood up to begin his remarks, I stated that Mary McCarthy in her book "Hanoi" which appeared in 1966, had expressed surprise over the fact that large portraits of Stalin were prominently exhibited in Hanoi. I had suggested that her surprise was attributable to her lack of awareness of the North Vietnamese rulers' basic ideological commitment to Stalinism and all the brutality it entails.

In the study on The Human Costs of Communism in the Soviet Union, which he prepared for your subcommittee, Robert Conquest calculated that the Communist revolution and the prolonged terror which followed it had exacted a toll of some 30 to 40 million human lives. In the introduction he wrote for this study, the late Senator Dodd pointed out that apologists for the Soviet Union had persistently denied the facts about the Stalin terror—until the publication of Khrushchev's secret speech in 1956, made it impossible for even the most stubborn apologists to persist in these denials!

I tried to pin Porter down on the question of Stalin's atrocities because he had been so evasive on the issue in his study. Let me quote what he said.

"Generations of Americans have been led to believe that revolutionaries guided by Marxist-Leninist concepts must be fanatic and cruel. The tendency of so
many Americans to accept that stereotype in total ignorance of the real nature of the Vietnamese revolution made it easy for the myth of the "bloodbath" to gain popular credence, and helped to stifle the search for truth.

In his reply to me Porter was even more evasive than he was in his study. He insisted, on the one hand, that whatever took place in Russia is irrelevant to the Vietnamese case—while, on the other hand, he completely evaded the question of the tens of millions of victims of communism in the Soviet Union.

Had Porter been old enough to write in the thirties, forties, or early fifties, I am sure he would have been found in the ranks of the Soviet apologists who wrote learned treatises denying the existence of the Stalinist terror—until this position was made intellectually untenable by Khrushchev's personal confirmation that the Stalinist terror had been even more massive and merciless than had been charged by the Western critics.

Mr. Sourwine. Can you summarize for us your criticism of Mr. Porter's study of what he calls the bloodbath myth?

Mr. Thodore. My research into the radical Land Reform over the last few months convinced me, Mr. Chairman, that Porter must stand accused of the following acts of outright intellectual dishonesty:

(A) Though he condemned those who used secondary sources and official U.S. translations; it is evident from Porter's study that he did exactly the same thing. Often, rather than go to the original Nhan Dan, he would rely on citations of Nhan Dan made in North Vietnamese propaganda tracts about the radical land reform, written over 10 years after it was over.

(B) He quoted mistranslations, or mistranslated Communist documents himself, in order to support his claim that all the official evidence used to support the bloodbath myth is fabricated or mistranslated.

(C) He quoted Communist sources totally out of context to support views which are the exact opposite of those really presented by the misquoted sources.

(D) He used documents for the period when the radical land reform was in low gear in order to underestimate what went on when the campaign was full-blown.

(E) Porter totally disregarded the official documents confirming the Communist Party's participation in and responsibility for the very excesses he recognizes as having occurred.

(F) Porter personally slanders the advocates of the bloodbath hypothesis, totally disregarding the inescapable biographical evidence to the contrary—particularly in the case of his central target, Hoang Van Chi.

(G) By juggling the figures of the very authors he criticizes, Porter seeks to show a tremendous nutritional benefit to the poor peasant as a result of the radical land reform. However, when the exact same mathematical computations are applied to the statistics given by his Communist sources, the results show no improvement whatsoever.

(H) Relying on totally unreliable secondary sources, Porter dismissed as "fakes" cooked up by Saigon propaganda organizations, major documents on which Hoang Van Chi's contentions are based.
This he does without first checking the primary sources (such as Nhan Dan) to see if they confirm the existence of these documents.

Mr. Sourwine. You have made some rather sweeping allegations against Mr. Porter. Allegations as serious as these require documentation. Are you in a position to document the statements you have just made?

Mr. Teodori. I have a prepared statement, Mr. Chairman, in which I seek to document these charges. With your permission, I would like to read this statement. I also request that the record incorporate as an appendix a letter I have received from Hoang Van Chi in response to my queries on Porter's charges. Mr. Hoang has been reluctant to respond to Porter's charges for fear that his response might give stature to an otherwise worthless production. His statement hits at the very foundation of the charges leveled at him by Porter. It deserves at the very least the same national attention Porter's slanders of him have received.

I also wish to submit for publication as an appendix an excellent rebuttal of Porter's study prepared by Robert F. Turner of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace. Mr. Turner clearly shows that Porter does not monopolize Communist documents nor does he present them accurately.

I would now like to read from my prepared statement.

"The Human Cost of Communism in Vietnam," a compendium published in February 1972 by the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security, succeeded in surmounting the barriers that had previously prevented public discussion of the subject and attracted attention on a nationwide and international scale. Even The New York Times, which has generally displayed the greatest restraint in criticizing the conduct of Hanoi, printed a long article by Sir Robert Thompson reviewing the subcommittee's compendium. It had great public impact and considerable impact on the campuses. It forced many people to face up to the terrible human cost of communism in Vietnam and in other countries where it has taken power.

From the standpoint of Hanoi and its apologists, it became necessary, as a matter of the greatest urgency, to discredit "The Human Cost of Communism in Vietnam" and those writers whose works were quoted in it. To the extent that the accounts of a North Vietnamese bloodbath were believed, it would be more difficult for the North Vietnamese to obtain a peace settlement on their terms. To the extent that the American people and the American Government could be persuaded that there was no reason to fear a Communist bloodbath in South Vietnam, Hanoi would be in a stronger position to force a settlement on terms most favorable to it.

Gareth Porter's study, "The Myth of the Bloodbath" was, in my opinion, the first and most important salvo in an international campaign designed to achieve this objective.

In his study Gareth Porter attacks all those scholars whose research led them to the conclusion that the radical land reform program enacted in North Vietnam from 1958 to 1956 resulted in a veritable bloodbath. He accused them of "sloppy scholarship," basing their opinions on propaganda and unreliable secondary sources. Contrary to their views, Porter asserts that— I quote —"...
The main objective regarding landlords was to transform them into productive citizens by their own labor and not to liquidate them, as has so often been charged. The evidence further indicates that the land reform policies were conceived with the aim of minimizing injustice and unnecessary suffering and not, as has been alleged, to murder innocent people with a “deliberate excess of terror.”

How could so many scholars be so wrong about the bloodbath? Easy, answers Porter: they were all the willing dupes of Hoang Van Chi, whom he describes as a CIA-financed Vietnamese charlatan. Hoang, he says, deceived them all with mistranslations, misrepresentations, and lots of total fabrications.

How does Porter know that Hoang Van Chi’s quotations are false? Claiming to be fluent in Vietnamese he boasts that he went to the “actual historical record,” consisting of official North Vietnamese documents of that time, such as the official North Vietnamese Communist Party newspaper, Nhan Dan.

I must say that to call Nhan Dan’s version “the actual historical record” is a bit naive to say the least. Porter argued in our debate at Cornell that since Nhan Dan is the official party paper, it transmits official party policy. For example, no quotas for the number of landlords to be executed appeared in Nhan Dan, so Porter argues that there could not possibly have been such quotas. His insistence that party policy is totally expressed in the party press reminds me of a story told by William Hinton, an eyewitness partisan of the Red Chinese Land Reform, after which North Vietnam’s was modeled.

When the Chinese Communists realized that their radical land reform of 1947 was suicidal, they made a 180° turn and attacked the excesses of their own cadres as “left deviations.” Hinton recalls one cadre protesting that he “had done nothing in the course of his work that had not been written in the People’s Daily [Red China’s “Pravda”] or suggested in that paper as the valuable experience of some other place.” A high-level party official replied: “In any case, the newspaper is not the body directing our work. Why then do so many of you [cadres] read it as if it were exactly that?”

In the same way, it is rather infantile to assume that in North Vietnam lower echelons would find their directives in the morning press. Nhan Dan, Porter’s view notwithstanding, does not tell all. On the quota issue, for example, I for one am much more convinced by the on-the-spot report of the respected London Economist’s correspondent that each village had to execute or imprison a minimum of 16 people as “evil landlords,” than I am by the absence of such an order in Nhan Dan.

My first examination of some of the Communist documents cited in Porter’s study convinced me that Porter was misrepresenting them. I became incensed—and I determined to find out on exactly how many falsehoods Porter’s “no bloodbath” thesis is based. As I delved into his study further, it became more and more apparent that this so-called study was not a study at all, but rather a malicious propaganda tract, designed to slander, in a hit and run fashion, a number of eminent scholars of Vietnam affairs.

This production received extraordinary attention from the national press, including heavy coverage in the New York Times and the Washington Post. The TV networks also picked up Porter and gave him
tremendous exposure. Needless to say, the entire left wing press in this country, and the left wing propaganda apparatus internationally gave heavy and repeated play to the Porter charges. His “study” was hailed as a definitive debunking of the charge that the North Vietnamese Communists had perpetrated a bloodbath in their territory after coming to power and that they were planning to repeat this bloodbath in South Vietnam.

No one took the trouble to check Porter’s charges or to research his quotations, or his sources. And, despite the palpable weaknesses and outright falsehoods in Porter’s paper, to date little opportunity has been given to those of us who seek to refute his charges and its personal slanders.

Let me give you four examples of some of the many blatant misrepresentations and falsifications which characterize his study.

Porter claims that Hoang Van Chi foisted counterfeit documents on his reader. For example, a major document supporting Hoang’s contentions was a speech made by a famous professor of law, Nguyen Mau, Tuong, of Hanoi University. About this document Porter said—I quote—“The authenticity of this document is doubtful,” for the evidence indicates that it was fabricated by the Saigon regime for psychological warfare purposes.

This charge, of course, was directed not only against Hoang Van Chi but against the subcommittee’s compendium on “The Human Cost of Communism in Vietnam,” which reproduced extensive excerpts from the Tuong speech.

Let me examine the evidence on the Tuong speech.

His speech, delivered at a special congress of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, convened in October 1956 to “study the errors of the land reform and to conceive corrective measures,” Tuong charged that the radical land reform, was marked by lawlessness and murder as characterized by its motto: “It is better to kill ten innocent people than to let one enemy escape.” Porter discards this document on grounds that Tran Van Dinh, a former South Vietnamese consul general in Rangoon, charges that it is a fake fabricated by Saigon’s propaganda agencies. Since the document was alleged to have come into the hands of a South Vietnamese journalist in Rangoon, Porter insists Dinh’s charges is irrefutable.

Several facts must be taken into account before one accepts Dinh’s story. Dinh was not consul general at the time the speech got into South Vietnamese hands. Furthermore, Dinh is probably one of the most unreliable Vietnamese sources possible. He served the Japanese, the French, the Communists and Ngo Dinh Diem. He is notorious for having been on all sides. Since 1964, when he joined the ranks of the so-called “peace movement” in the United States, he has offered himself as an “unimpeachable source,” for its historical revisionists. Other sources completely negate Dinh’s claim. Nguyen Huu Chi, South Vietnamese ambassador to the United Nations, was quite intimate with the story behind the Tuong speech, having known Professor Tuong in Hanoi for quite some time, he claims that the speech is undeniable.

Tuong said that it was obtained as a release from the North Vietnamese information service in Rangoon.

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In fact, this is one time Dinh’s background caught up with him. In early 1958, when he was consul general in Rangoon, Ho Chi Minh was scheduled to pay a state visit to Burma. Dinh wrote to Saigon urgently, requesting 50 copies of Hoang’s compendium of critiques appearing in the North Vietnamese press for distribution to the local press. Professor Tuong’s speech is reprinted in this collection. Dinh had no trouble in getting the Burmese press corps to recognize the authenticity of the Tuong speech. They had all known of it since it was released in 1956. For 3 days straight, the leading paper in Rangoon, The Nation (February 15 to 17), excerpted extensively from Tuong’s speech, reminding its readers that though the Burmese should welcome Ho, they should not forget that he represents a barbarous, totalitarian Communist regime. At his press conference on February 17, Ho was confronted with the quotes from Tuong’s speech. He was furious and cut his visit short, leaving the next day. Dinh boasted to everyone that he was responsible for the whole affair. Actually, he could not have succeeded if the Burmese did not know the Tuong speech to be authentic. Nevertheless, because it now suits his purposes to play the role of an “unimpeachable source” for all of the “peace movement’s” nonsense, Dinh pretends to know that it is a fake, even though he knows quite well that it is authentic. The “peace movement” repeatedly goes out on a limb by relying totally on this kind of opportunistic “Vietnamese.”

Porter, probably because he wanted to believe that the Tuong speech is a fake, chose to simply accept Dinh’s charge without first checking it out further. Had he done so, he would have found verification even in Nhan Dan [see Hoang Van Chi’s letter]. In coverage of the Vietnam Fatherland Front Congress at which Tuong made his speech, Nhan Dan of November 1, 1956, lists him as the first speaker. In December it printed criticisms of his call for the application of Western judicial standards by party hacks, calling this contradictory to the party’s Marxist character.

In his May 1960 Hoc Tap article, Truong Chinh made reference to that Fatherland Front Congress. Though when he addressed it at its final session, he “warmly hailed the constructive criticism of the participants” (Nhan Dan, Nov. 1, 1956), in his Hoc Tap article he wrote, I quote:

Toward the end of 1956, when our Party uncovered errors in the carrying out of the land reform and rectification of Party organization, diehard landlords, reactionaries, bourgeois elements, together with religious counter-revolutionaries [i.e., Catholics], raised their heads and opposed the Party and the regime. Within the Vietnam Fatherland Front, some people, with rightist tendencies, availed themselves of the situation to attack the Party. The Party Central Committee and President Ho held that distinction should be made between friends and foes, that enemies should be repressed, whereas opportunist elements within the Front should be criticized and opposed.

Professor Tuong was lucky. Being considered only an “opportunist”—he was sentenced to 10 years in prison!

The Tuong speech was extensively quoted by another Communist source—Le Chau, in his book “Le Vietnam Socialiste,” published by François Maspero, publisher of exclusively Communist books.

Wanting to show the people of South Vietnam that all the terrible things they were hearing from the 1 million North Vietnamese refugees fleeing South were being corrected by the “Rectification of
Errors Campaign,” Hanoi openly distributed the texts of all these “critiques” and “auto-critiques” through its foreign missions and information services throughout the world in the hope that they would reach South Vietnam. Hanoi’s aim was to get people to think exactly as Porter argues; that the terrible things that happened were only the result of disobedience of party directives and that the party was quickly moving to make up for these “errors.”

For its part, Saigon regarded these confessions as proof positive of its claims about Communist totalitarianism and so it obliged Hanoi by printing the materials it dissemi nated in a special journal called Tim-Hieu Su That (Seek to Know the Truth).

Porter’s use of innuendo in the manner of a medieval inquisitor to discredit the assertions of Hoang Van Chi is blatantly evident in the way he dismisses Hoang’s assertion that Chinese advisors directed the land reform. Porter never comes out and denies it. Instead, he tries to link it to what he calls Saigon’s “wholly fabricated story” about Chinese advisors. In this way Porter hopes to stigmatize Hoang’s whole account of the Radical Land Reform as based on Saigon’s propaganda and not on reliable evidence. Porter cannot flatly deny the presence of Chinese advisors because there is too much evidence for this. Ho Chi Minh, for example, at the National Congress of Combatants of the Agricultural Emulation Movement, in March 1, 1966, praised the Chinese advisors in North Vietnam and urged the delegates, “to follow the good example of this friendly country [that is, China].” Again, lacking evidence for his case, Porter resorts to slander.

Porter deprecates those advocates of the bloodbath hypothesis who write prior to the appearance of Hoang Van Chi’s study by calling them dupes of falsified U.S. Government translations. One such case is that of J. Price Gittinger, an agricultural specialist who wrote a study of the radical land reform based almost exclusively on North Vietnamese documents. In his study, Gittinger asserted that “The [Hanoi] regime admitted that 30 percent of the persons convicted as landlords were erroneously condemned.” To document this claim he cited the August 13, 1957, issue of Nhan Dan. Porter charged that Gittinger was fooled by a mistranslation, claiming that the article actually said “I quote:

The reclassification of those wrongly classified as landlords is being carried out rather fundamentally. Every village has corrected some mistakes. Some have corrected their mistakes relatively less, about 80%, while others have corrected over 60% of them.

In other words, according to Porter, the 30- to 50-percent figure applies to the percentage of errors corrected out of the total number of errors committed and not to the percentage of errors committed out of the total number of people classified as landlords. Checking the original Nhan Dan, however, [see Hoang Van Chi’s letter] it appears that Porter is wrong. The article literally reads as follows:

After the classification was completed, people who had been wrongly classified as landlords have been re-classified [i.e., into a non-landlord class] and rectification of classification has been quite systematic. Rectification has been started in every village. There are villages where the rectification was relatively small [unimportant], approximately 20 percent, and there were village where the rectification was great [important], exceeding 50 percent.
Further on, the article goes on to say:

There are areas where correction is only about 30% and yet a correct classification has been corrected into an incorrect one (i.e., true landlords were erroneously reclassified as non-landlords in the correction period) and there are also areas where the correction was much higher, although deep investigation proved that they [were] correct.

In other words, the writer reports that though in some areas the percentage of those misclassified as landlords out of the total of those classified as landlords was low, only 30 percent, some out of that 30 percent were really landlords. However, in other areas where the percentage of those erroneously classified as landlords was “much higher” careful investigation proved that all the classifications were correct. Anyone reading the full text, therefore, could not avoid concluding that the party admitted to unjust classification for 30 percent and higher out of the total number of people classified as landlords during the radical land reform—exactly what Gittinger said.

What is most revealing is that Porter’s mistranslated sentence is identical to an erroneous translation of that same sentence which appeared in one particular official U.S. translation put out by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service. One cannot help but wonder if instead of going to the original Nhan Dan, Porter in this case at least, was quoting from a mistaken FBIS translation—exactly what he accused Gittinger of doing.

Porter challenged the statement made by several authors that the rectification of errors campaign resulted in the release of some 12,000 prisoners who, the Communists frankly conceded, had been wrongfully incarcerated. This figure, he asserted, was without authentication of any kind—it was a fictitious figure put out by the Saigon propaganda machine. In making this *ex cathedra* statement, Porter again committed two cardinal sins. First, he slandered responsible scholars by accusing them of lacking good scholarship. Second, he was himself guilty of the most irresponsible kind of scholarship in failing to consult or adequately research the very official Communist documents which he holds to be the repository of all truth.

According to Tho Moi (Hanoi) for December 4, 1956, Truong Chinh (who had just been deposed as party Secretary) made the following statement in the course of a talk with some hundreds of artists and writers:

> During the fifth phase of the Land Reform [the fifth phase of the Land Reform was the last one, and it lasted only 3 months], in a large area inhabited by 8,000-10,000 people, many unjust arrests were made. According to reports so far, more than 12,000 persons have been released.

On this point, Porter owes still another apology to his readers and to those he slandered.

Before analyzing Porter’s perversion of history, let us look at the hows and whys of the radical land reform. As Porter says, the men who conceived it are not bloodthirsty madmen. They are dedicated revolutionaries deeply preoccupied with ideology and with consolidation of power.

As a background to my discussion of the land reform program, there is a vital quotation which should be kept in mind. The statement in question was made by Truong Chinh, Secretary General of
the Vietnamese Communist Party, speaking at Founding Congress of Vietnam Fatherland Front, September 1955. This is what he said:

Opposing communism is tantamount to opposing the nation. Those who oppose communism reveal themselves to be the enemies of the nation.

This statement is vitally important for it betrays the underlying purpose of the radical land reform.

In August 1945, the Vietnamese Communists found themselves, more by fortune of circumstance than by their own doing, entering Hanoi and proclaiming themselves leaders of Vietnam without firing a shot. Realizing their war was doomed, the Japanese occupation forces in Vietnam imprisoned all Frenchmen and did not interfere with the Communists.

At that time the Communist Party was only one minor Vietnamese faction. But, it outmaneuvered all other factions in three ways—(a) assassinating as many nationalist leaders as possible; (b) creating, on the Stalin blueprint, a coalition for "all patriotic tendencies"—they even pretended to dissolve the Communist Party as a sign of nationalist solidarity; (c) after secretly informing the French that they favored a return of French rule, the Communists led them to the stronghold of the deposed nationalist forces and French armored cars did the rest.

"Of the above three techniques, creation of a United National Front and expansion of party membership was the most important. The Communists bent over backward to win over intellectuals, the middle class, merchants, professionals, and so forth, at the expense of the lower classes. Thus, promises of land to the peasants were broken for the sake of winning over the landlords and merchants, who held them in servitude. Demands for workers' benefits were low-keyed in order to win over the "national bourgeoisie." As the "Resistance War" against the French developed, the peasants and workers continued to be the cannon fodder, but the nuts and bolts of the Communist Party and the National United Front continued to be the upper classes.

As the ranks of the Party and the United Front swelled with the upper classes, Truong Chinh, the party's secretary general, increasingly opposed the party's conciliatory attitude toward "proletarian classes." On the first anniversary of the coming to power of the Communist-led coalition -- the so-called "August revolution" -- he wrote in Sit That, the party journal (I quote)

We admit that, because of the extremely intricate situation of our country and the relatively limited strength of the Vietnamese Revolution, it was not possible to carry out a systematic elimination of the counter-revolutionary elements on Jacobin or Bolshevik lines. However, it is to be regretted that energetic and necessary measures to counteract all possible dangers in the future were not taken immediately upon the seizure of power.]

I ask permission that, when I correct the transcript of my testimony, I may underline certain specially important segments of this and other quoted excerpts and that material so underlined may be printed in italics. I also ask permission to insert occasional footnotes.

The CHAIRMAN. The permission will be granted.
admitting that, "our mistake in this period [August revolution] was to admit to the party a number of landlords who were exploiting the peasants and in some localities inadvertently to let the landlords and rich peasants dominate the front's organizations."

The extent to which the party had been infiltrated by people of the wrong classes was made blatantly clear by the Cominform [Communist International] Journal in August 1953—the year the radical land reform began. It noted that of the top 1,855 posts in the party, only one-sixth were occupied by members from the peasant class and only one-twelfth by members from the working class. So not only had the "class enemies" escaped eradication, they were deeply imbedded in the party's inner works. For Truong Chinh, cleaning them out was an urgent matter.

In the same Su That article of 1946, cited above, Truong Chinh pointed out the importance of land reform to the development of socialism in Vietnam. I quote:

So far, the Vietnamese revolution has only restricted that feudal and semi-feudal exploitation. It must progress further to realize land reform and wipe out all vestiges of feudalism. In brief, the Vietnamese Revolution must fulfill both the anti-Imperialist [i.e., anti-French], and anti-feudal [i.e., anti-landlords] tasks to realize independence, freedom, and happiness for the people. In other words, it must complete the task of democratization to pave the way to the socialist revolution in the future; to socialize all means of production, abolish from Vietnam the regime of exploitation of man by man.

Despite this view, during the Resistance the communists never paid proper attention to land reform. As Truong Chinh wrote in the 1960 Hoc Tap article I have just cited:

'In the first years of the people's power we underestimated the peasant’s role and forces, overestimated the role and position of the patriotic landlords, members of the Resistance, and as a result paid too much attention to persuading the landlords and too little attention to leading the peasant struggle.

As a result of this shortcoming, levers of power remained in the hands of the very class that, Truong Chinh wanted liquidated. In 1953, Truong Chinh admitted that:

After the August Revolution, in numerous regions, the landlords seized control of the various [revolutionary] rural organizations. The political power of the landlords was not weakened to an adequate degree, the political supremacy in the countryside of the peasants was not actually established.

Summing up his view in Marxist terms, Truong Chinh wrote in 1959:

In the application of the agrarian policy, our principal error until then [1953] was in not understanding that realization of the party's and government's agrarian policy calls for a fierce and decisive class struggle."

Truong Chinh concluded that it is imperative to eliminate the landlords as a class, insisting that, "as far as class was concerned, the landlord class was the enemy of the people's national democratic revolution and had to be overthrown." [Speech made to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the party, February 1960.] This would prove quite difficult since, as he admitted in the same speech:

Our Party was born and has grown up in an agricultural country with a small working class. The overwhelming majority of our cadres and Party members come from the petty bourgeoisie. This was something difficult to avoid.

4 Read the phrase "petty bourgeoisie" to say "landlord" and other property-owning classes. The word "petty bourgeoisie" was first used in this sense by Trotsky to avoid admitting that the class nature of the working class—communist leadership is the same as that which the party seeks to overthrow.
Truong Chinh also faced a third problem. It will be recalled that as early as 1946 he emphasized that the role of land reform was “to pave the way to the socialist revolution in the future; to socialize all means of production.” That position was reemphasized in 1951—2 years before the radical land reform began—when, according to Truong Chinh, the Party at its second congress adopted a resolution stating that: “The popular national democratic revolution progresses without fail to the socialist revolution.” His problem, therefore, was to convince the very peasants who fought for the promise of “land to the tillers” to accept the taking away of their newly-gotten land during collectivization.

To sum up, before the radical land reform went into effect, Truong Chinh’s three main problems as secretary general of the party were:

1. The party suffers from massive class impurity.
2. The landlords are still powerful and the peasants passive.
3. The contradiction between the slogan “land to the tillers” and “collectivize the national agriculture” must be resolved in favor of collectivization, that is, socialism.

THE RADICAL LAND REFORM

The Truong Chinh plan for solving the above three problems was rather simple and proven, having been tested by Mao Tse-tung in China. His basic working rule was to depend totally on the poor peasants and the salaried peasants. These were the most wretched of the lot for they either owned too little land from which to make a living, falling perpetually into debt to the landlords and usurers, or else they owned no land and just moved about as migrant farmhands. These people constituted about 60 percent of the rural population of North Vietnam, according to Tran Phuong, an official historian. They represented the downtrodden masses, the lumpen proletariat that had nothing to lose if the old system were overthrown and everything to gain from the promises of the new. Despite all they suffered at the hands of the old order, the peasants remained passive. According to Truong Chinh, I quote:

*,*, *, In the beginning, lacking the party’s propaganda and penetrating education and having not participated in many class struggles as yet, they were usually more nation conscious than class conscious. Their class-consciousness and the standard of their organization were then still weak. A fairly large number of them still bore the influence of the landlord’s thumb, especially through family or racial relationships (in national minority areas). Many of them still stood in awe of the landlords who held positions in the (revolutionary) administration or in the [Communist led] Front. Therefore, in the course of each step of agitation, it was necessary gradually to strengthen the peasants’ class consciousness through their personal experiences. Only by so doing did they consciously and voluntarily rise up to struggle and overthrow the landlord class.

Another official writer, Nguyen Nghe, put the problem in more succinct terms: “Having their confidence is not enough to emancipate the peasants, they need a ‘collective emotional shock!’ That shock was to come in the To-Kho sessions where the peasants were forced to watch the humiliation of their landlords and then be implicated into the revolution by taking part in condemnation of the landlords. The To-Kho session was the basic means by which Truong Chinh solved his three problems.
As a first step, in March 1958, the Ho Chi Minh regime promulgated Decree No. 239/B/TLP on the classification of the population. According to this decree, the rural population was to be divided into five classes:

1. Landlord—One who lives off land rents without tilling his land.
2. Rich farmer—Tills some of his land and exploits the rest with hired labor.
3. Middle farmer—Has just enough land to survive.
4. Poor farmer—Owns too little land for subsistence.
5. Farm labor—Owns nothing, just wanders about hiring himself out to farmers.

The classification decree allowed local authorities to decide what quantitative characteristics distinguish a landlord—the enemy—from a rich peasant—theoretically a tolerated class. The distinction between rich and middle farmers—the junior partners in the revolution—on the one hand, and poor and laborer peasants—those on whose behalf the radical land reform was being conducted—on the other, was just as vague.

In December 1953, the radical land reform law calling for confiscation of lands and belongings from the landlords and redistribution to the peasants was promulgated. To enforce this law, Truong Chinh selected thousands of youths from among the children of the poor and landless peasants. Half literate but fully propagandized, these new cadres were sent out to mobilize the masses and run the land reforms.

When a landlord was chosen to face the people, a To-Kho session would be arranged (usually in the middle of the night) where all the people of the village would be gathered. Brought before them and made to kneel, head bowed, was this wicked landlord. Selected victims of his wickedness would step before the crowd to denounce him for rape, murder, theft, oppression, treason, etc. The crowd would then be whipped into a furor calling for proper punishment. Some time later (several hours or sometimes several days), the convicted landlord would be called forward again to confess to his crimes and to self-criticize, asking for the mercy of the people’s court. The land reform cadres would act as judges, passing sentence based on the verdict called for so vigorously by the crowd.

Having seen his master humbled and accused, the theory goes, the peasant would lose his enslaving respect for the landlord, and by having condemned the landlord, the peasant would feel implicated in the party’s acts, thus assuring his commitment. To accentuate the peasant’s complicity, the party’s journals were full of stories emphasizing the role of the peasant in condemning the landlords. The following from Cuu-Quoc is an example:

In the past the judiciary committee of the town of Phuc Xuan worked in the autocratic manner of bureaucrats. Now the methods of working have completely changed. After having pronounced the verdict, the tribunal solicits the views of the population. One farmer remarked: ‘I can say that since it is democratic, the tribunal seems lenient towards ordinary people and very energetic towards the reactionary landlords.’

As the land reform expanded, the “new” cadres leading the peasants began to “hit” recklessly everywhere. Since the classification decree made “landlordism” hereditary and was very vague on how one over-
comes his socioeconomic lineage, class "impurities" imbedded in the
party's inner works eventually fell victim to the energetic campaign
of the class-pure land reform cadres.

With the landlord class thus undergoing "liquidation" and the
party's internal "class impurities" being "rooted out" and "hit," two
of Truong Chinh's problems were well on their way to solution. In
the words of an "official" historian, Ho Viet Thang, in Hoc Tap,
December 1955:

In the regions where the agrarian reform has actually been achieved and
where power has returned to the laboring peasantry, the administrative com-
mittee, the security organs, the popular militia were effectively reinforced. Our
[Party's] popular power has begun to consolidate itself. There lies a very im-
portant political factor.

All that remained for Truong Chinh to do was to resolve the con-
tradiction between "small scale capitalism" through the ownership of
land and "large scale socialism" through the consolidation of the peas-
ants into cooperatives and collectives. This was a particularly ticklish
problem, for as Lenin wrote in "The Proletarian Revolution and the
Renegade Kautsky," I quote:

The peasantry which has overthrown Tsarism and the landlords dreams of
equal land tenure, and no power on earth could have hindered the peasantry,
only they had been freed both from the landlords and from the bourgeois par-
liamentary republican state. The proletarians say to the peasants: We will help
you to reach "ideal" capitalism, for equal land tenure is the idealization of capi-
talism from the point of view of the smaller producer. At the same time we will
prove to you its inadequacy and the necessity of passing to the social collectiviza-
tion of the land.

Taking his cue from Lenin, Truong Chinh did exactly that. By dis-
tributing the land evenly among the poor and landless peasants, he
made them each the owner of a plot too small to permit economic sur-
vival. Facing renewed starvation and poverty, the poor peasants never
failed to see the "necessity" for cooperatives.

THE PORTER THESIS

With this background in mind, it may prove useful to now turn to
Porter's study. Given the atmosphere during the radical Land Reform,
one can easily become sympathetic to the view that life for at least 40
percent of the rural population was very unpleasant. An "earth shak-
ing and sky splitting" campaign run by illiterate adolescents and
other rootless elements, guided by a law deliberately made vague to
permit maximum "local discretion" in imposing sentences: from a
minimum of 1 year in prison to execution, after the defendants suffered
insult and abuse at the hands of the "mobilized peasant masses"—psy-
chologically shocked to "become fully conscious of their hatred for the
landlord class"—such a campaign can be expected to be full of abuses
and excesses.

How does Porter see all this? From his study of the "official record,"
he has concluded that, again I quote:

"These defendants, even though the land reform teams sent to the villages did not rely
on the local authorities who had been trained during the resistance—even those
were the poor peasant class—but turned instead to poor peasants elements who
had previously been active in the revolution. These peasants, given a
significant political role in their villages for the first time, apparently abused..."
it in a variety of ways: Guidelines put out by the Central Committee for dealing with landowners, rich peasants and middle peasants were systematically violated; proper distinctions were not made among landowners on the basis of their political attitudes; rich peasants were treated as landlords; and middle peasants were discriminated against; crop areas and land yields were overestimated and peasants often classified in a higher social stratum than was justified. Poor peasants not only denounced landlords who had committed crimes against them, but also unjustly classified landowners as "dishonest and wicked notables" in order to make more land available for distribution.

Similar political tendencies created serious problems for a parallel effort to reorganize local party branches by taking in large numbers of poor peasants. Many of the older, better trained, party cadres were attacked by newcomers as reactionaries, forced out of the party and even jailed, with the result that some of the oldest party cells were left in disarray and some even dissolved completely.

As if the combination of land reform and party reorganization were not enough, beginning in late 1955, the land reform cadres were also given the task of uncovering "counter-revolutionaries" in the villages... protests against abuses, by land reform cadres too often resulted in the protesters' being jailed merely on suspicion of being "counter-revolutionaries" or "saboteurs."

If this lengthy quotation seems somewhat redundant, I apologize.

Senator EASTLAND. That's all right.

Mr. TEODORU. I had to offer it so that a common baseline between Porter's account of what happened and mine can be made evident. From the above common ground, several issues come up for debate:

(a) Did the party expect or want all those "excesses" to happen?

(b) Was the purpose of the radical land reform the fair distribution of land or the creation of economically untenable land ownership which would result in collectivization?

(c) Did the party publicly admit to all these "excesses" or were such citations by scholars only pure fraud?

(d) Is Hoang Van Chi a CIA-backed liar who was a nobody in North Vietnam?

These are questions which every American should answer for himself after carefully evaluating all the material presented here. There remain several issues still to discuss, juxtaposing Porter's arguments to the available historical records.

Porter's thesis is that all these excesses occurred contrary to the party's desires. But, contrary to Porter's view, it is evident from (a) the willful vagueness of the classification decree and the radical land reform law; (b) the choice of very poor quality cadres to lead the poor and uneducated peasants; and (c) the totally arbitrary nature of the grounds on which people brought before the land reform "tribunals" were convicted, that the party set the scene for exactly what the To-Kho sessions produced. Even during the so-called first phase, party organs were vividly recounting To-Kho sessions all across the land. On the night of September 15, 1953, for example, poor and landless peasants could sit in front of the village radio, listening in vicarious delight to the official "Voice of Vietnam" account of the To-Kho "session at which "villainous landlord" Phu Thanh Y underwent denunciation:

"The comrades cadres gathered and decided to judge the cruelest of the landlords. Knowing the procedure, the arguments to present, and the witnesses that had to be called on, the comrades went forward with great enthusiasm in preparing the trial which would take place the next day. The peasants had learned their lesson well at previous trials. There was nothing but a human wall eddying to this enemy [the landlord]... The trial began in excitement. More than thirty people rose to denounce the crimes of this landlord, the cruel and re-
actionary Phu Thanh Y: dishonest tricks ** cheating, maltreatment ** murders ** The comrades and peasants accused Y of, other than his crimes, proving to be hostile towards the Government and of having slandered the Party and Government ** Y's face was pale, his body trembled, he sat on bare ground, terrorized, remaining silent for several minutes ** One could see that he was completely beaten.

The role of violence was paramount in the radical land reform. Proof of this comes from Porter's own study. Porter argues that the real purpose of the radical land reform was to give the poor and landless peasants land in order to "mobilize them for a final push to victory over the French, which determined the precise timing of the beginning of the land reform." This was necessary, according to Porter, since the previous land reform efforts, "did not fundamentally alter the land tenure system of North Vietnam", because: "With the emphasis during the resistance on the need to maintain tight unity of all social strata to oppose the French, peasants frequently were not informed by local cadres of their new rights or of the necessity to struggle for them." Citing Tran PhuQng, the "official" historian, Porter writes that prior to the radical Land Reform:

"** the official Lao Dong Party [Vietnamese Communist Party] organ made it clear that, although peasants should demand their rights, the method to be used was negotiation with the landlord, not coercion.

What Porter fails to mention is that precisely for that reason—because, in Tran PhuQng's words, "so far they (landlords) were only subjected to persuasion and explanation"—it was decided to try the opposite approach—the use of force—during the rent reduction campaign. In the words of the same Tran Phuong:

A radical reform has no other aim than the total overthrow of the oldest ruling class in Vietnam, the feudal class. It was not surprising that this class did its best to oppose the reform. In face of the feudallists' reaction, the revolutionary forces had no other way to break it than the use of violence. This revolutionary violence was effected on the one hand through the administrative measures (i.e., Government decrees) decreed by the revolutionary power, on the other hand—and this is the essential—through the force of the revolutionary masses [i.e., To-Kho sessions].

The carrying out of partial reforms in earlier years had taught us that administrative measures alone were not enough to force the landowners to give up, or even to limit, their ways of exploiting the peasants. Persuasion especially had not given the expected results. Only a mobilization of the masses for carrying out land reform would force the feudallists to strictly implement the measures set forth.

Indicative of how little land reform cadres were restrained and guided by the numerous decrees, laws and guidance pamphlets, Porter cites, is the fact revealed by the Hanoi journal "Le Vietnam en Marche" in November 1959, that some 8,500 cadres of district level and below were illiterate and at the same time undergoing "basic education"—that is, reading, writing, basic mathematics. They were so ignorant of the radical land reform law that they came to be known as the "Can Bo Rang-Den Ma Tau," which roughly translates to "the ignorant killer cadres with the laquered teeth" (a practice amongst backward rural folk).

Again, to reiterate, sending out illiterate youths, fired up in propaganda sessions lasting several weeks, to "mobilize the masses" is not something one would do if one wanted a very discriminating and orderly alteration in land tenure. It would be more precise to say that
these Can Bo Rang-Den Ma Tau served as a hammer used to "hit" the landlords so that, in the words of Tran Phuong: "The feudalists, hit on their heads, reconciled themselves to the implementation of the agrarian measures of the Government."

There is no doubt, Porter's objections notwithstanding, that the radical land reform was a classical "class struggle" whose purpose it was to solve Truong Chinh's three problems, over the course of the years it was in effect.

Now let me deal with the main phases of the Land Reform.

First there was the mobilization of the poor and landless peasants under the leadership of the Land Reform cadres to overthrow the landlord class.

This phase, begun in late 1953, was described as follows by "official historian" Tran Phuong: "It was a hard blow at the feudal class, awakening the class consciousness of the masses, drawing them into the antifeudal struggle, and, in this way, preparing for the general offensive to overthrow the feudal class as a whole." More specifically, "the target for the Land Reform to combat was the class of feudalists [Tran Phuong's emphasis]. This class had to be entirely abolished and its economic base destroyed."

The experience of North Vietnam would have to be outstanding indeed, in contrast to that of all its "socialist brother countries," if it did not involve the liquidation of members of the so-called "feudal class" as the principal means for the "definite and thorough liquidation of the feudal landlord class—as a class."

The second phase was marked by the eradication and apprehension of "traitorous," "counter revolutionary," and "reactionary" elements. This campaign overlapped with the "destruction of the feudal class" and the "mobilization of the peasant masses." The official campaign for this elimination of subversive elements did not get underway until 1955, 1 year after the war ended, 2 years after the radical land reform began, and just when the period allowing people to travel freely from one zone to the other (from North to South) according to the Geneva Accords ended. Though "bad elements" were apprehended and "punished" throughout the resistance, this phase could not officially commence until the party was safely in control of the entire North, all foreign sources of support—that is, French—were gone, and a large part of the opposition had gone South. This phase constituted the acid test of the land reform cadres' ability to lead the mobilized masses.

The "new" cadres were assigned the task of breaking the hold at local level which the "old" cadres had developed over the population in the course of the long years of the resistance. Recalling Truong Chinh's unhappiness with the class nature of the party's "old" local cadres—judging them "ideologically unreliable"—one can understand why the party could not permit them to maintain their hold over the "ideologically naive" masses. Since they drew their power from the population rather than from the party, these "old" cadres could be expected to turn against the party leadership. It would be far better to replace them with the "new" cadres, whose whole political, social, and economic ties are exclusively to the party (for they were nothing before the party recruited them). Being newcomers on the scene, they

1 Quote from Tran Phuong.
were totally dependent on party leadership for power. This process by which the old cadres of the “struggle” period are replaced by the new cadres of the “consolidation of power” period is called “centralization of democracy.” Every Communist regime went through this phase once the party took power.

The impact of this “democratization” of the party can be seen from some “official” statistics on the class composition of the party before and after the radical land reform started. A shift was evident even in the early phases of the campaign. According to Prof. Jean Chesneaux, a faithful friend of the Hanoi regime, in 22 villages surveyed after the rent reduction phase took place, the proportion of “poor peasants” in the party increased from 37 percent prior to the campaign to 53 percent soon after it got started.

The extent to which the young “new” cadres replaced the older “old” cadres is vividly demonstrated in a breakdown of party membership by age for the year 1963, almost a decade after the radical land reform, which appeared in Tu Do, Hanoi, on February 9, 1963:

- Of 500,000 members of the party and its youth organs, 9 percent were under 11 years old; 50 percent were 11 to 15 years old; 37 percent were 16 to 30 years old; only 4 percent were 30 years old and over.

After August 1965, when the party decided to broaden the land reform to include a full-blown campaign to “repress enemies of the people’s power,” emphasis suddenly broadened to include the punishing of “enemies” who fit in the following categories:

1. Traitors—people who collaborated with the imperialists. [Note: To avoid violating the Geneva Accords which forbade reprisal against former collaborators, with the French, “traitors” were officially tried on trumped-up criminal charges of rape, murder, etcetera. The trials, however, took the form of To-Kho sessions.]

2. Counterrevolutionaries—people who oppose the party, its policies and the measures taken by the cadres to implement party policy.

3. Reactionaries—representatives of nonrevolutionary vested interests and advocates of the old order, culturally, ideologically, and religiously.

In Hoc Tap, May 1960, Truong Chinh restated the rule which guided the transition from the resistance to the radical land reform. Whatever coalition is developed at upper levels, he insists, control at the local level should be restricted to the proper class. Here I quote:

The worker-peasant alliance is the basis not only of the National United Front but also of the people’s democratic power. Nevertheless, other stratum of the population, (petty bourgeois) recall that earlier he called this class the basis of the party-DFT and national bourgeoisie) must also be represented in the organs of power. Besides, there should be a number of democratic and patriotic personalities. But the organs of power at village level must belong solely to the (poor and landless) peasants.

For the sake of class purity, Truong Chinh was willing to risk the replacement of proven and experienced cadres suffering from class impurity with young, inexperienced and uneducated cadres who were, however, “new.” In the old controversy plaguing Communist regimes all over the world—red or expert?—Truong Chinh chose to sacrifice the expertise of the “old” cadres for the “new” redness of the “new.”

These number three involved the redistribution of land in order to prepare for socialism.
The most fundamental point in Porter's thesis is the following. I quote:

A careful examination of the available data concerning the land tenure system in North Vietnam before the land reform as well as the actual economic benefits derived from the reform by the peasants indicates that there were sound social and economic reasons for a radical redistribution of land by the DRV. The land reform cannot be accurately portrayed, therefore, as merely a product of abstract ideology or as an "excuse" for the liquidation of social and political opponents.

Porter does not challenge Hoang Van Chi's claim that 91 percent of the landlords owned less than 10 acres each, or Bernard Fall's claim that 61 percent of those who owned land owned less than 1 acre, or the U.S. Department of Agriculture's claim that 98.7 percent of the landlords worked part of the land they owned. What he objects to is that: "In dismissing the land reform program as 'economically absurd,' Fall [and others] simply ignore the evidence of a fundamental improvement in the nutrition of the average poor peasant family [as a result of it]." To prove this point, Porter juggled some of Fall's figures and came up with an average daily bowl of 460 grams of rice per person as a result of the radical land reform. While this does not seem like much to live on, it comes to almost twice the 264 grams which he cites as the daily consumption prior to the land reform, according to one of his "French sources," Yves Henry. But, if we look at other "official" figures given by two "official" historians, Doan Trong Truyen and Pham Thanh Vinh, whom Porter cites in his study, we get a different picture.

According to these official historians, 810,000 hectares were confiscated and distributed to 9.5 million people, which averages to 0.2 acres per person. According to Porter, the rice yield for 1957, the year after the radical land reform ended, was 729 kilograms of paddy per acre. Thus, the average peasant got 146 kilograms of paddy rice in 1957. According to the progressive tax law in effect then, 8 percent of that would go to the state, leaving the average peasant with about 134 kilograms of paddy. Using Porter's extremely low figure for weight loss after threshing, milling, and so forth—20 percent—we find the peasant left with 107 kilograms of rice per year which comes to 293 grams per day.

Using official figures and the same kind of arithmetic Porter used, we find that all this earth shaking and sky splitting land reform was designed to bring the average peasant a nutritional improvement of 29 grams or about 1 ounce of rice per day.

Porter failed to understand that what critics of the radical Land Reform consider absurd is the pretension by the party that it would solve the problem of rice production in the overpopulated Tonkin Delta by breaking down the already small land holdings into even smaller and totally inadequate morsels. After such a solution, the problem continues to be the same as before. There are too many mouths to feed with what the Tonkin Delta can produce. Redistribution of land is, therefore, meaningless. In fact, according to Tran Phuong, the official historian Porter likes so much, our estimate of what each peasant got as a result of the radical land reform is confirmed by the demographic picture—again I quote:

It must be noted that the area of cultivated land in the Bac Bo [Tonkin] Delta is very limited: an average of 1/10 hectare (about ¼ acre) per head of population, one of the lowest figures in the world.
We can now understand what Tran Phuong meant when he wrote:

> "... the peasants, liberated from feudal exploitation, will of their own accord, cooperate to turn private ownership of land and other means of production, which in the last analysis engenders exploitation of man by man and differentiation of social classes, into socialist collective ownership.

Thus, the completion of land reform is of strategic importance, not only because it marks the completion of the national democratic revolution in North Vietnam, creating the initial basis for the building of an independent national economy, but also—if one looks at it from the viewpoint of the Marxist-Leninist theory of uninterrupted revolution—because it paves the way to the transition to socialism in the countryside.

The fourth phase in the radical Land Reform involved the "rectification of errors."

In August 1956, the party began to criticize the performance of its Land Reform cadres. By October, the criticism of grave errors committed and the rectification of those errors was well underway. On October 29, 1956, Vo Nguyen Giap, reputed to be greatly at odds with Truong Chinh and opposed to his land reform policies, went on the offensive, strongly criticizing the errors made. Giap's attack was quite sharp, noting that: "In a mechanical manner, all the landlords were considered as enemies, even those who participated in the resistance."

He went on to say that in the course of the "repression"—a term used when someone or the members of a group, class, etc., cetera are to be liquidated—"excess of rigor led to the casting aside of prudence; we resorted to illegal means of pressure." Many innocent people were classified as reactionaries.

Like a swinging pendulum, the Land Reform cadres made a "leftist error," swinging too far to the extreme opposite of the tolerance of landlords practiced during the resistance. This swing, according to Giap, struck right at the party. This is what he said:

We mobilized the masses and abolished the landlord class, but since we overestimated the power of the enemy, we strayed from the political line, in our methods and principles of execution; in certain places the attack against the enemy lost its orientation; we hit even at our own ranks.

Hitting directly at Truong Chinh, Giap criticized the fact that: "Instead of attacking the enemy outside [the party], we called for 'hitting' the enemy on the inside [of the party], battering the enemy organizations inside the party." He went on to conclude that:

These errors... caused damage to the foundation of the Party, the power [i.e., government], the organizations of the masses, influenced in a harmful way the politics of the National Front conceived by the Party, in the cities as well as in the countryside, affected dangerously the moral and material lives of our people, rendered the situation in the countryside extremely tense, thus being harmful to the spirit of unity and morale in the Party and among the people, [harmful] to the consolidation of the northern zone, [harmful] to the struggle for the reunification of our nation.

The question is whether in all these admissions, one can find evidence of the execution of enough people to justify the claim of a bloodbath. Porter rejects the 50,000 figure put forward by Bernard Fall because he said, "It was strongly influenced by his erroneous assumption that the DRV [North Vietnamese] leaders had the objective of liquidating whole economic classes." However, since the very official historian (Tran Phuong) Porter depends on so much, described the objective of the land reform as the definite and thorough
liquidation of the feudal landlord class, Porter would have to use some other arguments to negate the 50,000 figure. He does. Porter cites a Party Politburo survey covering 1,875 villages, showing that an average of only 2.1 landlords per village were brought before “Peoples’ Tribunals” during the period August 1958 to April 1954. But this survey covers the “rent reduction” campaign, in which the landlords were not targeted—not the subsequent Land Reform campaign whose declared purpose was their liquidation. Therefore, in order to properly estimate the total number of victims one must add the figures for the “rent reduction” campaign to the much larger figures for the radical Land Reform proper. Porter should have read the documents he cites more carefully.

Porter himself wrote that: “The DRV’s account of the land reform suggests that the most numerous mistakes of classification and of accusation were committed after June 1955 as the party’s supervision of land reform teams began to lag behind the pace of implementation in newly liberated areas.” One, therefore, cannot help but conclude that even if the official statistics for the period from August 1953 to April 1954 are taken at face value, they would have greatly increased later on when all the agricultural lands were liberated and the party had initiated its campaign to wipe out reactionaries, counter-revolutionaries, and traitors, as well as landlords.

In fact, it is interesting to note how this escalation is revealed unintentionally by Porter himself. In seeking to explain the excesses of the land reform cadres, Porter writes—I quote:

The cause of this development is easily explainable: throughout the resistance war the tendency of Party cadres had been to compromise with the wealthier rural strata, even at the expense of the poor peasants’ interests. When the rent reduction and land reform campaign began, therefore, ‘land reform’ cadres were urged by the Party to avoid this “rightist deviation.”

This is indeed correct. But, in documenting his argument, Porter quotes an article in Nhan Dan, calling for correction of such lenient rightist deviation, dated January 13, 1956, 3 years after the campaign had started and only 6 months before it was abandoned. In citing this Nhan Dan article, Porter reveals that repeatedly, up to the end of the radical Land Reform campaign, the party called for more and more trials and condemnations. It would be interesting to compare the official figures for the first nine months of the radical Land Reform with those for any later 9-month period. Unfortunately, Porter informs us that such official figures are not available. Little wonder then, that Porter should conclude that: “Although the DRV government pledged to make full restitution in cases of unjust imprisonment or execution, there is no documentary evidence that there had been the kind of indiscriminate execution of innocent people so often alleged.”

Reading Truong Chinh, Tran Phuoc, and other official versions of the course of the Land Reform, we find that it rose, leveled, or declined in intensity with the demands of the anti-imperialist struggle. After the French totally abandoned Vietnam in 1955, the radical Land Reform really got rolling. Porter likes to think of that period as a time when the party lost control of its cadres. While it may be true that the party was not totally in control of its land reform cadres at the village level, it is quite obvious, as seen from the January 1956 Nhan Dan article quoted by Porter, that the party was encouraging the land reform
cadres to overcome rightist, that is, lenient tendencies and to root out more and more enemies of the people. To absolve the party of its part in what the land reform cadres did is like trying to absolve one arsonist who throws gasoline on a burning building on grounds that another arsonist has set the fire.

Porter continuously cites party policy statements as proof of its discriminatory approach to the radical land reform. But these policies date back to the last months of the war when the party, according to Porter, feared that excesses would arouse unnecessary opposition among potential allies in the landlord class.

Porter relies heavily on a Communist history of the Land Reform written some 12 years after the campaign ended—"Cach Mang Ruong Dat"—Agrarian Revolution in Vietnam, by Tran Phuong, Hanoi: Khoa Hoc Xa Hoi, 1968. In 1968, Vietcong agents were already seeking contact with South Vietnamese landlords in hopes of drawing them into a post-Tet offensive coalition government. No doubt, the need to make the radical land reform as palatable for them as possible resulted in something of a revision of history; particularly since this book saw its way to many of them through friends and relatives in Paris or directly through their Vietcong contacts. I first saw this book in the home of a big landlord in Can Tho city in early 1969.

The years from 1954 to 1956 appear as a big gaping hole in Porter's study of the radical land reform. Trying to cover up that hole, Porter stretches the official statistics he has available for the early part of the campaign when the war was in its final phase, and the campaign was deemphasized for the sake of national unity.

Short of data to support his claims, Porter resorts to slander. Noted authors whose personal experiences in North Vietnam and intimate relations with DRV officials afforded them the opportunity to know a lot of what lies behind the Nhan Dan newscast are dismissed as totally unreliable. Gérard Tongas, for example, is dismissed as one who gathered his information exclusively from "Francophilic members of the Vietnamese bourgeoisie in Hanoi," which "longed for the overthrow of the DRV so that they could send their children to French schools," and "who still hoped for a return to the status quo of the colonial period." In a footnote Porter accuses Tongas of "undisguised contempt for nonfrancophile Vietnamese," and then fraudulently quotes Tongas out of context—giving us the reference so that we could all see how foolish Porter's whole approach really is. There are more such examples in this scholarly tome—many, many more, unfortunately.

Now to return to the question of a bloodbath. Presumably, Bernard Fall's figure of 50,000 people executed during the radical Land Reform, if convincing, would resolve the bloodbath debate in the affirmative. Since no actual statistical count is available, let us see what we can do with what is available. According to Porter, there were about 4,000 villages in North Vietnam with an average population of 3,000 people per village. Supposing we accept the average figure for the percentage of landlords executed as 10 percent of those brought before To-Kho sessions (Porter's figure). That would mean that to reach Fall's figure of 50,000 people executed between 1955 and 1956, 500,000 people would have to have been put through To-Kho sessions. That would come to
an average of 125 To-Kho sessions per village, at the rate of about 30 per year, with three of the accused being executed as "cruel and wicked landlords," "wicked notables," "counter-revolutionaries," "traitors," or just plain criminals. According to Vo Nguyen Giap's critique:

The cadres...seeing the enemy everywhere and hitting without discrimination, overestimating at times in striking fashion the cultivated areas and the productive capacity of land holdings [i.e., overclassing], came to injure and even hit a number of poor peasants and landless peasants.

According to Porter, rich peasants were treated like landlords. It becomes obvious that when let loose, the radical Land Reform cadres would have no trouble finding enough people to bring to trial and enough to execute in order to meet Fall's estimate. Combining Fall's estimate for the number of people condemned to death and the official confession that innocent people were punished during the radical land reform, one can see why all objective authors have concluded that many innocent people were killed during this campaign.

Nhan Dan and other party journals were calling for the elimination of cruel and wicked landlords throughout the land reform. While it is true, as Porter asserts, that landlords could not be executed simply for being landlords, they were to be executed for their evil deeds against the people and the revolution.

As we have seen, all it took to seal a man's doom was for a peasant to denounce him. No proof was needed. Accounts of such kangaroo courts appeared in Nhan Dan on a daily basis. Daily Nhan Dan classed all landlords as saboteurs, devils, oppressors, and so forth, not as individuals but as a class. How could Porter miss the inevitable conclusion of such incitement by the party? Could it be that he never read Nhan Dan? Whatever may be the truth about Porter, the truth about the party's land reform is, as we have seen, inescapable.

Now I would like to say something about Hoang Van Chi and the tactic of the big lie.

Porter heaps the bulk of his criticism on Hoang Van Chi, the author of the book, "From Colonialism to Communism--A Case History of North Vietnam." Porter accuses Mr. Hoang of:

(I) pretending the authority of having been a member of the Viet Minh when he was really nothing but a school teacher;
(II) flagrant mistranslation of documents;
(III) attributing policies to the radical Land Reform which are contrary to actual policy;
(IV) serving the CIA and USIA propaganda mills to discredit the radical land reform.

Let us deal with each of these points.

1. Who is Hoang Van Chi?
Porter could have avoided slandering Hoang by reading the introduction in his book. Had he done so, he might not have leveled some of the charges he did. Actually Hoang was a member of the Viet Minh Government, serving as Chief of Cabinet to Pham Van Dong, now DRV Premier, when he was Minister of the Economy. He also headed the North Vietnamese Mint. Though a member of the Hanoi Government, it is true, he never belonged to the party. Nevertheless, he did come into contact with valuable material on what actually went on throughout the country.

2. Hoang's alleged mistranslation of documents.
Replying to Porter's attacks of mistranslations, Hoang has said that his translations were not literal, but designed to convey the meaning any North Vietnamese would get from reading the exact same texts in his morning Nhan Dan. Porter does not accept this view and proceeds to attack Hoang's integrity on the basis of his own alleged literal translations. There are several problems with this approach:

(a) Vietnamese is a very complicated language. Much of what one gets from written texts comes by inference. That inference is drawn from the way words are combined to make whole sentences. A literal translation is, therefore, extremely difficult because when word combinations are broken down they are ambiguous and, if improperly recombined, they make no sense or are misleading. Vietnamese literature is replete with all sorts of word games played by authors with the readers.1

(b) For the above reason, Vietnamese Communist theoreticians had to compose an entirely new vocabulary to fit the ideologic concepts on which Communist theory and practice are based. This was done by means of word combinations which to someone not familiar with them might make no sense.

(c) Whether or not the word "to kill" is used should not be the standard by which admission of killings is judged; since in Communist literature it is common practice to use all sorts of euphemisms for killing when done by the Communists—and the verb "to kill" only when referring to killing done by the "enemy"!

(d) Because of the complexity due to imprecision and the demand for familiarity with the "new language" of the party, one finds that few people are capable of properly transmitting what is said in a Nhan Dan article, for example. Least of these is Porter, particularly since his grasp of the language has been described as less than rudimentary by a number of Vietnamese. An attempt on his part to communicate with a high-level Vietcong defector named Bui Cong Tuong caused the latter to complain that Porter's Vietnamese was incomprehensible. The U. S. Mission in Saigon then provided—at Porter's request—one of its "official" interpreters (see Robert Turner's article, p. 33).

(e) A strict literal translation of Giap's critique cannot be considered accurate. Though willing to admit to the errors committed, Giap wanted to avoid going down on record with words that were too harsh or too explicit. The result is a confession replete with vagueness which, though not explicit, conveys the message that a lot of terror did take place. I showed the Giap quote in Vietnamese separately to six Vietnamese along with the two translations (Porter's and Hoang's) without identifying them, and in all six cases Mr. Hoang's was selected as the more accurate in conveying the meaning of Giap's text. Further, supporting Mr. Hoang's version is the fact that the official French translation of Giap's speech released by Hanoi's information

1I do not mean to say that Vietnamese is a language which always leaves subject, action and object unclear. Rather, due to structural ambiguity and ellipsis in sentence formation, an elucidation of the underlying structure (ideas conveyed) is necessary in order to properly map the surface structure of a written text. A literal translation of parts of a text without imposing the deep structure conveyed by the author can be incorrect because the ambiguity inherent in the surface structure of the text. (I am deeply grateful to Dr. Nguyen Dinh Hoi, a foremost authority on Vietnamese linguistics, for assistance in understanding the ambiguities inherent in literal translation. For this reason, he felt that one would better opt for Hoang Van Chi's native feel for deep structure over Porter's superficial approach.)
agencies is closer to Mr. Hoang's interpretive than Porter's literal translation. In fact, parts of Mr. Hoang's translation marked "not in original text" by Porter, appeared in the official French version.

(f) Hoang's book, in which the Giap quote is supposed to have been mistranslated, was originally written in English. It was later translated into Vietnamese. In that version the Giap quote appears exactly as it did in Nhan Dan. Since Hoang used the Nhan Dan version to document for his Vietnamese readers the exact same point he sought to document for his American readers with his interpretive translation, it is safe to assume that his Vietnamese readers were expected to interpret the Giap quote much as he interpreted it in his English translation.

But our point here is not to get tangled in a debate over use and misuse of the Vietnamese language. It would be meaningless since most people would be in no position to pass judgment. That is why in my testimony I have based myself almost exclusively on English and French language texts provided by Hanoi. In other words, I have used Hanoi's translations. Enough materials of this kind are available to convince any objective reader that Porter is barking at the moon in his insistence that all those authors claiming that a "blood-bath" took place don't have a leg to stand on.

Hoang Van Chi came up with a total figure for victims of the radical land reform of 500,000. This figure is based on an estimation not only of those who died by execution but also those who died:

(a) as a result of imprisonment,
(b) as a result of suicide,
(c) as a result of shock and stress,
(d) as a result of hard labor,
(e) as a result of the party's "isolation" policy.

Remembering that most of those "hit" by the radical land reform were older people (village notables, landlords, and so forth), we can expect a low survival rate because of the mental and physical stresses put on them by imprisonment, To-Kho sessions and the hard "honest labor" imposed on those allowed to "reform" themselves. According to the policy Porter himself quotes, those convicted were to be isolated from their families, thus left to bear their burden alone. One can find many published accounts of the ordeals suffered by condemned people, because in 1957, during the "Hundred Flowers" period, criticism of the regime was momentarily permitted [see Hoang Van Chi, The New Class in North Vietnam, for many of these texts].

Another action which resulted in the demise of many people was suicide. It is not hard to accept the proposition that, faced with the horror of To-Kho sessions, people's tribunals, conviction, and so forth, many people simply took their own lives.

Then there is the most serious cause of death—the policy of "isolation." This policy, borrowed directly from Stalin via Mao Tse-tung, simply attributes the stigma of "blood ties" to the family of an "enemy of the people." In Vietnam as in Eastern Europe, where family ties are very strong, such a policy is nothing new. Historically, despots applied this policy on their royal enemies. It proved quite advantageous to the Communists to revive this practice on a broader scale.
The members of an “enemy’s” family were to be turned away, exiled from their villages, and refused any kind of assistance. Since such a policy resulted in more land and goods to be distributed, many people found it profitable to abide by it.

Porter insisted that, I quote, “there was no such policy of isolating families, even those landlords sentenced for serious crimes during the land reform.” To prove his claim, Porter quotes a Nhan Dan article as saying that, “if the family is one of a dishonest and wicked notable, who was sentenced to imprisonment, there should be no contact with the person imprisoned, but there can be visits with the other members of the family.”

Here again, in using this quote, Porter is back to his old trick of using material from one period as evidence for another. The Nhan Dan article he quotes is dated August 6, 1956, just about the time when according to him, “rectification of errors” began. As before, his documentation for the land reform years is a big blank hole!

But in this case anachronism is not his only fault. He in fact misrepresents the very Nhan Dan article he quotes. At the very beginning that article reminded its readers of the party’s call to the population to side with the peasants in struggling against the landlords and to “avoid siding with landowners’ families for personal interest or because of sympathy,” because by so doing they “act against the policy of the party and the Government.”

The article goes on to say that the party never obliged anyone to change his feelings toward landowning relatives. “Naturally,” it continues, “during the period of mobilization it would not be useful to the struggle movement and to one’s own person if one visits relatives who have been classified as family of landlords.”

In the sentence just before the one Porter quoted, the article noted that now—that is August 1956—since the landlords have been defeated, the peasants have been given the land, and land reform is basically completed—and here I quote:

Those whose families are resistance landlords or ordinary landlords are permitted to call on them for a visit. But if the family is cruel and wicked landlord, being sentenced to jail, then it is not advisable to have relations with the one who is in jail, but it is still possible to call on the other members of the family.

The next sentence goes on to say, I quote:

If the family is under house arrest, one should not visit their home in person, but write a letter to ask for news instead.

From what the article said before, and after the sentence Porter quoted, and indeed from the sentence itself, it is quite clear that the “isolation” policy was standard practice and that only when the land reform was completed did the party become more lenient.

That the relatives of condemned landlords suffered from isolation was admitted by General Giap himself in his “critique,” I quote:

The bad fashion in which we behaved toward them or toward their families—and this is equally true for ordinary landlords—rendered life difficult and miserable for a certain number of people living in the countryside.

To correct this situation Giap ordered that, again I quote:

It is imperative that emergency aid be given to those who are very ill and have no means of livelihood because of mistakes committed in the land reform, especially to old people and children, regardless of their class.
Who could ever forget the classical reminder of the party's isolation policy—the poem, “The Enemy's Child,” by the poet Hoang Cam which appeared in the North Vietnamese literary journal Giai Pham Mua Thu of October 1956? Only Porter can! As an advocate of Hanoi he totally disregards the testimony of thousands who experienced Hanoi’s land reform. He even disregards the party’s own admission.

Hoang Van Chi differs from Porter in that he writes as a man who was on the inside looking at the land reform as he lived through it. The magnitude of experience that resulted in his book cannot simply be cast aside by Porter on grounds of insufficiency of “official” evidence.

In linking Hoang Van Chi to the CIA, Porter exhibits the same kind of slander he directed at Tongas. It is true that Hoang received a payment from the Congress for Cultural Freedom, a CIA front. But this payment was only about $1,500, and by the time he received it, Hoang was already well into his book—having started it in India at the urging of the Indian Socialist Party—not the CIA. Hoang had become a refugee for the second time—first from the Communists in the North, then from Diem in the South. He considered both regimes a tragic burden for the people of Vietnam to bear. As he wrote in the conclusion of his book:

Every people gets the regime it merits, said Engels. But in this particular case, the Vietnamese are not alone to blame for the regimes under which they live. The Allies supported the Viet Minh during the Second World War and provided the Communists with their opportunity to emerge as a government. The same powers are still, at present, supporting a highly reactionary government in the South, thus making a propaganda gift to Communist subversion.

Unlike the many so-called “peace movement,” anti-Vietnam “scholars” who also received grants—much bigger grants—from the Congress for Cultural Freedom, Hoang does not hide this fact; he acknowledges it in the foreword of his book. If after he became famous through his book Hoang still seemed antiwar enough for Bertrand Russell to solicit articles from him for his antiwar magazine, I cannot see how Porter can accuse Hoang of serving the CIA’s purposes.

Hoang was and is a Vietnamese who knows from a well-balanced mixture of experience and study of the documents that North Vietnam’s radical Land Reform was a “bloodbath.” He tried to make this known to as many people as possible. There is nothing wrong with that. Furthermore, to say that Hoang is the only source which led so many scholars to also conclude that the radical land reform was a “bloodbath,” is to slander them as well.

Porter’s “study” is an exercise in mass slander, reminiscent of a To-Kho session where a well-rehearsed ignorant peasant slanders landlord after landlord as the cruelest, the wickedest and the most criminal. Porter claims to have gone to primary sources, such as back issues of Nhan Dan. In fact, he didn’t. As we have seen, he uses citations of Nhan Dan made in an “official” study of the radical land reform written over 10 years after it ended. His arguments are not new and original, and they exhibit great ignorance of the subject and the people about which he writes. Such a work is a fairly good piece of propaganda, but it cannot be passed off as “scholarship.” It is a slanderous polemic, debasing to the great university that permits him to use its name in order to pass it off as “academic.”
I have tried to show that the radical land reform was designed to solve Truong Chinh's three main problems. I have also tried to show the weaknesses in Porter's alleged "study" of "official" materials.

Porter's weakest argument is that official U.S. Government translations are unreliable. This is absolutely false, and the reader who wishes to better understand Communism in Vietnam is urged to consult them regularly—as Porter himself obviously does. I have checked "official" U.S. translations against "official" Hanoi translations of the same documents and can only conclude that whatever weaknesses each may have, they are still remarkably similar.

In simple justice, the critique I have here presented of Gareth Porter's study should be extended to cover several important figures in the academic community who advised Mr. Porter on his paper and who have played a key role in creating the tragic confusion on the Vietnam issue which today characterizes our academic community. Mr. Porter opened his study with acknowledgements to Professors Benedict Anderson, George McT. Kahin, and David Mozingo, who he said had taken the time to read earlier drafts of his paper and to make helpful comments. "These comments and criticisms have saved the author from many pitfalls," wrote Porter. Although Porter insists that, as the author, he remains solely responsible for the contents of his paper, the trio of academic "experts" on Vietnam who read his paper and advised him cannot escape their share of the responsibility for Porter's incredibly sloppy research and his transparent perversion of history.

Let me state in conclusion that I do not question anyone's right to take issue with our Vietnam commitment. But no one has the right to pervert the facts or rewrite history in support of his position. I do not know how the present negotiations will turn out: one can only hope that they will result in a viable peace. In the interest of a viable peace, however, it is essential that we learn and remember the lessons of the past.

Mr. Chairman, in my presentation today I have quoted extensively from North Vietnamese Communist sources. I offer for the files of the subcommittee photostatic copies of all of the articles from which I have quoted. Because there are those who may have a preference for "official" Hanoi translations. I also wish to submit for publication as an appendix a list of the "official" translations from which most of my quotes and citations are drawn.

The CHAIRMAN. The material you have offered will be accepted for the record and for the files.

I want to thank you for a very illuminating presentation and for the trouble you have obviously gone to in researching this matter. I think you have performed a real service.

The committee stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

(Whereupon at 12:30 p.m., the hearing was adjourned, subject to the call of the Chair.)