

passed above Don's head. Had it seen anything? No! It darted towards the river, looking for suspension bridges, shot through a gorge, then soared up again.

Don, standing firm in the trench, aimed his rifle at the plane. Everything was happening as expected. He prepared to shoot. But the plane flew away.

"It's gone!" cried Buoc, "It's too bad, Don!"

Don was about to climb out of the trench when the plane came back. There it was! Never had he done anything in such a hurry! He had literally to take time by the forelock! The challenge from Muc village should be met! The young girls who had made bouquets to celebrate the coming victory should not be disappointed!

Bang! He opened his eyes wide. The plane roared past, unscathed. He heard Buoc's reproachful voice:

"You missed it! You only hit the air, way behind its tail!"

Don put down his rifle and tried to think it out. He had missed. Why? His finger had not trembled. His eyesight was as sharp as ever. The tree-branch used as a support had not moved. Yes, the only reason was that he had aimed wrong. Nhat had shot at a plane diving on him, Bin on a helicopter taking off, and he on a jet fighter in flight. There was a lot of difference. He should have aimed much farther ahead of the plane. He was a fool not to have thought of that sooner!

Again, he rested his rifle on the branch. The plane had turned back like a mad dog wanting to bite. Don felt strangely calm. He was standing on familiar soil. The cassava plants hid him perfectly. The village folk

were expecting a brilliant exploit... "A yard ahead of the air pirate... a full yard..." he muttered to himself.

Bang! The shot was still resounding when he heard the villagers' "hurrah" and the sounds of drums and gongs.

"Don's got him! The pirate is belching flames..."

Buoc darted toward Don and took him in his arms:

"Aren't you glad, Don?"

Don said nothing. After a moment, he handed his rifle to Buoc.

"Take this and remain here," he said, "I'm going back to the village."

"Why should I stay here?"

"Another Yank may come."

"What shall I do then?"

"What a silly question! Get him!"

Don was greeted by the villagers with enthusiastic cheers. The village patriarch invited him to drink from the cup of victors. Then turning toward the young girls, the old man said:

"Bring the flowers!" Attaching a bouquet on Don's shirt, he told the young man:

"Remember, son, these wild flowers are our own image. The red ones have the colour of our blood, which we are ready to shed in order to drive out the Yankees. The blue ones have the colour of our mountains and villages, the good name of which we shall defend to the end. The white ones are as fresh as the water of the

A Vuong river, as tender as our affection for you. The yellow ones are the colour of the golden star on our flag, which is showing us the way... Don, my son, remember that!"

The old man was now looking at Don in silence: Sharp eyes, a proud gait... a truly handsome Ka Tu boy! His hair still showed the dust of the battle!

Then, turning toward the young men, the patriarch said:

"Bring me the piece of red thread!"

Somebody remarked:

"But his rifle is not there! Where is it, Don!"

Don, who was in a veritable euphoria, turned and answered:

"Buoc has it."

"Keep the thread and wait a moment!" said the patriarch to the young men. Then, raising his arms, the old man gave a signal. Drums and gongs resounded, and everybody joined in a lively dance.

Suddenly, the roar of engines was again heard. The tumult ceased immediately. Everyone listened intensely. The patriarch was looking with wide-open eyes in the direction of the fields. Buoc was there with Don's victorious rifle. He would soon engage in a life-and-death struggle with the Yankee pirate. O Buoc! Do you hear the gongs and drums of your village, son? The old man again stretched his arms: No! the gongs and drums must not remain silent!

“Go on!”

And the gongs and drums again resounded, impetuous.

Bang! Had Buoc opened fire? Yes, no doubt was possible, it was a rifle shot. The gongs hesitated. But the patriarch, standing in the centre of the courtyard, raised his arms. His whole body was quivering, as if he had fallen into a trance:

“Go on with the drums and gongs!”

Bang! Another shot rang out. The drums were now roaring like waterfalls, like thunder in a storm. In the sky above Toi village, the enemy plane had burst into flames and was diving to the ground.

Buoc's loud call to announce victory was answered by a thousand voices. You need not call out any longer, Buoc! We have heard you very clearly. But Buoc would not stop and his shouts of triumph, echoing over mountains and torrents, kept rising...

Buoc was greeted by a wildly cheering crowd as he ran towards the village, with his rifle raised high. The patriarch came up to him, pinned a bouquet on his shirt and told him the same words he had told Don a moment before. Then he asked for the bits of red thread and tied them to the rifle:

“Take good care of your weapon, son! Never let the colour of this thread fade, never let the good name of Toi village be tarnished!”

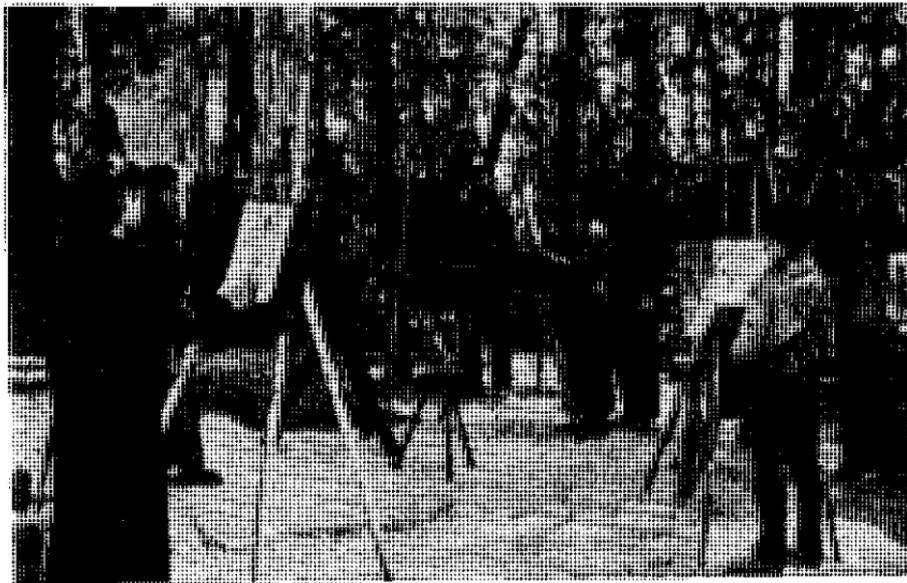
All of a sudden the patriarch cried out an order:

“Silence!”

An impressive silence set in. A solemn atmosphere now prevailed, as at an oath-taking ceremony of an army of volunteers in the heart of grim, impassable mountains...

When night came, the houses remained empty. Everybody was out, in the fields, along the streams, digging new fortifications. The patriarch, Don, Buoc and Bin, who had just come back, were all there. Let them come if they dare, those monsters which no longer scare anybody !

Translated from the Vietnamese



Painting class in a liberated area.

*Photo: Liberation Writers' and
Artists' Association.*

Nguyen Duc Thuan

The Victor

Nguyen Duc Thuan, a revolutionary arrested in Saigon in 1957, was in turn tortured, cajoled and threatened over a period of several years by the U.S. Diem police to get him to renounce his Party. It was a long struggle from which he emerged victorious. Freed after the fall of Diem, he has told his story, from which the following is an excerpt. The whole story will be published by the Foreign Languages Publishing House.

The gang of "re-educators" divided the task equally among themselves, each of them taking charge of one of us, using all kinds of pressure. They told us over and over again how seven of our comrades had died on March 27, and gave details about Tin's death which they said had been "awful", "atrociously piteous", "a grievous

loss", a "regrettable waste of human life". Obviously, they tried to break up our morale.

Then they brazenly threatened us: "You have very little chance to survive, gentlemen! A candle in the wind, a ton hanging from a hair! We see Death at your side, sharpening his scythe!"

Or they blandly suggested: "Once out of here, you'll regain your strength and after you have recovered, you can do whatever you like. Even combatants need some rest, don't they? Now, listen to us, get out of this place for some time and take a rest."

On the 15th day of the 7th lunar month, each of us was given a packet of cigarettes and a tin of condensed milk.

"The major sends you some delicacies on this Day of Pardon for the Dead," they told us. "You see, the authorities are thinking of you, but you're giving nothing in return!"

"Say what you like, we don't care! We see that you are not producing anything new, always the same story. Don't expect anything from us!"—so we thought to ourselves.

On September 3, Dang Tu, with the police chief by his side, summoned our group of seven to the verandah and made a brief speech:

"Gentlemen, on arriving here, I saw you for the first time. Today I'm seeing you for the last!"

And without saying anything more, he went away.

True, he had seen us only once. And immediately after that first meeting, it had been the drenching with icy

water, a diet of lime-washed rice and dried fish, the savage beating on March 27 resulting in the death of seven of us... And this time?

Three days later, on March 6, policemen and "re-educators" reappeared.

"So, gentlemen," they told us, "you have been thinking over the advice of our captain, the deputy-chief of province? His words will soon take effect!"

That very day, Huynh Van Khuy "renounced" the Party. Still seriously ill with dysentery, and unable to lie down, he remained sitting in a corner. Immediately after his "recantation", the enemy noisily summoned a physician for urgent treatment. Stretcher carriers and hospital attendants were running about hurriedly as if to fight a fire. Then Khuy was taken away in an ambulance. All these activities were calculated to make us "think it over".

But it must be said that Khuy, after his transfer to Section 2 and until he was released from prison, never saluted the enemy flag, nor shouted governmental slogans.

Afterwards, we learnt from a man who had been transferred to Section 2 before Khuy, that the latter, native of the same place as he, had made this self-criticism of his "recantation": "I thought that all the seven in the tiger cage (1) would die if something was not done, and it was preferable that I should be transferred to Section 2 where I would make a detailed account

(1) Underground cell where were interned prisoners who refused to renounce their Party.

of the situation to the comrades, and this was the only chance of finding some way to save some of those still kept in the tiger cage."

Thus, there now remained only six of us. The enemy took off all our clothes, as they always did during a period of tortures. And again it was rice without any salt, and half a pint of muddy water a day.

On September 8, they came again and told me :

"Three of your group, Messrs Minh, Mot and Sac, have recanted! Only you, Mr Binh and Mr Hieu remain recalcitrant. Why should you stay here any longer when most are gone?"

"Those who choose to recant can do so if they like," I answered. "As for me, I am determined never to do that."

"There remain only the three of you, what can you do? We can kill you whenever we like. Come on, recant, the sooner the better!"

Inwardly, I was laughing. The enemy were trying to divide us. The police chief had suggested the ruse to Hai Gac, who was in charge of the security section and the tiger cage :

"Take away three of them, and tell the others that their comrades have recanted. Maybe, they will believe it and do the same!"

And so our three comrades Minh, Mot and Sac had been taken to some other jail, before the enemy came to talk to each of us in turn.

Early in October, Hoan who had replaced Pham Sao as head of the group of "re-educators", summoned us

one day to the verandah. Several smartly dressed fellows we had never seen before were already there.

"You have refused to recant," said Hoan, "and that has been reported by the captain here to the authorities on the mainland⁽¹⁾. So the central government has decided to send here a delegation of cadres who will talk to you. Here is Mr. Thu, a high-ranking cadre from the Central Re-education Bureau, and here is Mr. Thieu, a cadre of the Psychological Warfare Bureau, deputy-chief of the delegation."

So, their central authorities had been forced to take direct command of the offensive against the six of us.

Thu was a sturdy, short fellow; Thieu was tall and thin. They had under them four others whose task was to study in a critical manner the work done by the re-education group on the island. They criticized the latter for having done nothing besides "denouncing communists, exterminating communists, praising the State" and "appealing to our preservation instinct," which could only result in their failure. They said among themselves: "With these individuals (they were speaking of us), the essential thing is to break up their conception of heroism and their loyalty to the revolutionary ideal, there is no other way of defeating them."

Filled with scorn for the "re-educators" on the island, they strongly believed they could embarrass us with their arguments, reduce us to silence and finally, "break up our loyalty."

(1) The events took place on Poulo-Condor detention island.

They formed two three-man teams, each of which took charge of three of us. I was in the group to which Thu's team was assigned. A fervent catholic, he had the manners of a priest and talked like a preacher, now unctuous, now incisive, always eloquent.

One morning, they harangued us on the verandah where we had been summoned.

"Gentlemen," one said, "when you refuse to renounce your Party, it is a matter of loyalty. We know it very well, and we respect your feelings. After all, a recantation is merely a bureaucratic formality instituted long ago by Mr. Bon — but since it has been started, it must be continued, for, don't you see, to abolish it would require permission by the central government and would take much time and cause much trouble. In reality, it has no meaning at all. You see, all we can do is to imprison your physical body, but nobody can do anything against your mind! Don't think that to recant means losing one's combative spirit. No, no, not at all. On the contrary, a recantation at this juncture will benefit your line of action. Why? Because you will live, to carry on your struggle... You sign the recantation statement, but since inwardly you are not recanting, what can it mean to you and who can ever blame you for anything? Could you be such a formalist as to accept death, by rejecting a formality, and thus put an end to your struggle? No, you cannot be so lacking in common sense, you are surely more realistic! Isn't it true, gentlemen, that loyalty to principles also allows of adaptation to circumstances?"

He continued :

" Maybe, your intention is to become heroes, reformers of the world, authors of extraordinary exploits. But, please tell us, how could one, by dying unnecessarily, reform the world and become outstanding men ? "

Another added :

" You surely think, like Khuat Nguyen, the great Chinese poet, that ' everything is impure on earth, only I am pure. ' Then you have fallen into the traps of individual heroism, which is the very thing you oppose. And your acts are thus in contradiction with your ideal ! "

They did the preaching in turn. It was clear that they were trying to shake our loyalty, but their arguments were no better than their predecessors'. At best, they were a little more metaphorical, more sophisticated. The talking took all that morning. Before leaving, Thu joined his hands over his forehead and prayed aloud :

" Mighty God, give wisdom and lucidity to these men. Mighty God, save them. "

We nearly burst into laughter. That fellow was incapable of understanding us, how could he defeat us !

In the afternoon, all six of them tackled first the group of our three comrades Minh, Mot and Sac, then came to us.

It was raining heavily and the verandah was soaked with water, so they took us to a corner near the staircase where they said nearly the same things as in the morning. After a moment, Thu asked me :

"Well, what is your opinion?"

"The weather is too bad today," I answered, "to further prolong our interview. So we will try to present our viewpoint briefly now, and I will go further into the matter when the occasion comes."

And I explained to them what we felt about our struggle. Thieu nodded and said:

"You spoke briefly but said many meaningful things. I only want to ask you this question: Do you still love your Party?"

"As it's our Party, why shouldn't we love it?" I answered.

"If you love your Party, you must put its principles into practice, mustn't you?"

"Of course."

"Now I ask you: According to your Party's principles, the minority has to respect the will of the majority. Then why are you adamant in your refusal to recant, unlike most of your comrades? Clearly, you are no longer respecting the principles of your Party."

"Since you know nothing about our Party's principles," I retorted, "it is very difficult to make you understand these things. Now I only want to tell you this; all revolutionaries whether free or in captivity, whether they have 'recanted' or not, pursue the same aim—they struggle for the reunification of the country."

With half-closed eyes, Thieu said:

"Well... Since you persist in maintaining your views, there is nothing we can do! Good-bye, then..."

As they stood up, preparing to leave, I added:

"Since you belong to the government machine, we ask you to transmit the following request. You must know very well that your government has been destroying property and killing, torturing, deporting people for years. You have seen these atrocities. A thousand of us have died here, not to speak of thousands of others who are sick, incapacitated, suffering all sorts of agonies... We think it would be less barbarous to kill us, to shoot us, so we ask you to transmit this request: have us shot immediately whenever you feel like it, but as long as we remain alive, we want a decent treatment."

Thieu again joined his hands but restrained himself and instead of raising them to his forehead, as in the morning, he threw them behind his back, and said:

"All right... we... we will... transmit your request... to the central government."

Then, the gang left.

Completely frustrated, they returned to the mainland the next day, giving up for ever their efforts to "break up" our loyalty.

*

Force is often resorted to when arguments fail. This was what the enemy often did. We knew it, that was why we were not taken by surprise when subjected again to the water torture.

This time, the drenching was done only at night. Three times each night, at 9 p.m., 1 a.m. and 4 a.m.

So, the enemy had given up their attempt to win a quick victory. After the beating of March 27, it was clear that they were now engaging in a war of attrition

against us. At each attack they purposely killed some of us, to scare the survivors.

This time, we were told to keep our clothes on for the drenching. The enemy did their utmost to increase our suffering.

“Lie down!... You there, lie down!... On your back, completely... for the drenching!”

At times, they yelled :

“Sit still, face up, towards the ceiling!”

And again :

“Stand up!... with your arms against your sides!”

The tiger cage was never dry again. The lower half of the wall surface was soaked with water, the plaster was falling away. The cement floor was now as rough as sand-paper, and the soles of our feet were cut when walking on it. Inflammation swelled the flesh between the toes. When drenching time was nearing, we would vigorously lash our bodies with the sides of our hands, in order to get warm. And waiting to be drenched was like waiting to go to the scaffold. One felt terribly uneasy, a feeling which is indescribable. Our brains might have gone wrong after we had got so much water on the head. Waiting brought great anguish and tension.

In the black night, the howling wind, the clanging of the casks, the steps up and down the stairs of our torturers fetching water for the drenching... Hearing all that was enough to make one shudder. Our torturers, standing high above us, muffled up in heavy woollen clothes and thick scarves, were looking down at us as we were sitting curled up, shivering in a corner of our cell.

“ Which one first ? ”

“ Well... Minh first today ! ”

“ Minh, it's very cold, isn't it ? ”

A cask of icy water was emptied. The drenched man howled... When there was a power failure, they would use their flashlights to see if we were remaining in the prescribed position.

During this period, we had new company : 70 comrades from Section 2 had been transferred here... Tiger cage was now a crowded place, day and night resounding with the noise of water pouring, of blows and the screams of the victims...

The 70 comrades from Section 2 had been transferred to the tiger cage for two reasons, 65 had refused to sign a “ letter of thanks ” and 5 had tried to escape from the island.

On October 26, 1961, the enemy decided to transfer to the mainland a number of detainees in Section 2. Right on the pier, just before embarking, the detainees were told to sign a “ letter of thanks to express gratitude to President Ngo ” and solemnly promise “ to become loyal citizens ”. Sixty-five refused. One of them said :

“ I participated in the war of resistance against the French colonialists, and have been put under arrest and interned by the Ngo Dinh Diem government ever since peace was restored. Now, you're telling me to sign this paper to express my confidence in his government and my gratitude to him, but I must say frankly that I have no confidence in this government. What

barbarous treatment I have suffered! I will not sign, even if this means I'll have to remain here!"

Another said :

"I will not sign anything before I see my family. This government cannot be trusted. On the mainland, those who attended the 'course on denunciation of communists' were promised freedom. But they were sent to Poulo-Condor instead. Those who were transferred from Section 1 to Section 2 were also promised freedom. But the beatings and detention continued. Isn't it true that those who signed were returned here a short time after they had been taken back to the mainland? I don't believe in the sincerity of this government, so I will not sign!"

Others simply said :

"The entire people are struggling for the reunification of the country. If I promised to stay out of this struggle, with whom could I live after returning to the mainland?"

"B. signed such a paper and was taken back to the mainland long ago. But his family is still writing to people here to inquire about his fate. Where is he interned now?"

Those comrades were immediately taken to the tiger cage where they were savagely beaten.

The next morning, they were brought back to the pier where they were told :

"Salute the flag and get on board to return to the mainland!"

The comrades refused to salute, whereupon they were sent back to the tiger cage. There, they were beaten and tortured as savagely as we were. Among the new inmates was Chuong, a comrade who had been three times chosen by the enemy for repatriation but three times had been kept back at the last minute for refusing to sign a "letter of thanks". Chuong suffered the worst treatment.

The five comrades who had unsuccessfully sought to escape from the island were also savagely beaten. For lack of a favourable wind, their raft had failed to sail out to sea. Before dawn, an enemy motor-boat gave chase to them; they were soon caught and taken to the tiger cage where they were subjected to atrocious tortures. The enemy wanted to find out details of the escape organization, but the comrades would not reveal anything.

There were at that time three categories of detainees in the tiger cage: those whom the enemy would have allowed to return to the mainland but who refused to sign a "letter of thanks"; those whom the enemy wanted to keep on the island but who sought to escape; and those—the six of us—whom the enemy did not know where to keep and who were just waiting to die. The security agents pacing the upper floor kept on shouting insults:

"Those 65 sons of bitches have been attending indoctrination courses for years, all they have to do now is to sign a letter of thanks before going home, and yet they refuse to do it! Really, one can't understand them!"

“And those five bandits, they’re terrible! They had the nerve to attempt an escape from this place! This, too, defies comprehension!”

“And these six chaps!... They even refuse to be hospitalized, and just lie there, waiting to die! You people must have nerves of steel, we could not stand even one such night!”

Every time police agent Tu Hoach tortured the 65 “non-signatories”, he came to ask us :

“Did you hear the blows? Denounce your Party or you will be beaten to death!”

“Kill us. We’re not going to recant.”

Then we were put together with the 65 comrades, and together with them we were beaten ruthlessly.

At that time, the comrades in Section 2 engaged in a spirited struggle which had a great repercussion on Poulo Condor island: they vigorously opposed the profanation of the graves of Communists in the Hang Duong cemetery.

The enemy had secretly planned to turn Poulo Condor into a logistics island base. U.S. advisers came to make a survey of the topography. The place was first used as a paratroops’ training ground. And at Coong, Section 2 detainees had been used for months to build an airstrip. This project required the razing of the Hang Duong cemetery. But the enemy kept their plan secret, asserting that they only wanted to “build a funeral monument to the memory of the genuine nationalist revolutionary, Nguyen An Ninh”. By doing so, they tried to kill two birds with one stone: on

the one hand, they could pretend that they respected the "nationalist revolutionaries"; on the other hand, they could wipe out conspicuous relics of the Revolution, i.e. the graves of Communist militants. The enemy were also seeking to destroy what remained of the combative spirit of those who had "recanted", so as to further lower their prestige. They would not fail to trumpet that "communists have profaned the graves of their own comrades"...

But our comrades in Section 2, clearly realizing the enemy's design, were resolved to oppose at any costs the digging up of the graves. They put up the fiercest resistance, saying:

"Our comrades are also revolutionaries who have sacrificed their lives. Why should their graves be dug up while those of others are embellished? We will never do that!"

"We already suffer greatly for not being allowed to visit our comrades' last resting places and look after them. How could we be so heartless as to dig up their graves?"

Thereupon, the enemy ordered three prisoners whom they had bought over to dig up a grave near that of Nguyen an Ninh. Bones were thrown up, with bits of flesh still sticking to some of them. The comrades could not help crying. The enemy then had their lackeys push them into the opened grave, to force them to do the gruesome work. When they tried to climb out of the grave they were savagely beaten and pushed back into it. They were covered with mud and blood, and even with bits of the dead man's flesh.

While blows were being rained on them, some lay prostrate near the remains of the dead man, pledging :

“ We promise to follow your example, comrade ! ... ”

Thereupon, Tam, Ut and finally The himself, had to call for troops who came with machine-guns and mortars and surrounded the comrades. Under The's command, the soldiers piled up at each of the four corners rattan sticks as thick as a great toe. Hundreds of prisoners who had become lackeys of the enemy, police agents, and soldiers drove the comrades — there were only a few dozens of them — towards the center of the square and beat them savagely, every broken rattan stick being immediately replaced, and the beating continued all that afternoon, until the four piles of sticks were used up. The ground was littered with broken rattan sticks which now looked like brooms. The sand was soaked with blood. Still, none of the comrades agreed to pick up a shovel or pickaxe and profane the graves of our martyrs.

Defeated, the enemy had to give up their attempt to remove the remains of communists and level off the Hang Duong cemetery. They sighed :

“ Dealing with political detainees is certainly a hard job. ”

On learning about the fight put up by the comrades of Section 2, we were overjoyed and filled with admiration for them... The blows and the drenching to which we were subjected now seemed less painful.

We were continually beaten and drenched with icy water all through the cold season, from October to December, then January... Our health was now like fading light.

Hai Gac, a native of North Vietnam who had left for the South, who had once been convicted and imprisoned by our government, used against us his method of "biting cold and hunger". We were drenched and deprived of food and drinking water. After three days, a police agent reported to Hai Gac: "It seems they will soon be finished off, boss!" Thereupon, Hai Gac hurriedly came to have a close look at us, then ordered that we be given food as before. However, on Sundays we still had to go without food.

From time to time, whenever Tu Hoach felt like it, he would take us to the verandah to give us a beating. Each of us had to sit with his back against a pillar to which his hands were tied while his feet were fastened to another pillar. With his victims completely immobilized, the thug started beating them. He liked to kick forwards, or backwards — turning his back on us — at our chests, with the tips or heels of his heavy shoes. At the same time, his lackeys, detainees who had been bought over, kept striking with sticks at our joints.

They never beat anybody to death. When their victim fainted, he was thrown back into his cell.

While the enemy was inflicting such cruel sufferings upon us, our unity gave us precious comfort and encouragement. One day, shortly after a drenching at

9 p. m., as we were massaging our bodies to get warm, Comrade X. came and told us in a low voice:

“Good news, comrades!”

“What news?” I asked, springing to my feet.

“The comrades in the Convicts’ Section have made known their position.”

In no time, I was beside X. without realizing how I had managed to move.

“Position on what?”

“On our refusal to recant or attend indoctrination courses, which they find in complete conformity with the position and the ideological principles of the Party.”

“What next?”

“They are filled with admiration for the struggle you comrades in Section I have been waging, and for your determination to struggle to the end!”

Oh, these few words were everything to us! We were so happy that we could not sleep, and wanted to call out aloud to one another, in order to enjoy it together! So the comrades in the Convicts’ Section also approved our stand!

We had thus defined our position: “Courage, determination, readiness to sacrifice one’s life in the struggle against renunciation of the Party”, but the thought kept nagging us that we should have discussed our position with the majority of the comrades.

But the latter, one after another, had successively expressed their approval. What could be more encouraging to us? We now felt our hearts at peace, we

were no longer worried about the correctness of our position. We realized still more clearly that on the road of struggle, the Party and the collective were always there to guide and support us.

That night, I could not sleep and kept thinking. I told myself: The wheel of history is always turning. This is an objective process which involves everyone. If I myself cannot contribute to accelerating it with my own hands, I must at least cling to it, in order to keep pace with it. It would be extremely risky, very dangerous, to let go one's hold. To deny one's faith would be to lose one's hold, to fall behind. And to choose the road of treason, would be to put oneself in the way of the wheel and be crushed.

I shuddered. All of a sudden, images of depravity, degeneration, betrayal, surged up in my mind in all their horror. To deny one's faith, to let go one's hold of the wheel of history? Impossible! Never! To the end, remain in the ranks! To the end, cling to the wheel!

The enemy continued to beat us in the day-time and drench us with cold water in the night. It must be admitted that this cruel treatment, this relentless, prolonged, endless persecution could have a very pernicious effect. Defeatist thoughts could spring up like mushrooms after the rain, and once you got caught by them, the physical pains would become more acute, to such a degree that the mere thought of tomorrow would bring terrible anguish, fear, and lassitude.

At these moments, I had to struggle with all my strength, thinking intensely of the Party, the people, until finally I could get rid of those defeatist thoughts.

"Above all," I told myself, "I should never think that I have already done better than others, merely because I have been able to hold out until this day, or that in future I shall have nothing to be ashamed of. Never think that if you should die for the cause, even if the Party should praise your acts, you would not be there to rejoice, and so would bite the dust just like anybody else... Such thoughts are but calculations for one's personal interests, taking into account difficulties of the moment. The achievements and the future of any individual lie in the achievements and the future of the Revolution. The former cannot be separated from the latter. Individual future and achievements are due to the Party and the people, one cannot create them from nothing. As individuals, we can only do this: to carry on the struggle based on the stand and the ideological principles of Marxism-Leninism and the political line of the Party. This is the key factor for achieving victory." This was what I told myself.

Our bodies were making us suffer day and night. The least movement caused acute pain, and we were constantly threatened by temptation. Indeed, only sleep could bring some peace. And even then there were the dreams... The enemy were surrounding us, attacking us, driving us into the darkness of death. And at the bottom of the dark hole, a small outlet appeared like a dim light before our eyes, which insistently appealed to our preservation instinct. But

we knew that it was a fatal noose, a most frightful trap. "To recant" was to seek escape through that trap. To recant in order to live... To live and recant!

The sufferings of our bodies at times became unbearable. But our spirit ordered us to hold out, to fight, to rebel. Every hour, every minute, we were confronted with conflicting tendencies, and the tension was great. In our minds, it was the same continuous and fierce struggle between combativeness and defeatism, Defeatism obstinately clung to us, like a hungry leech. Hardly had it been driven away when it again returned.

Every time we woke up from an agitated sleep, the atrocious physical pains returned and, along with them, the defeatist thoughts.

Never before had I been so penetrated with this essential truth — that without defeating the ideological enemy within oneself, one could never defeat the class enemy without. And it is by no means easy to defeat the former. It conceals itself cleverly under a perfect camouflage, using pretexts "conformable to heart and mind". Any self-indulgence, any wavering in one's determination to chase the enemy into its last lair will cause it to appear interesting, even attractive. In prison, defeatist thoughts are closely linked with one's personal life, one's family, one's suffering body... They appeared under the form of the innocent eyes of one's children, the soft voice of one's wife, and also fallacious arguments: "The Revolution may need your service in the future, why then should you die here? Is this the right place, the right time to die? Would it not be a waste of human life?"

One felt that all the cells in one's body were clamouring for life. What one longed to eat in the daytime inevitably came back at night in one's dreams. And everything was lacking... I would mention only a trivial trouble which outsiders would never think of: the lack of toilet paper. No paper, no tree leaves, no rags. The enemy would not give anything. Something had to be done. So everyday we made our "paper" by pressing some cooked rice into thin sheets of paste which were left to dry. These sheets, not larger than a match box, were enough to solve the problem.

You may say that this is a very trivial matter. Yet, if you fail to satisfy this daily need, the trouble will be great indeed.

Physically, you may be stout or frail, strong or weak, but no one can get used to pain or hunger. The difference lies in the will and determination to fight. Without this will and determination, you will give up half-way, whether you are physically strong or weak.

I knew very well that the will and determination to fight had to be unceasingly strengthened, otherwise it would gradually melt away. And one would fall into the bleak abyss of individualism, the interests of the Revolution would be neglected, the comrades' sacrifices would no longer mean anything to one, and burning hatred would be replaced by gnawing fear.

Not for a single second should I lose vigilance, and fail in my determination to keep off unproletarian thoughts. I must unceasingly strengthen my position of struggle against "recanting" and surrendering to

the enemy. I must continually remind myself that I had to do my utmost to fulfil the most glorious task of a Party member: to devote all my life to the Revolution.

In every cell where I was interned I inscribed in some place these words: "To devote all one's life to the Revolution."

After four months of persecution, of barbarous treatment inflicted on their victims, the enemy remained as ruthless as ever. They had taken away all our bowls and chopsticks. Our rice was now thrown on the ground, and we crawled out to pick it up. The rice was lying on the doorstep, at the very place where we relieved ourselves.

We had to relieve ourselves on the doorstep because the bucket placed there had been taken away. At first, they came daily for cleaning with sand and water, but for a month now, they had been doing nothing. On the doorstep were heaps of excrement and pools of urine. At meal-time, they opened the door, took a bowlful of rice, threw it down and went away. We silently crawled out and picked it up grain by grain.

We did eat the rice. Why should we not? As long as we lived, we remained a problem for the enemy, who would not be left at peace. As long as we lived, our example would encourage the comrades in Section 2 to struggle against the enemy. In prison, we had to hold high the vanguard banner of the Party, which had been dyed with the blood of thousands of our comrades during so many years of fierce struggle.

We endeavoured to survive. Whenever we had an opportunity to go out, we would collect wild vegetables growing in filthy places and eat them. Eating something more would prolong our life a little longer, even if this kind of food was far from being clean.

However, I had begun to cough out blood, like all the others in our group of six. Among us, comrade Hieu was the most seriously ill.

At that time, the "tiger cage" was crowded as 65 "non-signatories" had arrived from Section 2. Comrade Binh and I were in one cell, next to that of Hieu who was alone. We distinctly heard Hieu's words, every time he vomited blood: "I'm going to die... bowlfuls of blood...."

We felt great compassion for Hieu. He was liked and respected by all of us. During discussions in the tiger cage about the common line of struggle, Hieu's opinion was the soundest, most logical and most representative.

My heart ached when I heard him sigh: "I'm going to die... bowlfuls of blood..." We all expected to die, but death came to Hieu first. My heart bled when I thought of him. He was over fifty, but his eyes retained their extraordinary beauty, their crystalline limpidity. It seemed that they could reflect nothing impure, only the noblest feelings — kindness, sincerity, candour. Many times, looking into his eyes I had a clear impression that he was very proud of taking part in the struggle in the tiger cage.

The enemy, seeing that Hieu was vomiting blood, acted still more ruthlessly. The police agents on the upper floor often said to each other:

"The fellow is vomiting blood all the time! The floor is now a red pool!"

"I have reported to the boss. He ordered more drenching!"

"So," I thought, "they are doing the same thing they did to Tin some time ago. When Tin went on a hunger strike, they simply deprived him of drinking water to make him die sooner. Now that Hieu was vomiting blood, they would intensify the drenching. He has very little chance to survive!"

So, while Hieu was lying prostrate, vomiting blood, the enemy kept drenching him with cold water. Binh and I said to each other; "If Hieu wiped away the blood, the enemy would not seek to hasten his death. But he never thought of that!"

Every time we vomited blood, we would carefully clean the floor, so that the enemy knew nothing. But unfortunately we could not contact Hieu and suggest that he do the same.

On December 29, we heard Hieu say:

"I want to see the police chief."

"He's busy now, he can't see anyone!" answered police agent Nam Trong.

Hieu spoke louder, but still with a calm voice (he always spoke calmly, even to the enemy):

"If you continue the drenching, tonight I will smash my head against the wall and die!"

"You son of a bitch, I'll not be on duty to-night!" barked Nam Trong.

On Christmas eve, Hieu got more drenching at 9 p.m. His torturers said:

"You see, Hieu, we're doing business as usual!"

Several buckets of cold water were poured down on Hieu, who exclaimed:

"I'm going to smash my head!"

We heard the noise made by a shock and a fall. Hieu had gathered all his waning strength to stand up on his sleeping board and tried to dash his head against the wall before him. But he was already too weak and his head just reached the wall before he fell on the floor. He cried out:

"Beat me to death! Pour more water to kill me! I will never recant, I tell you! I will not sink so low!"

Never sink so low! These words bespoke his honesty, his candour. We felt an immense compassion for Hieu.

Sneered police agent Van who was standing on the upper floor:

"Ha, ha! Do it once more, if you dare!"

"If I had enough strength left to do it, I would not hesitate! You swine!"

"All right!" Van said, enraged. "You fellows, pour more water on him!"

Water was falling like a cascade. Horrified, we lay motionless in the tiger cage. Fifty buckets of water were poured on Hieu. We counted them one by one, and felt as if our bowels were being cut up.

At dawn, the enemy withdrew and we crawled to the panel separating our cell from Hieu's, to find out

whether our comrade was still breathing. We heard feeble groans. The guards, now exhausted, were lying on canvas beds at one end of the tiger cage, at some distance from our cell. We ventured to call out :

“ Hello, Hieu ? How are you ? ”

We heard him move, probably turning his head in our direction.

“ I wish you all good health ! ” said Hieu, “ I’m leaving first ! ”

Leaving first ! What could that mean ? We stared at each other, filled with apprehension. On Poulo-Condor island, “ to leave ” often meant “ to recant ”. Was Hieu going to recant ? We shuddered at the thought. Then, it would be... Or did he only mean that he was “ leaving for Hang Duong ” — the cemetery — another phrase commonly used at the place ?

We lay in our cell curled up against each other, wondering what Hieu meant when saying that he was “ leaving ”. At this time, he must be lying amidst a pool of icy water, emaciated and exhausted... Oh, Hieu, you are so honest, so simple ! You never expected the word “ leaving ” you used to torment us so much !

At day-break, we told each other :

“ Hieu will never recant ! Such a man will never recant. ”

So, “ to leave ” could only mean to die. If Hieu recanted, we would greatly suffer, but his death would also break our hearts. We were squatting with our knees against our chins, when Nam Trong passed before our cell, calling :

"Hieu! Hey, Hieu!... Hieu!... Hieu!..."

He called seven or eight times but Hieu did not stir.

Turning towards us, Nam Trong said:

"Listen to me... Come out!..."

After vainly calling Hieu several times more, he told us:

"See? He'll soon be finished! He looks like a dried-up frog. He'll die in a few minutes... You people, don't wait until it's too late, like Hieu... Come out!"

We remained silent.

Nam Trong cried out: "Open this door!"

Then he told us:

"You two may go out and have a look!"

We crawled out and looked into Hieu's cell. Hieu's completely naked, skeleton-like body was in a sitting posture, his head resting on his sleeping board. His long, disordered hair were still soaked with water. Tinged with blood, the water around him had a reddish colour. A section of his bowels was protruding.

Nam Trong kept calling: "Hieu... Hieu... Hey, Hieu!" But Hieu remained motionless.

"But he's dead!" exclaimed Nam Trong.

A guard seized Hieu's ears and shook his head. But Hieu was now but a corpse.

Translated from the Vietnamese

Editor's note : The poem " The Shadow of the K'nia Tree " published on page 71 of the present issue is an anonymous folk poem of the Hre national minority, which has been translated into Vietnamese for the first time by Ngoc Anh. The English translation has been made from Ngoc Anh's version.

PRINTED IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

QUANG DUNG

VNSF # 67
1968

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FILE SUBJ.
DATE SUB-CAT
68

The House
on the Hill

(story)

Ever since the children came to live with her, the old woman often thought of the time twenty years ago when a unit of the Ve Quoc Doan (1) was billeted in her house, the soldiers always addressing her as "Mother".

She was then a lot younger, barely fifty, but the house was located at the same place. Standing somewhat out of the way, on top of a small hill, it was surrounded by a green bamboo hedge, and a meandering path led up the slope to its gate. A widow, Mrs. Luu had had to work hard to bring up her only son and send him to school. Morning and afternoon, she was busy in her little tea garden, picking leaves and buds. Days rolled by, uneventful and a little sad, like this monotonous landscape of Son Dong. And yet Hanoi was not very far away.

The silence was usually troubled only by the plaintive verses sung by sister Tham, her neighbour, to lull her baby to sleep:

*Some spend their lives rolling in money and luxury,
Others have but the rags on their backs.*

(1) Army for the Defence of the Fatherland, now the Vietnam People's Army.

And then one would hear the creaking of the hammock, which marked the passing of time with a sad little noise reminding one of the gnawing of wood worms.

When evening came, the villagers used to come and sit on top of the hill and talk. Often one would point his finger to a luminous patch of sky just above the horizon in the east and say, "There's Hanoi!"

In fact very few of them had ever visited the city. Mrs. Luu never. But from her door she could see the reflection from its lights on the evening sky, and often she would say to her son, "We must visit Hanoi some time."

One night in December 1946, more than a year after the August Revolution, the sky above Hanoi came aglow with flashes of artillery shelling.

"The nation-wide resistance has broken out," said the village guerilla head coming back from a meeting, a sabre in his hand.

That very night, convoys of lorries passed along the road, carrying troops from Son Tay. Two stopped in front of Mrs. Luu's. Foxes were flushed out of bushes by their headlights. The village authorities set about quartering the men.

The following day, the tranquillity of the place was gone. Squatting a short distance from the well and washing cassava for her guests' breakfast, Sister Tham, the young mother, no longer thought of singing her plaintive verses.

The men billeted at Mrs. Luu's seemed to be part of some kind of special unit. They were all very young.

and with the fair complexion of city-dwellers— even fairer than the skin of girl-weavers in the neighbouring village, Mrs Luu thought. As she left the house for an errand, they were all sleeping soundly, lying on the plank bed, the floor, and even the veranda: they needed sleep, having travelled a long way.

But when she returned, the house had changed so much she hesitated a second before stepping in. The clothesline, where usually only a forlorn blouse of faded brown cotton hung, was now crowded with all sorts of things: multicoloured towels, toilet bags, singlets, shirts, caps with a gold star.... From a corner of the garden rose the notes of stringed instruments.

Nguyen, the leader of the group—it was part of an armed propaganda unit—came running up and took from her hands the earthen jar she had just borrowed from a fellow-villager. Other soldiers came and greeted her cheerfully.

Before evening came she had learnt all their names. She had also learnt that all of them were native of Hanoi, the capital.

They were a bunch of gay fellows, always buoyant and in high spirits. One of them, Don, had a splendid tenor voice and spent his time rehearsing songs:

We of the Ve Quoc Doan,

Up hill and down dale we go,

Ready to lay down our lives for the Fatherland...

In the house on the hill, a lively atmosphere had set in: music, song, dance, even sketches in which "our men" and "the enemy" engaged in fierce fighting.

In the evening, the soldiers would hold a meeting to discuss the day's work. Sitting on straw pallets laid on the earthen floor, wrapped in blankets when the weather was particularly cold, they talked animatedly, sometimes severely criticizing each other, but the atmosphere was always friendly. Mother Luu, as she went about the household chores, could hear snatches of their discussion: "We sons of the people... quartered in their homes... win their sympathy... help them in their work... order and discipline... even a needle or a bit of thread... military secrets..."

They woke up early in the morning and did their callisthenics singing at the top of their voices: "*Let's be strong to serve the country...*" Soon, music and singing would start, and in lively plays, "guerillas" and "foreign aggressors" would fight each other to the finish. Once Mother Luu cried out with terror seeing a shaggy-haired, hairy-armed and wild-eyed French soldier rushing out of a corner. But the ruffian quickly seized her hand and whispered, "Don't be afraid, Mother, this is Cuong playing the part of a French officer."

Night and day, the reports of artillery were heard coming from the direction of Hanoi. But song and laughter continued to fill the house on the hill. Although little used to carrying water jars hanging from the ends of a shoulder pole, the young soldiers made a point of keeping all Mrs Luu's earthen containers filled to the brim with crystal-clear water drawn from the well at the foot of the hill. The woman couldn't help admiring her adopted sons' buoyant spirits.

"They're wonderful," she used to tell the neighbours. "Their only food is low-quality rice and some salt fish. Yet they study and work all day. And not only that: they help people with their field and household work. The other day, they put a new roof to Sister Tham's cottage!"

On a cold evening, as the winter monsoon wailed outside, they would sit around a fire, eat roast cassava and talk about home. Cuong looked at his watch and said: "Only seven-thirty! I thought it was about midnight!. At this time, I used to drop in at the Central Library in Hanoi....Oh, those books, those polished desks, that atmosphere of the reading-room! It's so warm, so comfortable, so quiet! And of course on my way to the library I would have bought a package of those delicious roast peanuts sold by a Chinese in Sam Cong lane!"

"What I miss," another chimed in, "is the Lake of the Restored Sword. In autumn its waters look so beautifully green, as they must have always been since the times of Lê Loi." (1)

"To me Hanoi mostly means," said a third young man, "the warmth of a room and the wonderful sounds that come out of a record-player. At this time of night I and a few friends would be listening to Grieg, or to Johann Strauss, depending on the mood! Around ten, the last tram would clang past, brightly lit but almost empty. At two or three in the morning

(1) A 15th century king.

the train to Lao Cai would be crossing the Long Bien bridge in a thunderous noise. Ah, Hanoi!"

What a strange city Hanoi is, Mrs Luu would say to herself. Lying in her room on her straw pallet, she listened to their conversation and sympathized with their nostalgia. One never could imagine them so homesick when seeing them in the daytime so enthusiastically engaged in their multifarious activities. Some even remembered the curious posture of an electric pole planted in the tiled roof of an old house in Jewellers' Street. Others recalled the picturesque silhouettes of ancient dwellings in the old quarters of the city. Now they were all living in Mrs Luu's thatch cottage on top of a hill in a remote corner of the countryside! Their friends, quartered in other cottages, were cleaning their guns in anticipation of future battles.

Every night, village guerillas back from guard duty would drop in at Mrs Luu's to have a chat with their friends of the army. Lifting the wattled bamboo panel which served as a door, they let the cold drizzle drift into the room as they stepped in, together with echoes of the far-away rumble of guns. Leaning his sabre against the wall and reaching for the hubble-bubble, one of them said, "We'll drive the Frenchies out of the country, sure as eggs is eggs!"

*

The armed propaganda detachment stayed at the village for a fairly long time, then left. Years went by. From time to time, a letter came from them, asking

how's everybody and saying how they missed the good old days at Mrs Luu's and how wonderfully fragrant her green tea was!

Then it was Dien Bien Phu, and peace. Lorries laden with troops rolled in the direction of Hanoi. One day, one of them stopped at the foot of the hill in front of Mrs Luu's. A few men alighted and hurried up the path: it was Nguyen and some of his friends. They presented the old woman with a gift: an immense piece of parachute cloth seized from the enemy.

On National Day, the entire village sat on top of the hill watching the fireworks display above Hanoi, the capital. Mrs Luu received repeated invitations from her adopted sons in Hanoi to visit them. Each time she promised to come, but each time something prevented her from keeping her word: who would look after the pig and poultry? who would till the garden, or pick the tea? And so Hanoi remained for old Mrs Luu just a luminous reflection in the sky, and fireworks display when National Day came each year in the autumn.

Then the anti-American resistance broke out.

Again, twenty years after Nguyen, Cuong and their friends of the Ve Quoc Doan were quartered at Mrs Luu's, her house was filled with song and laughter. But the guests were not the same.

Much water had flown under the bridge. The roof of the house had been renewed many times. Mrs Luu's hair had turned silver white. Her adopted sons Nguyen

and Cuong had become heads of families. Their eldest sons had joined the army to fight the Americans. The younger ones had had to be evacuated to the countryside on account of American air raids: the fathers had thought of Mrs Luu and her warm hospitality.

The children didn't need, as their fathers had, to tell the villagers that they were native of Hanoi: everybody knew it right away, as soon as they looked at the children's bags and parcels: knapsacks and haversacks, enamel basins and bowls, thermos flasks, gaily-coloured plastic bags, and also protective helmets of plaited straw, against steel-pellet anti-personnel bombs!

Thoa, Cuong's little girl, had a comb made of durium, on which was engraved a F.105 being pursued by a Mig and fired on by A.A. cannon. "My brother made it with debris of the American plane brought down on Le Truc street in Hanoi," she said to Mrs Luu. "He is a fighter pilot, Grandma. Next time he flies over, I'll show you his plane."

Old Mrs Luu, listening to her chatter, remembered her father playing the French officer and smiled: he had given her such a blue funk, rushing out of a corner and rolling his eyes, one day twenty years ago!

"Well, my little ones, don't you miss Hanoi badly? Here I have no entertainment to offer you, only hill after hill covered with tea plants!"

Instead of answering, little Thach, Thoa's younger brother, said in an angry voice: "I am just mad with the Yanks! Were it not for their raids, we would be having so much fun in Hanoi. Every year, on National Day, we could see a big military parade. As

we live in Ly Thuong Kiet street, where the marching columns usually drilled before the festival day, we were able to see everything. Once we watched a whole motorized division roll past..."

On Sundays, soon after daybreak, one would hear coming from the road noises made by aluminum containers hanging from a bicycle handlebar and banging against its frame, and then the children shouting with joy, "Mother's coming!"

And then old Mrs Luu would bring out an enormous breadfruit which soon filled the room with its nice smell.

So that her "grandchildren" could have plenty of water at their disposal, she had borrowed many extra jars from fellow-villagers. The kids, like their fathers in the old days, learnt hard to carry water on shoulder pole and soon became very skilful at it. The village children flocked in to make friends with them, and one could often hear their clear voices singing in unison :

*Let's liberate the South:
The propitious time has come for the country,
Dawn has risen...*

In the evening, when the children had lighted their kerosene lamps and sat poring over their lessons, the old woman felt happy just looking at them. Little Thanh, a born engineer, had made a special lamp for himself with an old discarded phial stuffed with cotton wool. "The thing burns brighter and consumes less oil," he said proudly. "No wick is needed. It's because

kerosene is turned into gas before burning." He added: "We must practise economy to fight the Yanks!"

Their fathers had left for far-away places, said a letter which the children read to Grandma Luu. She heaved a sigh and looked in the direction of Hanoi. Because of the blackout, there was less light reflected in the sky above the city. From time to time, one could see a streak of fire: a missile pursuing Yankee marauders. One also heard the angry rumble of anti-aircraft guns meting out due punishment to the air pirates. That was Hanoi. Hanoi, the valiant capital of her fearless people, was present in her home, with those clear voices of children reading their lessons.

Old Mrs Luu remembered the first days of the anti-French resistance, twenty years ago. On cold nights, she used to boil cassava for her adopted sons' supper. She rose and went into the kitchen. A moment later, she came out with a steaming pot of sweet potatoes, from which whiffs of caramel wafted. Her silvery head bent over the children as they laughingly tried to peel and eat the scalding hot potatoes. A smile flitted on her lips: was she thinking of the children's fathers, those Ve Quoc Quan who came to her home a long time ago, or of their brother, the Mig pilot, and his fellow-combatants now on the frontline?

The sweet fragrance of tea plants in bloom filled the air.

Adapted from the Vietnamese

American
Authors
in the D.R.V.

A quiet morning in Hanoi. It was very cloudy. The weather did not seem to be propitious to air raids and the American air marauders did not turn up: However vigilance had not slackened. Here and there one could see powerful A.A. guns pointing their muzzles at the sky while a radar antenna, which looked like a big sunflower, was slowly scanning the horizon. Sitting on the grass near a tent, a group of very young gunners listened attentively to one of their comrades reading a novel aloud. What book do you think they were reading while waiting to give battle to Phantoms and Thunderchiefs? The Vietnamese translation of Ernest Hemingway's "For Whom the Bell Tolls" (*Chuong nguyen hon ai*, Van Hoc Publishing house, 1963.)

This is not an isolated case. A journalist friend of mine returning from a mission in Lang Son province told me that he had seen on a mountain peak in Chi Lang, young soldiers of the Tay and Nung national minorities reading Albert Maltz's "An Afternoon in the Jungle" while on the look-out for predatory planes.

Herbert Aptheker noticed during his three-week stay in the D.R.V. that American writers had become familiar

to the North Vietnamese public. In his book "Mission to Hanoi" (International Publishers, New York, 1966), this American author remarked that people in this country, even in the fire of war, always carry with them three things: a tool, a gun and a book. He was astonished to see on the shelves of a crowded bookshop Vietnamese translations of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Ilitch Lenin, Honoré de Balzac, Charles Dickens, Alexandre Pouchkin, Jorge Amado, Maxim Gorki... He spoke ironically of Harry Truman, "What proves that Hanoi is really the centre of a world plot against the interests of the U.S. is that Mark Twain, hailing from Missouri just like Harry the Two Bombs, has been published in the Vietnamese language and become a friend well known to the D.R.V. people." And Herbert Aptheker went on to say that "Albert Maltz will join an august company where Sam Clemens is not alone." And the author of "Mission to Hanoi" went on to mention Walt Whitman, William Faulkner, Caldwell — Erskine, not Taylor — the former convict O'Henry and another author whose translated books were sold out as soon as they came out: Ernest Hemingway ("For Whom the Bell Tolls?," "The Old Man and the Sea.")

Of course the list is not an exhaustive one and such names as John Reed ("Ten Days that Shook the World"), Langston Hughes (Poems), Arthur Miller ("The Death of a Salesman" and "All My Sons"), John Howard Lawson ("Parlor Magic") should be added.

Soon after Herbert Aptheker's visit to the D.R.V., *Van Hoc* Publishing House brought out a selection of

short stories by Albert Maltz, Don Ludlow, Sanora Babb, Martin Abzug, Dorothy Parker, Charles Humboldt, Arna Bontemps, Jack M. Clark, Alvena Seckar, Alan Max, Alexander Saxton and Philip Stevenson, under the title "An Afternoon in the Jungle," the short story by Albert Maltz mentioned above.

In April 1968 came out another collection of short stories by such American writers as John Reed, Albert Maltz, William Faulkner, Mike Quinn, Ring Lardner, Erskine Caldwell, John O'Hara, Yuri Suhl, Meridel Le Sueur, titled after a short story by E. Caldwell "Lingering Death."

Mention should also be made of the translations of "The Last of the Mohicans" (Fenimore Cooper), "Uncle Tom's Cabin" (Beecher Stowe), "Martin Eden" (Jack London), "Tom Sawyer" (Mark Twain) which are now ready to go to press. *Van Hoc* Publishing House will also print works by Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, Philip Bonovsky and others.

The author of "Mission to Hanoi" noticed that the Vietnamese people are fond of study and reading. He was surprised and delighted to find that progressive American literature, which holds an important place in world literature, has earned the sympathy of "hundreds of thousands of readers in this land regularly bombed by the Americans." Needless to say that the Vietnamese people never confuse the American people with the torturers, the genuine conscience and true genius of the American nation with the barbarity of the American aggressors. While in the eyes of our people, the Quaker Norman Morrison—who burnt himself to death so that "his flaming

body could become a torch of truth" as wrote To Huu in his poem "Emily, My Daughter" — is an image of the modern American hero, we also chuckle when reading the adventures of Huckleberry Finn and Jim, his mate, feel indignant over the fate of Sonny Clark in "Trouble in July" and are deeply moved by Robert Jordan who, wounded, waits for the enemy, tommy gun in hand, on a hill in Spain.

All this, despite the atrocities committed by Johnson and his accomplices.