THE MASSACRE OF DAK SON

The Dak Son massacre: The Communists incinerated the villagers with flame throwers at point blank range. Most of the victims were women and children.

The worst atrocity yet committed in the Viet Nam war (see picture above) began its course last week when a handful of Viet Cong crawled up to the wall-and-wire perimeter of the hamlet of Dak Son, some 75 miles northeast of Saigon. The V.C. called for the hamlet’s inhabitants to surrender and come out. When they got no takers, they withdrew, hurling behind them their ultimate epithet: “Sons of Americans!” Earlier in the day, villagers had reported to their 140-man defense force that some Viet Cong were roaming through the surrounding fields. But that was hardly unusual, or cause for any particular alarm. The Viet Cong had steadily harassed Dak Son, and four times this year had mounted an attack and tried to overrun it; each time they had been stopped short of the defense perimeter and thrown back.

The reason for the Communists’ intense interest in Dak Son, a hamlet of 2,000 Montagnard people, was that it was the new home and sanctuary of some 800 Montagnard refugees who 14 months ago fled from life under the Viet Cong in the surrounding countryside, where they had been forced to work in virtual slavery as farmers and porters. The Montagnards are the innocents of Viet Nam: primitive, peaceful, sedentary hill tribesmen. The women go bare-breasted and the men, who scratch out a living by farming and hunting with crossbows and knives, wear loincloths. The Viet Cong not only missed the services of those Montagnards who had fled to government protection, but also feared that their lead might be followed by the 20,000 other Montag-
nards in the province of Phuoc Long, many of whom are still serfs of the V.C. Lest the others should get the idea of seeking government protection, the Communists decided to make an example of the refugees of Dak Son.

**YELLING AND SCREAMING**

As in most Vietnamese villages, the people of Dak Son were completely unarmed, and most of them were women and children. The Viet Cong began their attack at midnight, pouring machine-gun, mortar and rocket fire into Dak Son as they had in the past. This attack, however, was to be very different from the others. The 600 Viet Cong who assembled outside Dak Son were armed with 60 flamethrowers. Yelling and screaming, they attacked the town, shooting countless streams of liquid fire that lit up the night and terrified by its very sight a people who had only recently discovered the use of matches.

The Viet Cong first broke through the perimeter opposite the refugee quarter and forced the outmanned militia force to retreat across the road into the town proper. There the militiamen were surrounded and isolated—and for the rest of the macabre night pointedly ignored by the marauders. The Viet Cong were not intent on a military victory but on the cold-blooded, monumental massacre of the helpless Montagnards.

To that end, long ugly belches of flame lashed out from every direction, garishly illuminating the refugee hamlet and searing and scorching everything in their path. The shrieking refugees still inside their houses were incinerated. Many of those who had time to get down into dogholes beneath the houses were asphyxiated. Spraying fire about in great whooshing arcs, the Viet Cong set everything afire: trees, fences, gardens, chickens, the careful piles of grain from the annual harvest. Huts that somehow survived the fiery holocaust were leveled with grenades. Then the hoses of fire were sprayed down inside the exposed burrows. Later, the Communists incinerated a patch of the main town just for good measure.

**NIGHT OF TERROR**

One mile away, at the town of Song Be, Dak Son's intended defenders, a battalion of South Vietnamese soldiers, clenched their fists in helplessness as they watched the flames on the plateau mount higher and higher into the dark sky. Their small force of helicopters had earlier been sent out on another mission and could not be recalled. A march on foot to relieve Dak Son would lead through a wild and deep ravine separating the burning hamlet from Song Be. It meant three miles on a tortuous and twisting trail in the darkness—and an almost certain Viet Cong ambush. Dak Son's only outside help during its long night of terror and death was a single C-47 Dragonship that hovered over the hamlet, spraying the surrounding fields with its miniguns. The grim gunners had no need of flares to spot their targets.

Only when they ran out of fuel for their flamethrowers did the Viet Cong resort to guns. Forcing 160 of the survivors out of their dogholes, they shot 60 of them to death on the spot. Then, finally abandoning the smoking ruins of Dak Son at dawn, they dragged away with them into the jungle another 100 of the survivors.
GHASTLY EMBRACE

In numb horror, the other survivors stumbled out to look for wives, children and friends. They held handkerchiefs and cabbage leaves to their faces to ward off the smell of burnt flesh that hung over everything. One by one the dogholes were emptied, giving up the fire-red, bloated, peeling remains of human beings. Charred children were locked in ghastly embrace, infants welded to their mother's breasts. The victims were almost all women and children. The dead adults were covered with scorched mats and blankets salvaged from the ashes, the bodies of babies laid in bamboo baskets. One man lost 13 members of his family. All told, 252 of the unarmed Montagnards had been murdered and another 100 kidnapped; 500 were missing, either dead or fled into the hills. Nearly 50 were wounded, 33 with third-degree burns over up to 20% of their bodies. Three U.S. Army doctors treating them in Song Be's dispensary were sickened and appalled by the sight. One remarked that any hospital in the U.S. would be paralyzed by that many burn cases being brought in at once. The doctors did their best.

The Viet Cong's aim was clearly to frighten the rest of the Montagnards from seeking haven in government towns like Dak Son. But in this case, Communist terrorism had clearly overshot its mark. Chanting and weeping as they buried their dead, the Montagnard survivors resolved to stay in Dak Son and rebuild the hamlet. More than 100 men immediately volunteered for irregular-force training and a chance to defend Dak Son should the men with "the guns that shoot fire" ever show up again.

[From the New York Times, Sept. 23, 1968]

FOE FAILS TO FREE P.W.'S, KILLS THEM

VIETCONG SAID TO HAVE SHOT 20 WHO CHOSE TO STAY IN RAIDED COMPOUND

(By Douglas Robinson)

SAIGON, SOUTH VIETNAM, September 22.—Twenty prisoners of war were shot to death early today by a Vietcong force seeking to rescue them from a South Vietnamese prisoner-of-war camp, according to a spokesman for the South Vietnamese military command.

He said the prisoners were killed after they had refused to leave the camp with the soldiers who attacked it after a heavy mortar assault drove the South Vietnamese guards away.

The incident occurred at the prisoner-of-war compound at Binhson, 18 miles north of the city of Quangngai.

The South Vietnamese spokesman said that 70 civilians in the nearby town were wounded during the mortar attack. He added that 10 of the South Vietnamese soldiers defending the camp were killed and 9 wounded.

Exactly what happened at the prisoner compound was far from clear. The Government spokesman said he had no information on how many prisoners were in the camp, nor did he know how many prisoners left with the Vietcong.
Equally confusing was the initial report this morning that 44 prisoners had been wounded in the shelling. The spokesman said he had no word that prisoners had been wounded.

[From the Washington Post, June 16, 1970]

SHOCK GRIPS RED MASSACRE VILLAGE

(By Laurence Stern)

PHUTHANH, SOUTH VIETNAM, June 15.—Seared and broken bodies have all been taken away and candles, standing in soft drink cans, flickered in their memory today amidst the wreckage.

Otherwise this village is stirring out of its shock and there is a sense amongst the survivors, even in the wide-eyed stare of the children, that Phuthanh has become something of a landmark in the Vietnamese war.

It was here that North Vietnamese sapper battalion T-59 came at two a.m. Thursday led by local Vietcong cadre and killed an estimated 100 civilians with the precision of a deadly corps de ballet.

Already the incident at Phuthanh is being described as the Communist version of the American massacre at Mylai and the television crews and reporters have begun pouring in. The government loudspeaker trucks are reminding the villagers, as if they didn’t already know, of the enormity of what happened.

"Get a picture of that baby crying," said the short, hard muscled American marine. "I want to get all the pictures I can because I am sick and tired of everyone talking about just American atrocities."

He had lived through early Thursday in Phuthanh when 11 of his fellow marines lost arms and legs and the 12th was killed.

The village of Phuthanh lies 18 miles south of Danang along Route 1, South Vietnam’s main north-south highway. It has been scarred by more than two decades of war lying as it does midway between Hanoi and Saigon. It is in the area that cradled the Vietminh movement.

Thursday’s attack had been preceded by warnings. The Vietcong had left notes warning villagers that they would be beheaded unless they stopped collaborating with the Americans.

Warning notes in English were also found, presumably addressed to members of the Marines’ CUP (combined unit pacification) team working in the village to train regional and popular forces for their role as a local defense force.

Sappers had previously blown up the bridge across the Baren River which carries Highway 1 into Phuthanh.

The lone prisoner taken in the attack informed his questioners that the sapper strike was aimed at the families of the government’s regional and popular force members. If that was the objective, it was fully achieved.

“The mortar attack started at 2 a.m.,” recounted Marine Lt. Thomas Miller, New Kensington, Pa., the CUP team commander in Phuthanh. “They laid the rounds down along the road together with small arms fire to keep everyone pinned down. We were mortared solidly from two to three-thirty.”
"About a half hour after the mortaring started, elements of the VC came in from the west and east and started burning the hooches. They were carrying grenade and satchel charges and dropped them into the mouths of bunkers.

"There were 22 civilians right in there." He pointed to the bunker, a large metal cylinder covered with a mound of dirt. "These people were asphyxiated. We found six or eight in a sitting position stone dead. The grenade just burned up the oxygen.

"And over there they called the mama san and kids outside then shot them in the chest."

The sappers had entered the rear of the village, encountering no resistance from the regional force of more than a hundred stationed in Phuthanh, which straddles Highway 1 in a compact square of about a half a mile.

No ambushes had been set up by the local territorial forces who are supposed to provide the security screen behind which the program called pacification is intended to flourish. Ambushes are designed to intercept invading forces before they reach a village.

"The regional forces were very good at defending their own compounds. And hell, they probably saved my life," said a Marine advisor. He pointed to the barbed wire fence just beyond the Marine compound where a regional force gunner killed two attacking Vietcong.

"But they didn't protect the people. We have been trying to get them to set up ambushes but it is just not in their tradition. The provincial forces tend to head for their compound and the PSDF (Peoples Self Defense Force) are mainly old men and girls with carbines."

The official military release on the day after the battle said, "Regional and popular force casualties were light." One estimate here was that seven were wounded.

The only troops deployed beyond the edge of Phuthanh in fact was Marine CUP Team Nine led by Cpl. D. M. Paul, who had been recommended for the Bronze Star. He lost both feet in Phuthanh Thursday morning and was given a meritorious promotion to sergeant.

When the mortaring and small arms fire began, squad leader Paul pulled his team into the market place where he calculated the Marine and South Vietnamese defenders could better cover the advancing Communist forces.

But the invading sappers responded by mortaring the marketplace, and it was there that six of the Marines were seriously wounded and the advance gunner, Cpl. Stephen Geer, was killed.

While Paul's unit was pinned down on the West, several sapper platoons ran through the lanes of the villagers east of Highway 1 shooting and dropping their grenades into the mouths of the bunkers where most of the villagers had taken refuge.

Luu Quan, a dwarf who sweeps Phuthanh's market, said he, his wife and eight-year-old son were in their bunker when one of the Vietcong attackers shouted to them "stay in there or you will be hurt." They waited several minutes and then scuffled for the school house for safety.

In the confusion they lost contact with the son, Luu San. It was not until the next morning that Luu Quan found his son half dismembered near the charred bunker. The child had been torn apart
by the grenade that a later party of sappers had dropped at the bunker entrance.

Through an interpreter today Luu Quan asked, "What is President Nixon going to do now that the VC have come and killed so many of our people? I am sure they will be back in three or four days."

Afterwards two Marines were talking in the market place. One was radio man Sgt. Billy Hendleton, a wiry Kentuckian who called in the guns on the night of the attack.

"I hear they are having trouble at the University of Kentucky," he said with an ironic smile while standing in the middle of a pile of rubble. The other Marine said bitterly, 'Don't worry, Sarge. When we get back there will be enough ammunition to take care of that situation."

A helicopter finally arrived with a chaplain, an army major just returning from delivering a morning service to American troops nearby. As the chopper rose over Phuthanh a small spotter plane could be seen circling several miles away.

A few minutes later there was a huge question mark shaped cloud of white smoke from an American airstrike somewhere in Quangnam province.

[From the Congressional Record, June 5, 1970]

THE VIETCONG TERROR AGAINST THE FREE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

STATEMENT BY SENATOR GALE McGEE (WYO.)

Mr. McGee. Mr. President, critics of the South Vietnamese Government are prone to seize on every aberration from utopian democracy as a proof that this Government is dictatorial and unworthy of support. More than one of them has argued that there is really nothing to choose between the dictatorship in the south and the dictatorship in the north. I am not among those who are prepared to give blanket endorsement to every single action of the South Vietnamese Government. I believe that that Government has been guilty of certain mistakes and certain excesses. In particular, I deplore the recent imprisonment of Tran Ngoc Chau, an official who has been given the highest rating by all Americans who have worked with him. But if the critics want to be fair, they must also be prepared to give credit where credit is due.

Under the present Government, a constituent assembly was elected, in elections that were given high marks for fairness by virtually all observers and correspondents; a democratic constitution was hammered out after months of vigorous debate; free elections were held for the National Assembly and for the Senate and for the provincial assemblies; village self-government, which was suspended by President Diem, was restored, and over the past 3 years some 2,100 villages have elected their own governing councils, in harmony with the centuries-old Vietnamese pattern of village democracy. An ambitious land reform program has been introduced, under which the land will be turned over to those who till it, very much along the lines of the enormously effective land reform program in Taiwan.
For all of these things the Thieu government must be given credit—and all the more credit because this progress has been achieved in the midst of a bloody and bitterly fought conflict.

Apart from ignoring the truly remarkable progress that has been achieved in many fields, I have the impression that some of the critics who equate the Saigon government with the Hanoi regime simply do not know the meaning of totalitarian dictatorship.

How false their equation is should be apparent to anyone who is willing to take the time to look at a few basic facts.

Hanoi has one political party, the Communist Party. Saigon has several score political parties, competing with each other frantically for cuts of the political pie at various levels.

Hanoi has one newspaper, which faithfully reflects the Communist Party line and only the Communist Party line. Saigon has 25 Vietnamese newspapers, 10 Chinese newspapers, two English and one French. And while there is censorship, there is also much vigorous criticism of the Government in the Saigon press.

But perhaps the most impressive evidence that there is far more democracy in South Vietnam than there is dictatorship is provided by the existence of a free trade union movement.

In the North, of course, there is no free trade union movement. As in every other Communist country, there are government controlled unions, in which membership is compulsory and whose officials are selected by the Communist Party. Strikes of any kind are not tolerated by these unions, because in Communist countries unions are instruments for government control over the workers, rather than instruments through which the workers may seek to improve their lot.

In South Vietnam, in contradistinction, there is a free trade union movement—the Vietnamese Confederation of Labor, or CTV—500,000 strong. The officials of the affiliated unions and of the confederation are elected by the workers themselves. The unions engage in strikes and fight militantly on many fronts to improve the lot of their members.

The tenant farmers’ union, for example, played an extremely active role in lobbying for the land reform legislation approved earlier this year by the National Assembly. And recently, the CTV announced that it planned to organize a farmer-labor party of its own, on a program approximating the political programs of the European social democratic parties, and compete in its own name in the political arena.

The CTV is headed by Mr. Tran Quoc Buu, a veteran of more than 20 years’ trade union activity, whose courage and independence is respected even by his enemies and who served a term in prison under President Diem. A measure of the esteem in which Buu is held; not merely in Vietnam but throughout the western Pacific, is the fact that he has for some time now served as president of the major regional trade union organization, the Brotherhood of Asian Trade Unions—BATU.*

Sometimes the CTV has had to operate against government opposition. But on other occasions it has received welcome support from the

---

*In late September of 1971, the Vietcong attempted to assassinate Mr. Tran Quoc Buu by placing a bomb in his living room.
Thieu-Ky government. In 1969, for example, the provincial police sought to suppress the textile workers strike in Gia Dinh by arresting the woman organizer and ordering a blockade of food supplies to starve out sympathy strikers. At that point, Nguyen Cao Ky, who was then prime minister, intervened to release the union organizer and end the blockade and suspend the overzealous police chief.

Despite their many political differences with the Government, the leaders of the CTV unions have been bitterly and militantly anti-Vietcong because they know only too well what has happened to the free trade union movement and to free trade union leaders under the Communist regime in the north. Because of this, the free trade union officials of South Vietnam have been favorite targets of the Vietcong terrorists.

Mr. President, for the purpose of illustrating the kind of terror that can be expected if the Vietcong takes over, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks a tabulation I have received from the CVT, listing over 60 officials of their union movement who have been assassinated by the Communists over the past 10 years.

I also ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the statement issued by the Vietnamese Confederation of Labor on February 7, 1968, condemning the Communists for the treacherous attacks they made on so many Vietnamese cities in their so-called Tet offensive.

Finally, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a statement adopted by the AFL-CIO executive council in March of 1969, reiterating its support for the Vietnamese Confederation of Labor.

There being no objection, the items were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:
### LIST OF CVT CADRE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES IN SOUTH VIETNAM FOR THE FREE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Unites local</th>
<th>Union position</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>How, where, when assassinated by VC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giao Can</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Farmers local Dien Ben district</td>
<td>Local representative</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Assassinated while carrying on union activities on Mar. 15, 1965.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doan Kiem</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Farmers province union of Quang Nam</td>
<td>District secretary</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Assassinated while carrying on union activities on Mar. 15, 1963.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nguyen Luong</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Farmers local of Quang Nam province</td>
<td>Provincial representative</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Assassinated while carrying on union activities on Apr. 20, 1968.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nguyen Buong</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Hang Gia local</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Assassinated while carrying on union activities in 1966.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tran Minh Chanh</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Plantation workers local Thanh An district</td>
<td>Local representative</td>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>Assassinated while carrying on union activities on Apr. 9, 1964. at Than An.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bao Van Thanh</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Secretary General</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Kidnapped and presumed killed by VC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Cong Tung</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Local Representative of Quang</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC in 1964.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Hoang Vinh</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC in 1965.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Van Hoang</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Farmers Local of Binh Thuan province</td>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Died from torture in 1953.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tran Van Hoai</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Farmers local of Phuoc Thanh district</td>
<td>Local secretary</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC at Thanh My in 1963.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tam Choc</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Committee member</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC at Thanh My in 1963.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nguyen Toan</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Farmers local of Quang Hai county</td>
<td>Secretary of Tu Nguyen local</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC at Tu Nguyen in 1964.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nguyen Sau</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Secretary of Tu-Luang local</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC at Tu-Luang in 1963.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Van Tham</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Vice president of Tu-Luang local</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC in 1965 at Tu Loung.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tran Can Nghi</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Farmers union of Nghi Loc</td>
<td>President of Nghi Loc local</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC when carrying union activities at Nghi Loc in 1967.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ton Ngoc Trang</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Driver</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC when carrying out union activities on July 14, 1969.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Van Hong</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Local vice president</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huynh Van Trang</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC on Dec. 6, 1968.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phan Thei</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC in 1965.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Van Huong</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Farmers local of Binh Dinh Tuong province</td>
<td>Local representative</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC when carrying out union activities on July 14, 1969.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nguyen Van Nghi</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>do.</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC when carrying out union activities on July 14, 1969.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Role/Position</td>
<td>Location/Union</td>
<td>Fate/Details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tran Chanh Hol</td>
<td>__________ Fishermen union of Quang Tie province</td>
<td>Vice president</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC and assassinated by VC in 1961.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Khanh</td>
<td>__________ Fishermen's local of Ky-Anh</td>
<td>Local secretary</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC at his home in 1963.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dang Duc Tam</td>
<td>__________ Farmers local of Ky-Ly</td>
<td>Local vice president</td>
<td>Kidnapped and assassinated by VC in 1961.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinh Thanh</td>
<td>__________ Farmers local of Ky-Nghia</td>
<td>Local president</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC at his home in 1964.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nguyen Anh</td>
<td>__________ Farmers local of Ky-Anh</td>
<td>Local secretary</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC at his home in 1963.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho Van Anh</td>
<td>__________ Farmers local of Ky-Nghia</td>
<td>Local vice president</td>
<td>Killed by warfare in 1967.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dang Dat</td>
<td>__________ Farmers local of Binh Quy</td>
<td>Local vice president</td>
<td>Killed by warfare in 1966.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tran Quang Phuc</td>
<td>__________ Farmers local of Ky-Sa nh</td>
<td>__________ Farmers local of Ky-Sa nh</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC in 1963.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nguyen Do</td>
<td>__________ Farmers local of Ky-Nghia</td>
<td>__________ Farmers local of Ky-Sa nh</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC in 1963.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L供电 Van Quang</td>
<td>__________ Farmers local of Ky-Sa nh</td>
<td>__________ Farmers local of Ky-Sa nh</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC at his home in 1966.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vo-Thong</td>
<td>__________ Farmers local of Binh Quy</td>
<td>__________ Farmers local of Binh Quy</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC in 1963.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vu-Van-Nguyen</td>
<td>__________ Lambrette drivers Union of Saigon-Glading</td>
<td>__________ Social committee driver member</td>
<td>Assassinated by VC at 37, 1965.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dao Ngoc Tam</td>
<td>__________ Plantation workers' Courtescy local</td>
<td>__________ Secretary</td>
<td>Kidnapped on Dec. 2, 1965, and presumed dead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lai Bao Nong</td>
<td>__________ Plantation workers union of Long Khan</td>
<td>__________ Secretary</td>
<td>Kidnapped on Dec. 6, 1962, and presumed dead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nguyen Van Huan</td>
<td>__________ Plantation Hang Gon local</td>
<td>__________ Representative</td>
<td>Kidnapped at Long Khan in May 1963.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nguyen Bao</td>
<td>__________ Plantation Hang Gon local</td>
<td>__________ Representative</td>
<td>Kidnapped at Long Khan in October 1962.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nguyen Buih</td>
<td>__________ Plantation Hang Gon local</td>
<td>__________ Representative</td>
<td>Kidnapped at Long Khan on Nov. 6, 1963.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vu Van Quan</td>
<td>__________ Plantation workers' Courtancy local</td>
<td>__________ Member</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC at Long Khan and presumed dead on Nov. 6, 1963.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nguyen Van Truy</td>
<td>__________ Plantation workers' union &quot;Tran Van Phong&quot;</td>
<td>__________ Representative</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC at Long Khan in 1965.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Van Lang</td>
<td>__________ Plantation workers local &quot;Tran Van Phong&quot;</td>
<td>__________ Representative</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC at Long Khan and presumed dead on Nov. 6, 1963.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tran Van Thai</td>
<td>__________ Plantation workers local &quot;Tran Van Phong&quot;</td>
<td>__________ Financial officer</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC at Long Khan and presumed dead on Nov. 6, 1963.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pham Van Tot</td>
<td>__________ Trade Unions Council of Binh Duong</td>
<td>__________ Secretary general</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC at Binh Duong in 1955 and presumed dead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Van Minh</td>
<td>__________ Trade Unions Council of Binh Duong</td>
<td>__________ Secretary general</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC in 1959 and presumed dead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Van Nguen</td>
<td>__________ Trade Unions Council of Binh Duong</td>
<td>__________ Secretary general</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC in 1959 and presumed dead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Thai Tuy</td>
<td>__________ Trade Unions Council of Binh Duong</td>
<td>__________ Secretary general</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC in 1959 and presumed dead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hueynh Thanh Hieu</td>
<td>__________ __________ __________ __________</td>
<td>__________ Secretary general</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC at Binh Duong in 1955 and presumed dead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phan Thanh Chau</td>
<td>__________ Goldsmith's Union of Vinh Long</td>
<td>__________ President</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC and presumed dead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bach Le</td>
<td>__________ __________ __________ __________</td>
<td>__________ Secretary general</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC and presumed dead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tran Chanh Ho</td>
<td>__________ __________ __________ __________</td>
<td>__________ Secretary general</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC and presumed dead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Thanh</td>
<td>__________ __________ __________ __________</td>
<td>__________ Secretary general</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC and presumed dead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tran Van Co</td>
<td>__________ __________ __________ __________</td>
<td>__________ Secretary general</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC and presumed dead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bui Tho</td>
<td>__________ __________ __________ __________</td>
<td>__________ Secretary general</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC and presumed dead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do Phuc</td>
<td>__________ __________ __________ __________</td>
<td>__________ Secretary general</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC and presumed dead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Tai Nguyen</td>
<td>__________ __________ __________ __________</td>
<td>__________ Secretary general</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC and presumed dead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Tai Nguyen</td>
<td>__________ __________ __________ __________</td>
<td>__________ Secretary general</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC and presumed dead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Trung Quoc</td>
<td>__________ __________ __________ __________</td>
<td>__________ Secretary general</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC and presumed dead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nguyen Van Chi</td>
<td>__________ Federation Plantation workers of Phuoc Tuy</td>
<td>__________ Secretary of Binh-Ba local</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC at Phuoc Tuy in 1957, and presumed killed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pham Cong Do</td>
<td>__________ Federation Plantation workers of Phuoc Tuy</td>
<td>__________ President of union</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC at Bu Dop on July 19, 1966.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nguyen Nam Tien</td>
<td>__________ Federation Plantation workers of Phuoc Tuy</td>
<td>__________ Treasurer of Thuan-Loi local</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC at Thuan Loi in June 1965 and presumed killed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huyenh Van Tu</td>
<td>__________ Federation Plantation workers of Phuoc Tuy</td>
<td>__________ Cadre</td>
<td>Kidnapped by VC on July 24, 1961, at Phuoc Tuy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FREE VIETNAM LABOR DENOUNCES VIETCONG ATTACKS

President Tran Quoc Buu of the Vietnamese Confederation of Labor (CVT) on February 7 sent the following cable to the AFL-CIO:

We at the CVT are safe and sound. We appeal urgently to free world union organizations to aid the workers and other Vietnamese who were savagely attacked by the Communists during the truce of Tet, the traditional sacred feast of Vietnam.

President Tran Quoc Buu and General Secretary Tran Huu Quyen of the Vietnamese Confederation of Labor (CVT) issued the following statement on February 2:

Considering that the armed forces of the Vietcong have invaded the capital area of Saigon, Cholon, Gia-Dinh and in chief towns during the new lunar year's truce; considering that the people's quarters generally and the working class quarters especially were treacherously used by the Vietcong for concealment and as a battleground to combat the army of the Republic of Vietnam; considering that the workers and their families have become as a matter of fact the miserable victims of street fighting inside the cities; considering that the permanent position of CVT is anti-war and for realization of peace by constructive social action, based on brotherhood, in order to protect the sacred freedom of man within the framework of social communities;

The Bureau of CVT, in its extraordinary meeting on February 2, 1968 in Saigon issued the following communique:

"We condemn the criminal actions of the Communists causing war in the days of truce.
"We earnestly appeal to all brothers and sisters, cadres and members over the country to be calm and to tighten their ranks in these troubled and perilous days. We earnestly request the government to apply suitable measures to protect the lives and property of the people and to restore quickly the general security and the public order."

AFL-CIO BAKCS CVT

(Statement by the AFL-CIO Executive Council)

The Executive Council notes the visit of President Buu of the CVT. After hearing his report about the activities of the Confederation of Vietnamese Workers and his being encouraged by the cooperative attitude manifested by the head of state, President Nguyen Van Thieu, we reaffirm our policy of cooperating with the CVT for the advancement of free trade unionism, democracy, social justice and a just and enduring peace.
In this connection, we note with satisfaction the recently announced readiness of AID to contribute substantially towards a $100 million undertaking for helping the government of South Vietnam speed a massive program of land reform and redistribution.

We emphasize that the success of this program and its being safeguarded against the sabotage by Communist infiltrators and undermining by corrupt forces can be best assured through organizations like the CVT participating actively in its execution so as to assure that the full benefits of the agrarian reform be enjoyed by the tillers of the soil.


REDS KILL 15, HURT 45 IN RAID ON VIET ORPHANAGE, TEMPLE

SAIGON.—Enemy troops attacked a Buddhist orphanage and temple south of Da Nang today, killing 15 Vietnamese and wounding 45, most of them orphans, a government spokesman said.

He said enemy gunners first fired 50 mortar shells into the undefended complex of buildings at Duc Duc and then about 80 uniformed North Vietnamese soldiers ran through, hurling hand grenades.

The attack was one of 50 shellings or ground assaults mounted by Viet Cong-North Vietnamese troops across South Vietnam. The enemy activity apparently was designed to disrupt today’s election in South Vietnam for 30 senators.

TWO POLLS HIT

Direct attacks were made against two polling places some 225 miles northeast of Saigon. They left seven civilians and two soldiers dead and 35 civilians and a militiaman wounded.

Military sources in Da Nang said the casualty list in the attack on the Buddhist complex at Duc Duc, 22 miles southwest of Da Nang, probably would lengthen.

The heavily damaged orphanage and temple were unguarded, the sources said, because “the Buddhists didn’t want any troops there.”

The nearest government soldiers were Vietnamese marines some 500 yards to the west and southwest. They were pinned down by another mortar attack that killed three marines.

CIVILIAN VICTIMS OF COMMUNIST TERROR IN SOUTH VIETNAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Killed</th>
<th>Abducted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1957-63</td>
<td>6,100</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>1,759</td>
<td>6,354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>8,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1,792</td>
<td>3,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>3,706</td>
<td>8,369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>5,389</td>
<td>8,759</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Killed</th>
<th>Abducted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1969 (through November)</td>
<td>6,232</td>
<td>8,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>5,951</td>
<td>6,672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36,181</td>
<td>53,758</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Does not include February 1968 Tet offensive in which an estimated 10,000 civilians lost their lives, including the Hue massacre of more than 3,000 civilians.

2. More than 15,000 were wounded in addition to those killed in 1969.

Note: The number of Vietnamese civilians wounded by enemy acts of terror has been averaging 2 to 3 times the number killed. In 1970, 12,348 civilians were wounded by deliberate acts of terror by the VC/NVA.
BRITISH GOVERNMENT, MAY 1968

[Editor's Note: The following document was prepared for the British Government by its representatives in Vietnam.]

THE VIETCONG'S CIVILIAN TARGETS

During the first four months of 1968, the Vietcong killed 6,459 civilians, wounded 17,296 and abducted 4,182, according to official figures released on April 25—four days after a claim by the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSV) that it has demonstrated "respect for the lives and property of Vietnamese civilians and foreign residents in South Vietnam".

This claim, reiterating guarantees contained in the NFLSV's enlarged 1967 "Political Programme", was made by its Liberation Press Agency through the official (North) Vietnam News Agency (VKA) on April 21. But on December 28, 1967, Hanoi Radio reported that the Vietcong had—

- Raided many cities, districts and provincial capitals.
- Punished the wicked agents and spies;
- Vigorously attacked the pacification teams and punished about a dozen stubborn agents each night;
- Destroyed the puppet administration in the villages and hamlets bit by bit ** *

On March 12, 1968, the South Vietnamese Liaison Mission to the International Control Commission established under the 1954 Geneva Agreements stated that during 1967, the Vietcong had killed 3,900 civilians, wounded 8,962 and kidnapped 712 compared with the 1966 figures of 2,593, 5,617 and 885 respectively. Figures for the four previous years were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Killed</th>
<th>Wounded</th>
<th>Kidnapped</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>1,719</td>
<td>6,456</td>
<td>9,698</td>
<td>17,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>2,073</td>
<td>8,791</td>
<td>7,262</td>
<td>18,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>1,811</td>
<td>8,475</td>
<td>6,710</td>
<td>16,996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>2,032</td>
<td>2,125</td>
<td>6,929</td>
<td>11,086</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MASS EXECUTIONS

The Vietcong's increasing terrorism against civilians—reflected in these statistics—has been particularly marked since the Communist breaking of the Tet (Lunar New Year) truce in February.

On April 30, it was disclosed that the Vietcong had carried out mass executions in the Hue area during the Tet offensive. Nineteen burial sites containing about 1,000 of their victims have recently been discovered. Some bodies were mutilated and others were found in conditions indicating that death had been caused by being buried alive. Among those found were Mr. Trần Dien, a Senator in South Viet-
nam's National Assembly, four officials of the Vietnam Nationalist Party, hamlet chiefs and their wives, teachers, shopkeepers, students and children. The victims also included two French priests and three German doctors from the Hue University Medical School.

Survivors told of the Vietcong's summary trials, torture and condemnation of civilians—including women and schoolboys—on such charges as being a "reactionary" or "opposing the revolution." A father of nine was buried alive because he had a son in the South Vietnamese Army. Some were forced to dig their own graves, and many who were called by Vietcong agents to attend a political education meeting were never seen again by their families. A Buddhist monk at the Tang Quang Tu Pagoda reported overhearing Vietcong execution parties working each night during the first two weeks of February. The search for graves is continuing.

INTIMIDATION OF LEADERS

Since the formation of South Vietnam's civilian government, the Vietcong have been striving to penetrate the cities and strike at the South Vietnamese central administration, including those members elected in the national polls in September–October 1967. Even before this, when the new South Vietnamese Constitution was being drawn up, terrorists were attempting to intimidate government members. On April 3, 1967, two National Assembly deputies received parcels containing an exploding device. The next day bomb parcels were also delivered to National Assembly members Nguyen Dac Dan and Nguyen Van Dinh, who had also received threatening letters. In both cases, the explosives failed to detonate. On December 14 the Vietcong assassinated a member of the new House of Representatives, Bui Quang San.

Parallel with attempts to disrupt the Presidential elections, terrorist tactics were used at rural elections with attacks on polling booths, the abduction of candidates and the assassination of elected officials. Twelve candidates were abducted from Vinh Tho village in April, 1967. On April 16, one third of a village was destroyed and many villagers—due to vote in the local elections that day—were shot. Between August 21 and December 14, the Vietcong murdered the family of the Binh An village chief in Thua Thien Province; the chiefs of the Due Hanh (Bin Tuy Province), Phuoc Thanh (Dalat Province) and Tra Loi (Ba Xuyen Province), and the vice president of Than Dao (Binh Tuong). The headmaster of An Phuoc hamlet school in Tuyen Duc was assassinated on October 7 and a school in Xuan Thoi Thuong in Gia Dinh was shelled and destroyed on August 17.

ATTACKS ON "PACIFICATION TEAMS"

The South Vietnamese "pacification programme", which seeks to give security and help to the villages, and pacification teams (comprising specially trained young men who go to live in the villages) are a major Vietcong target. On January 20, the NFLSV's "People's Liberation Armed Forces Command" ordered the "annihilation" of pacification workers and the stepping up of "the propaganda and proselytising task among enemy troops, their families, the personnel
of the puppet administration”, and recommended reward for fulfil­ment of these “missions”. The Liberation Press Agency communiqué celebrating the NLF’s seventh anniversary declared that during 1966-67 “thousands of pacification cadres were killed, wounded or captured”. (VNA, December 31, 1967). On September 28, terrorists shot and wounded five pacification workers in Tay Ninh Province; four more were killed in Vinh Binh on October 3. In Binh Hoa village on December 2 terrorists attacked a pacification team, killing eight and wounding four. On December 12, 12 pacification workers were killed in an ambush on the outskirts of Saigon; the team was on its way to distribute gifts to villagers.

To try to nullify the work of pacification teams the Vietcong have attacked villages, killing the inhabitants and destroying homes. Those seeking to live in government-controlled areas have been intimidated. On May 4 terrorists set fire to 130 homes in the Tra Hy refugee camp, killing two and wounding 30; grenades were thrown into houses in Le Son hamlet northeast of Saigon on April 10, killing eight and wounding 16. On June 5, 14 people of the Cai Doi “new life” hamlet, Kieng Tuong Province, were killed and 21 wounded and on August 2 two people died in an attack on a resettlement village in the central highlands. A week later Vietcong went into Vinh Xuan hamlet in Quang Ngai Province and killed 19 villagers and burnt 140 houses. On August 11 a refugee centre was attacked and 64 homes burned. A “new life” hamlet headquarters in Chau Doc Province was destroyed on October 25.

VILLAGERS ABDUCTED

Over 700 people are reported to have been abducted by the Vietcong in 1967, either to remove persons in authority from their posts, fill gaps in the ranks of the Vietcong or to deter South Vietnamese from taking shelter in government-controlled areas. On August 31, 38 young people were kidnapped from their village in Binh Dinh. Next day every villager in Ly Yen hamlet (Thua Thien) and Kim Nam hamlet (Quang Nam) was abducted. The chief of Tan Xuong hamlet in Khanh Hoa was kidnapped on October 5 and 13 young people were taken from Vi Le hamlet, Chuong Thien on November 7. Seven young people were kidnapped from a “new life” hamlet in Tay Ninh on December 14; the hamlet chief of Nam Thanh, Thua Thien, was abducted on December 25.

PENALTY FOR SUPPORTING THE GOVERNMENT

Villagers suspected of co-operating with the government are singled out for punishment. Guerrillas dressed as government troops infiltrated Binh Trieu hamlet on July 25, and shot five civilians they accused of being “spies for the national police”. On December 5 the Vietcong raided the Montagnard hamlet of Dak Son, Phnoc Long Province, killing 202 people; 100 others were reported missing. This was the villagers’ “punishment” for refusing to move to Vietcong-controlled areas. The NLF’s policy towards Montagnard hill dwellers was explained by a captured document reporting the Fourth Congress of the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN—the North Viet-
nameese control headquarters in the South) in March, 1966. It said: "The Highlands are strategic areas for us as well as for the enemy... In the immediate future, we must make sweeping efforts to set up firm bases in the Highlands, to attain overall control over, and from the mountainous regions consolidate and extend our bases to those in the delta".

ANTI-RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE

In May, 1967, the Vietcong threw 10 grenades into a Buddhist-run school in Phu Tho, causing 12 teenage casualties. On June 14 four Buddhist monks and four young followers were kidnapped from a pagoda at Thu Duc. On May 9 a mine exploded in the Buddhist Institute compound. A Buddhist pagoda six miles north-east of Saigon was burned down on July 4; three of the five civilians there were shot, one was believed to have drowned as he tried to escape, and one was wounded.

TERRORISM IN CROWDED AREAS

The largest number of civilian casualties are caused by Vietcong attacks in crowded areas.

On May 6, a hand grenade was thrown into a Chinese restaurant in Cholan, killing one and injuring several more. Four terrorists opened fire in a coffee shop in a Saigon suburb on June 13, killing a policeman and four local government officials; four other people were wounded. On June 22 a terrorist lobbed a grenade at a police vehicle, killing a child and wounding 29 people. A mine which exploded opposite a hotel in Cholon on July 9 killed three and injured 27 Vietnamese living nearby. On July 13 a grenade thrown into a Hue restaurant injured 22 people. A mortar attack on a shopping centre of Binh Long capital killed 21 and wounded 40. On July 26 a Vietcong bomb exploded in the market of An Thanh village Binh Duong Province, wounding three women and damaging surrounding houses.

A Vietcong mortar attack on the city of Can Tho on August 27 killed 37 and wounded 203. In Quang Tin, terrorists killed 200 people in their raid on the district headquarters on August 29. A grenade was thrown into a district market in Hoi An Province the following day, killing 25. A plastic bomb exploded in front of a restaurant in Binh Duong capital on September 1 killing two and wounding 30. Shells hit Tuy Hoa in Phu Yen Province on September 17; five people died and 14 were wounded. On October 26 a grenade was thrown into a variety show audience in Binh Duc village, Dinh Tuong Province, two died and 32 were injured. In another grenade incident on December 21, 27 people were hurt, including 11 children, at Tav Dinh market, Saigon. Guerrillas mortared a hospital near the Mekong Delta city of My Tho on December 30, wounding 17 civilians. An explosion in the market of a Mekong village on January 19 killed 25 and injured over 60 people.

TRANSPORT A TARGET

The Vietcong have also stepped up attacks on public transport, frequently blowing up buses and cars carrying men, women and children. Two buses were attacked on the Hue-Da Nang road on July 3, resulting in 17 deaths, another bus was mined in Thua Thien on July 9
killing 10 and wounding 18; on August 26, 22 people were killed when a bus hit a mine in Kien Hoa Province. An ambulance was mined on the My Tho-Cai Lay road on September 1, killing 18 and wounding 26. Terrorists shot at a car in Gia Dinh on September 22, wounding five, including two children. Twenty passengers of a bus were killed and eight wounded in a mine explosion on the Da Nang-Dai Loc road on October 5; a bus carrying orphans in Dinh Tuong Province was mined on December 23; nine people were killed, including four orphans.

**PRISONERS TORTURED**

In July, 1967, civilian prisoners released from a Vietcong camp in Quang Ngai Province were found to be suffering from malnutrition, and disease. Some had been shackled together. They reported that other inmates had been beaten to death and stoned in public executions in order to intimidate other prisoners into submissions. Twenty-one had starved to death, and half of the prisoners had been locked in wooden stocks clamped around their ankles.
Excerpts From

THE VIET CONG STRATEGY OF TERROR

By Douglas Pike

Douglas Pike, a U.S.I.A. officer, is the author of "The Viet Cong," a book generally accepted as the definitive text on the subject. He was also responsible for the most complete study yet made of the Communist massacre in Hue.

(Press Summary)

[From the Washington Post, May 16, 1970]

VC WOULD LIQUIDATE 3 MILLION IF IT WON, U.S. EXPERT CONTENDS

By Robert G. Kaiser

SAIGON, May 14.—One of the U.S. government's leading experts on the Vietcong has written a paper predicting that "if the Communists win decisively in South Vietnam, all political opposition, actual or potential, would be systematically eliminated."

The author of the paper is Douglas Pike, who has written two books on the Vietnamese Communists and is now United States Information Service officer in Tokyo. He wrote "The Viet Cong Strategy of Terror," a 125-page monograph earlier this year. The U.S. mission here plans to release it soon.

Pike's work seems to be a rejoinder to those who have mocked suggestions that the Communists would wipe out thousands of their opponents if they took over South Vietnam. Pike says that if the Communists win the war here decisively ("and the key word is decisively," he writes), the result will be "a night of the long knives" to wipe out all conceivable dissidents—perhaps 3 million persons.

Pike contends the massacre would go on in secret, after all foreigners had been expelled from Vietnam. "The world would call it peace," Pike writes.

He cites a list of 15 categories of citizens who would be murdered, saying such a list of categories is often found in captured documents. Pike notes a statement by Col. Tran Van Dac, one of the highest ranking Communists ever to defect to the Saigon regime, that "there are 3 million South Vietnamese on the blood debt list."

Pike's predictions are the most dramatic aspect of his paper. Most of it is devoted to an analysis of the Vietcong's present and past uses of terror. A major section analyzes the 1968 massacres at Hue.

"It would not be worthwhile nor is it the purpose of this monograph
to produce a word picture of Vietnamese Communists as fiendish fanatics with blood dripping from their hands," Pike writes. Rather, he says, he wants to describe how the Vietcong use and justify terror as a crucial part of their war strategy.

Current Vietcong doctrine, Pike contends, calls for terror for three purposes: to diminish the allies' forces, to maintain or boost Communist morale, and to scare and disorient the populace. He says the enemy seems to be moving more and more toward a terrorist strategy as part of a new kind of protracted war. (Official government terrorist statistics show a sharp increase in kidnappings, assassinations and other terrorism in recent months.)

In central Vietnam, Pike writes, Vietcong units are given terrorist quotas to fulfill. As an example, he cites intelligence information that special Vietcong squads in parts of two provinces were told to "annihilate" 277 persons during the first half of 1969.

In the most detailed analysis of the killings at Hue yet published, Pike writes that "despite contrary appearances, virtually no Communist killing was due to rage, frustration or panic during the Communist withdrawal" from Hue, which the Vietcong held for 24 days in February 1968.

"Such explanations are often heard," Pike continues, "but they fail to hold up under scrutiny. Quite the contrary, to trace back any single killing is to discover that almost without exception it was the result of a decision, rational and justifiable in the Communist mind."

According to Pike's analysis of the Hue massacres, the Communists changed their minds twice after seizing the city on Jan. 31. At first, Pike writes—he claims, captured documents show this—the Vietcong expected to hold Hue for just seven days.

During that first phase, Pike says, the Vietcong purposefully executed "key individuals whose elimination would greatly weaken the government's administrative apparatus..."

After they held on more than seven days, Pike's theory continues, the Communists decided they would be able to stay in Hue indefinitely. Prisoners, ralliers and intercepted messages at the time confirm this, according to Pike.

In this euphoric mood, he writes, the Communists set out to reconstruct Hue society, eliminating not just specific individuals, but whole categories of citizens whose existence would hinder creation of a new revolutionary society. Perhaps 2,000 of the estimated 5,800 persons killed at Hue were slain during this second phase, Pike suggests.

Eventually, Pike continues, the battle turned against the Communists in Hue and they realized they would have to abandon the city. This realization led to phase three, Pike writes: "elimination of witnesses." The entire underground Vietcong structure in Hue had probably revealed itself by this time, and now had to protect itself by eliminating many who could later turn them in to government authorities, Pike theorizes.

For this reason, citizens taken from their homes merely for political indoctrination had to be killed when the Communists decided to flee Hue, Pike suggests.
Chapter I. Overview

It is more difficult than might first appear to distinguish between terror and violence or between terror and war. • • •

In part, of course, this is a semantic question—that is, the difference between terror and force. What seems more to the point is not language but thought pattern, world view, philosophy of politics or however you want to characterize the question which divides us most sharply in the 20th Century: what are the limits to force, irrational violence, terror, in that ascending order, in bringing about social change? All of us fall somewhere along this force-violence-terror continuum. Toward one end are those who believe that less rather than more is justified; toward the other are those who advocate more on grounds of imperative need or as principle. • • •

The communists in Viet-Nam, as we shall see, are far down the continuum. Terror is an essential ingredient of nearly all their programs. Current intelligence in Viet-Nam points to a continuation of this. Indicators, such as information on communist training programs, weaponry shipments, personnel assignment, public statements on doctrine and strategy, all suggest that the communists are in the process of reverting to the so-called protracted conflict thesis, perhaps in some new form. Much of the intelligence indicates that this new form will involve what in part might be termed a strategy of terror. An example is the conversion of communist military and paramilitary elements into wide-ranging, well-trained sappers or city commandos assigned to full-time terrorism. This does not necessarily mean a substantial increase in terror incidents—already the incident rate is at a high level—but that terror will become even more central to communist strategy than in the recent past. • • •

• • • Most of the world that pays any attention to the war in Viet-Nam learned years ago the communists engage systematically in what we here define as terror (indeed, as we shall see, the communists assert they have a right to do so). If there still be at this late date any who regard them as friendly agrarian reformers, nothing here could possibly change that view. Hopefully, this monograph will be of some aid in understanding communist doctrine and strategy as they unfold during the crucial next year or two. If it also is an indictment of communist behavior, it is because the behavior is indictable.

Chapter II. Doctrine and Programs

The goal of the communists in Viet-Nam is unification of North and South Viet-Nam under the communist banner. Their leaders have reiterated this goal in virtually every speech since 1954. It is implicit in their every act, in Viet-Nam or in Paris. To most South Vietnamese, this is what the war in Viet-Nam is all about. The issue is not peace, the issue is forced unification.

• • • • • • • • • • • • •
Population Control

Control of the people, and here we are chiefly concerned with the two-thirds or so of the population living in the nation's villages, is sought through a number of specific methods. One means is enmeshing the villager in a network of social movements and organizations which develop social pressures to keep the dissenter in line, probably the most powerful force in any society. Another is through intensive communication efforts: education, "thought reform", agitation, propaganda. A third means is coercion, force and terror. All, and others besides, are essential to the system.

* * * * * * * * *

* * * What is vital is the underpinning of terror, the ominous spectre always hovering in the background; ideally, threatening but never emerging. Of course credibility demands periodic demonstrations that one still is able and willing to use terror.

Too often communist terror is portrayed in simplistic terms: viciousness for its own sake, terror simply to terrorize, the communists presented as sub-human sadists indifferent to the blood on their hands. Those who paint it thus do a disservice to truth and a greater one to understanding. The average communist in Viet-Nam thinks of his system not in moral but in utilitarian terms. He finds terror to be the single greatest advantage he has over the government, one which he credits for making possible most of his successes.

It has become an axiom for the communists that their successes are a direct function of the degree of people's sense of insecurity: the greater the insecurity, the better their prospects. This is well known and fully understood at all communist levels. Insecurity is not exactly the same as terror, but is closely allied to it. Conversely, for the government, the more security the brighter its prospects. To the government, security is not exactly the same as organization, but it is its heart.

Thus, in effect, the tool of the communists in establishing control consists of those programs which terrorize.

* * * All communist programs therefore have development of insecurity/terror as their center.

* * * * * * * * *

Rationale

Two devices are employed constantly and intensively by the communists in verbalizing their use of terror: semantics and legalisms. The communists choose their words most carefully when writing or talking about what we here define as terror, and it is virtually impossible to condemn them out of their own mouths by quoting them. A whole range of terms and words are studiously avoided. In print especially the subject of communist violence is treated delicately, alluded to, or circumnavigated. Communist writers are masters of the technique of writing around a subject, leaving the desired impression without ever dealing directly with it.

* * * * * * * * *
* * * In communist output (and this is generally true of internal documents circulated only among Party members as well as published statements) one is seldom shot or decapitated; he is punished or the Front has exercised its power. The victim is never a civil servant but a puppet repressor, or a cruel element; never a policeman but a secret agent or a lackey henchman. One is not an American, Korean or Thai, but an imperialist aggressor or imperialist aggressor lackey. One is not a member of a political or religious group opposing the communists but a key reactionary or recalcitrant elements (when more than one) in an oppressive organisation. Always cruel fascists are brought to justice or criminal acts against patriots avenged or the Front has carried out its severe verdict against the aggressors, not that non-combatants have been slaughtered. Such is the language that can rationalize use of terror.

The second device employed is the facade of legalism. It is no accident that the head of the NLF is a lawyer. Or that the NLF has carried on extensive public communication over the years with the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, a communist-front group, including sending representatives to each of its meetings, even those in Central Africa. All communist efforts in the South are cast in terms of having a judicial base. A codified system always is intimated, even though none exists. Assassinations are carried out after a “trial” in a “people’s court”. The “verdict” is handed down and then “implemented”. * * *

In the Contested Village

The true battleground in the “other war” is the so-called contested village, with its struggle for power between the communists and the government, between the two contending programs resting on two separate bases.

* * * The government’s social welfare projects occupy the attention of several thousand communist cadres whose only duty is to disrupt them, sometimes employing terror that is beyond explanation; consider, for example, what could have been the policy decision behind an act such as this:

“They (the communists) are particularly interested in closing schools (in this area). For example, last month an armed propaganda team stopped a local school bus on a side road one morning and told the driver the children were not to attend school any more. The driver conveyed this message to the parents who could not believe the communists were serious. The bussing continued until a few days later when the same team stopped the same bus, took off a little girl and cut off her fingers. The school has been closed since.”

* * * * * * *

Specifically there are fifteen types of South Vietnamese who come within the scope of the assassination program. This “Fifteen Catego-
ries” list has been frequently found among captured documents; the language varies slightly, but this is typical:

“1. Enemy personnel in fields of espionage, police, public security, special forces, psywar, including covert organizations.

“2. Members of reactionary political parties and organizations, and parties working behind a religious front (i.e., Dai Viet, VNQDD, Cao Dai, Hoa Hao).


“4. Puppet government officials, from inter-family level upwards.

“5. Leading and key popular organization leaders (i.e., village organizations such as farm cooperatives, women’s and youth organizations).

“6. Members of the enemy’s cultural, art, propaganda and press establishment.

“7. Leading and key members of religious organizations still deeply superstitious (i.e., Catholics).

“8. Thieves, assassins, gangsters, prostitutes, speculators and fortune tellers.

“9. Defectors who have given information to the enemy, who have taken with them automatic weapons or important documents, or who are suspected of having done same; or who were cadres or officers.

“10. Members of the exploiter class and their spouses who have not specifically sided with the workers. (The communists in Viet-Nam as elsewhere divide society into exploiter and exploited.)

“11. Individuals with backward political tendencies including those who do dishonest and corrupt deeds, yet try to justify them.

“12. Relatives of persons engaged in enemy espionage, security, special forces or psywar organizations; relatives of important members or leaders of reactionary political parties or religious groups still deeply superstitious; families of military above the rank of private; members of families of government officials from village level upwards.

“13. Relatives of persons who have been punished by the Revolution (i.e., in earlier years) and who subsequently have grumbled about the Revolution; relatives of those jailed by the Revolution for spying.

“14. Deserters or AWOL’s who have returned to the Revolution but without clear explanation (i.e., who may be government penetration agents).

“15. Individuals with suspicious background or record of past activity.”

It has been estimated that this list, if strictly applied to all of South Viet-Nam, would total at least three million. This probably is what Col. Tran Van Dac, the highest ranking hoi chánh, meant
when he said, "There are three million South Vietnamese on the (com­
munist) blood debt list."  

* * * the communist leaders are prisoners of their own policy. If they were to eliminate terror as a base they might win worldwide com­mendation but would commit suicide; and theirs is a power struggle, not a popularity contest. We can expect them to continue increased efforts to terrorize but with diminished effect.

One also concludes that to end the military defense in Viet-Nam, to halt opposition to these communist programs, would not, as has often been suggested, bring an end to the long suffering that has been the plight of the Vietnamese people. Considering the integral part terror plays in communist social change, it does not follow that the quick and sure route to peace, to a moratorium on death, is to permit the communists to assume power.

Chapter III. Hue

* * * What happened in Hue should give pause to every remaining civilized person on this planet. It should be inscribed, so as not to be forgotten, along with the record of other terrible visitations of man's inhumanity to man which stud the history of the human race. Hue is another demonstration of what man can bring himself to do when he fixes no limits on political action and pursues uncautiously the dream of social perfectibility.

What happened in Hue, physically, can be described with a few quick statistics. A communist force which eventually reached 12,000 invaded the city the night of the new moon marking the new lunar year, January 30, 1968. It stayed for 26 days and then was driven out by military action. In the wake of this Tet offensive, 5,800 Hue civilians were dead or missing. It is now known that most of them are dead. The bodies of most have been found in the past 20 months, in single and mass graves throughout Thua Thien province which sur­rounds this cultural capital of Viet-Nam. * * *

The Battle.

The Battle of Hue was part of the communist Winter-Spring cam­paign of 1967–68. The entire campaign was divided into three phases: Phase I came in October, November, and December of 1967 and entailed "coordinated fighting methods," that is, fairly large, set-piece battles against important fixed installations or allied concentrations. * * *

* * * Phase II came in January, February, and March of 1968 and involved great use of "independent fighting methods," that is, large numbers of attacks by fairly small units, simultaneously, over a vast geographic area and using the most refined and advanced techniques of guerrilla war.

Phase III, in April, May, and June of 1968, originally was to have combined the independent and coordinated fighting methods, culminating in a great fixed battle somewhere.

The Finds

In the chaos that existed following the battle, the first order of civilian business was emergency relief, in the form of food shipments, prevention of epidemics, emergency medical care, etc.

The first discovery of communist victims came in the Gia Hoi High School yard, on February 26; eventually 170 bodies were recovered. In the next few months 18 additional grave sites were found, the largest of which were Tang Quang Tu Pagoda (67 victims), Bai Dau (77), Cho Thong area (an estimated 100), the imperial tombs area (201), Thien Ham (approximately 200), and Dong Gi (approximately 100). In all, almost 1,200 bodies were found in hastily dug, poorly concealed graves. At least half of these showed clear evidence of atrocity killings: hands wired behind backs, rags stuffed in mouths, bodies contorted but without wounds (indicating burial alive). The other nearly 600 bore wound marks but there was no way of determining whether they died by firing squad or incidental to the battle. Among these victims were three West German doctors, a medical technician who was the wife of one of the doctors, and two French Catholic priests, one of whom was buried alive.

The second major group of finds was discovered in the first seven months of 1969 in Phu Thu district—the Sand Dune Finds and Le Xa Tay—and Huong Thuy district—Xuan Hoa-Van Duong—in late March and April. Additional grave sites were found in Vinh Loc district in May and in Nam Hoa district in July.

The largest of this group were the Sand Dune Finds in the three sites of Vinh Luu, Le Xa Dong and Xuan O located in rolling grass-tufted sand country near the South China Sea. Separated by salt-marsh valleys, these dunes were ideal for graves.

On the discovery of the Sand Dune Finds a story is told that a local farmer, walking over the dunes one morning, tripped over a piece of wire sticking out of the sand. In he jerked at the wire and out of the sand, at the other end of his wire, came a bony hand and arm. The find was made. Excavation work was ordered, and 800 bodies began to be uncovered.

In the Sand Dune Find, the pattern had been to tie victims together in groups of 10 or 20, line them up in front of a trench dug by local corvec labor and cut them down with submachine gun (a favorite local souvenir is a spent Russian machine gun shell taken from a grave). Frequently the dead were buried in layers of three and four, which makes identification particularly difficult.

Communist Rationale

The killing in Hue that added up to the Hue Massacre far exceeded in numbers any atrocity by the communists previously in South Vietnam. The difference was not only one in degree but one in kind. The
character of the terror that emerges from an examination of Hue is quite distinct from communist terror acts elsewhere, frequent or brutal as they may have been. The previously noted objectives for communist terror... scarcely fit for Hue. The terror in Hue was not a morale building act—the quick blow deep into the enemy's lair which proves enemy vulnerability and the guerrilla's omnipotence and which is quite different from gunning down civilians in areas under guerrilla control. Nor was it terror to advertise the cause. Nor to disorient and psychologically isolate the individual, since the vast majority of the killings were done secretly. Nor, beyond the blacklist killings, was it terror to eliminate opposing forces. Hue did not follow the pattern of terror to provoke governmental over-response since it resulted in only what might have been anticipated—government assistance. There were elements of each objective, true, but none serves to explain the widespread and diverse pattern of death meted out by the communists.

What is offered here is a hypothesis which will suggest logic and system behind what appears to be simple, random slaughter. Before dealing with it, let us consider three facts which constantly reassert themselves to a Hue visitor seeking to discover what exactly happened there and, more importantly, exactly why it happened. All three fly in the face of common sense and contradict to a degree what has been written. Yet, in talking to all sources—province chief, police chief, American advisor, eye witness, captured prisoner, hoi chanh (defector) or those few who miraculously escaped a death scene—the three facts emerge again and again.

The first fact, and perhaps the most important, is that despite contrary appearances virtually no communist killing was due to rage, frustration, or panic during the communist withdrawal at the end. Such explanations are frequently heard, but they fail to hold up under scrutiny. Quite the contrary, to trace back any single killing is to discover that almost without exception it was the result of a decision, rational and justifiable in the communist mind. In fact, most killings were, from the communist calculation, imperative.

The second fact is that, as far as can be determined, virtually all killings were done by local communist cadres and not by the PAVN troops or Northerners or other outside communists. Some 12,000 PAVN troops fought the battle of Hue and killed civilians in the process but this was incidental to their military effort. Most of the 150 communist civilian cadres operating within the city were local, that is from the Thua Thien province area. They were the ones who issued the death orders. Whether they acted on instructions from higher headquarters (and the communist organizational system is such that one must assume they did), and, if so, what exactly those orders were, no one yet knows for sure.

The third fact is that beyond “example” executions of prominent “tyrants”, most of the killings were done secretly with extraordinary effort made to hide the bodies. Most outsiders have a mental picture of Hue as a place of public executions and prominent mass burial mounds of fresh-turned earth. Only in the early days were there well-publicized executions and these were relatively few. The burial sites in the city were easily discovered because it is difficult to create a graveyard in a densely populated area without someone noticing it. All the other finds were well hidden, all in terrain lending itself to concealment, probably
the reason the sites were chosen in the first place. A body in the sand dunes is as difficult to find as a sea shell pushed deep into a sandy beach over which a wave has washed. Da Mai Creek is in the remotest part of the province and must have required great exertion by the communists to lead their victims there. Had not the three hoi chanh led searchers to the wild uninhabited spot the bodies might well remain undiscovered to this day. A visit to all sites leaves one with the impression that the communists made a major effort to hide their deeds.

The hypothesis offered here connects and fixes in time the communist assessment of their prospects for staying in Hue with the kind of death order issued. It seems clear from sifting evidence that they had no single unchanging assessment with regard to themselves and their future in Hue, but rather that changing situations during the course of the battle altered their prospects and their intentions. It also seems equally clear from the evidence that there was no single communist policy on death orders; instead the kind of death order issued changed during the course of the battle. The correlation between these two is high and divides into three phases. The hypothesis therefore is that as communist plans during the Battle of Hue changed so did the nature of the death orders issued. This conclusion is based on overt communist statements, testimony by prisoners and hoi chanh, accounts of eye witnesses, captured documents and the internal logic of the communist situation.

Hue: Phase I

When the communists were preparing their attack on Hue, their cadres at the sand table exercises deep in the jungle told officers they would be in the city seven days and no more. A message was passed on to most of the attackers on the eve of the battle. It was stated more or less openly in public pronouncements. Radio Hanoi, on February 1 for example, described the attacks as an effort “to remove Saigon power at certain levels, accelerating the process of decomposition of the Saigon administration.”

During the brief stay in Hue, the civilian cadres, accompanied by execution squads, were to round up and execute key individuals whose elimination would greatly weaken the government’s administrative apparatus following communist withdrawal. This was the blacklist period, the time of the drumhead court. Cadres with lists of names and addresses on clipboards appeared and called into kangaroo court various “enemies of the Revolution.” Their trials were public, usually in the courtyard of a temporary communist headquarters. The trials lasted about ten minutes each and there are no known not-guilty verdicts. Punishment, invariably execution, was meted out immediately. Bodies were either hastily buried or turned over to relatives. Singled out for this treatment were civil servants, especially those involved in security or police affairs, military officers and some non-commissioned officers, plus selected non-official but natural leaders of the community, chiefly educators and religionists.

With the exception of a particularly venomous attack on Hue intellectuals, the Phase I pattern was standard operating procedure for communists in Viet-Nam.
Orders went out, apparently from the provincial level of the Party, to round up what one prisoner termed "social negatives," that is, those individuals or members of groups who represented potential danger or liability in the new social order. This was quite impersonal, not a blacklist of names but a blacklist of titles and positions held in the old society, directed not against people as such but against "social units."

As seen earlier in North Viet-Nam and in Communist China, the communists were seeking to break up the local social order by eliminating leaders and key figures in religious organizations (Buddhist bonzes, Catholic priests), political parties (four members of the Central Committee of Viet-Nam), social movements such as women's organizations and youth groups, including, what otherwise would be totally inexplicable, the execution of pro-communist student leaders from middle and upper class families.

In consonance with this, killing in some instances was done by family unit. In one well-documented case during this period a squad with a death order entered the home of a prominent community leader and shot him, his wife, his married son and daughter-in-law, his young unmarried daughter, a male and female servant and their baby. The family cat was strangled; the family dog was clubbed to death; the goldfish scooped out of the fishbowl and tossed on the floor. When the communists left, no life remained in the house. A "social unit" had been eliminated. (Appalling though it was, one stands in that family's living room and, as a parent, thinks perhaps this was the kindest way, for in Hue one is haunted by the feeling that bereavement is worse than death).

Phase II also saw an intensive effort to eliminate intellectuals, who are perhaps more numerous in Hue than elsewhere in Viet-Nam. Surviving Hue intellectuals explain this in terms of a long-standing communist hatred of Hue intellectuals, who were anti-communist in the worst or most insulting manner: they refused to take communism seriously. Hue intellectuals have always been contemptuous of communist ideology, brushing it aside as a latecomer to the history of ideas and not a very significant one at that. * * *

The killings in Phase II perhaps accounted for 2,000 of the missing. But the worst was not yet over.

Hue: Phase III

That expulsion was inevitable was apparent to the communists for at least the (preceding week). It was then that began Phase III, the cover-the-traces period. Probably the entire civilian underground apparat in Hue had exposed itself during Phase II. Those without suspicion rose to proclaim their identity. Typical is the case of one Hue resident who described his surprise on learning that his next door neighbor was the leader of a phuong (which made him 10th to 15th ranking communist civilian in the city), saying in wonder, "I'd known him for 18 years and never thought he was the least interested
in politics. Such a cadre could not go underground again unless there was no one around who remembered him.

Hence Phase III, elimination of witnesses.

Probably the largest number of killings came during this period and for this reason. Those taken for political indoctrination probably were slated to be returned. But they were local people as were their captors; names and faces were familiar. So, as the end approached they became not just a burden but a positive danger. Such undoubtedly was the case with the group taken from the church at Phu Cam. Or of the 15 high school students whose bodies were found as part of the Phu Thu Salt Flat find.

Categorization in a hypothesis such as this is, of course, gross and at best only illustrative. Things are not that neat in real life. For example, throughout the entire time the blacklist hunt went on. Also, there was revenge killing by the communists in the name of the Party, the so-called "revolutionary justice." And undoubtedly there were personal vendettas, old scores settled by individual Party members. (How else can one explain one body found at Phu Thu in which every principal bone had been broken?)

The official communist view of the killing in Hue was contained in a book written and published in Hanoi:

"Actively combining their efforts with those of the PLAF and population, other self-defense and armed units of the city (of Hue) arrested and called to surrender the surviving functionaries of the puppet administration and officers and men of the puppet army who were skulking. Die-hard cruel agents were punished."

The communist line on the Hue killings later at the Paris talks was that it was not the work of communists but of "dissident local political parties". However, it should be noted that Radio Liberation April 26, 1968, criticized the effort in Hue to recover bodies, saying the victims were only "hooligan lackeys who had incurred blood debts of the Hue compatriots and who were annihilated by the Southern armed forces and people in early Spring." 

* * * * * * *

The number of deaths probably would have been higher but for limitations of time and circumstance. * * * The communist population control and organization plan was to divide the city into phuongs or precincts, a geographic unit containing up to 8,000 persons each. A ten-man cadre team was to run each phuong, charged with the task of locating, organizing, identifying and sorting out people in its area. After the first few days, allied military action divided the communist forces and denied them roughly half the population. They maintained this control for about three weeks. One cannot but conclude that the number of civilian victims would have been much larger than the 5700 currently estimated had the communist grip been tighter and longer.

* * * In listening in the evening to a flood of words from survivors about what happened at Hue, one is submerged in a hate that is almost a fog. Gone from Hue are the attentistes, the fence sitters, the advo-

*A theory widely circulated in Hue but without foundation is that Ho Chi Minh, having been socially rebuffed when teaching high school in Hue years ago, hated the place much as Hitler hated Stalingrad and personally ordered mass slaughter in Hue.
cates of noninvolvement. Hardly a person exists in the city who did
not find a blood relation or intimate friend in a communist grave: the
implacable hatred for communism by the people of Hue has become a
function of mathematics.

The meaning of the Hue Massacre seems clear. If the communists
win decisively in South Viet-Nam (and the key word is decisively),
what is the prospect? First, all foreigners would be cleared out of the
South, especially the hundreds of foreign newsmen who are in and out
of Saigon. A curtain of ignorance would descend. Then would begin
a night of long knives. There would be a new order to build. The war
was long and so are memories of old scores to be settled. All political
opposition, actual or potential, would be systematically eliminated.
Stalin versus kulak, Mao versus landlord, Hanoi communist versus
Southern Catholic, the pattern would be the same: eliminate not the
individual, for who cares about the individual, but the latent danger
to the dream, the representative of the blocs, the symbol of the force,
that might someday, even inside the regime, dilute the system. Beyond
this would come communist justice meted out to the “tyrants and
lackeys.” Personal revenge would be a small wheel turning within the
larger wheel of Party retribution.

But little of this would be known abroad. The communists in Viet­
Nam would create a silence.

The world would call it peace.

The aftermath of the Hue massacre: Grieving families went through endless
piles of bones in the quest for some trace of their loved ones. Skulls were of
particular importance because victims could frequently be identified by their
dental work.
A Viet Cong assassination: Mr. Au Van Hoa, a resident of Ho Nai village, Bien Hoa Province, was captured and tied by Viet Cong terrorists, and then hacked to death. There have been countless thousands of individual acts of terror similar to this in villages through South Vietnam.

**Terror—From the Record**

To provide the reader with a sense of the all-encompassing nature of communist terror in Viet-Nam, representative, but by no means comprehensive, examples have been selected from books, government files, newspaper morgues and International Control Commission reports.

**Viet Minh Terror**

The Viet Minh war against the French was marked by considerable use of terror, not only against the French but against Vietnamese who did not support the Viet Minh.

Beginning in the final days of World War II, the communists under Vo Nguyen Giap, destroyed all non-communist nationalist leaders they could run to earth.

In the Viet Minh controlled areas during the war, "enemies of the Resistance" were systematically eliminated.

Something of a blood bath took place following victory in 1954, one which would have been greater had not some 900,000 North Vietnamese escaped to the South in Operation Exodus.

Terror again surged upwards in 1956 with the so-called land reform program, which actually was destruction of the natural leader class in the North Vietnamese villages. A conservative figure of the number who died at this period is 50,000; some estimates run as high as a half-
million (population of North Viet-Nam at the time was about 14 million).

South Viet-Nam—A Few Items from the Record

March 22, 1961.—A truck carrying 20 girls is dynamited on the Saigon-Vung Tau road. The girls are returning from Saigon where they have taken part in a Trung Sisters Day celebration. After the explosion terrorists open fire on survivors. Two of the girls are killed and ten wounded. The girls are unarmed and traveling without escort.

January 1, 1962.—A Vietnamese labor leader, Le Van Thieu, 63, is hacked to death by terrorists wielding machetes near Bien Hoa, in the rubber plantation on which he works.

April 8, 1962.—Communists execute two wounded American prisoners of war near the village of An Chau in Central Viet-Nam. Each, hands tied, is shot in the face because he cannot keep up with the retreating captors.

May 22, 1966.—Terrorists kill 18 sleeping men, a woman and four children during an attack on a housing center for canal workers in the Mekong Delta province of An Giang. “We are doing this to teach you a lesson,” a communist cadre is reported to have said just before he pulled the trigger.

April 18, 1967.—Sui Chon hamlet northeast of Saigon is attacked by assassins and arsonists who slay five Revolutionary Development team members, wound three, abduct seven; three of those slain were young girls, whose hands are tied behind their backs before they are shot in the head. One-third of the hamlet’s dwelling is destroyed by fire.

May 11, 1971.—More than 200 doctors and medical workers of the Republic of South Viet-Nam have been victims of the communists in the past 10 years, State Health Secretary Dr. Tran Van Lu-Y tells the World Health Organization in Geneva. He says 211 members of his staff have been killed or kidnapped; 174 dispensaries, maternity homes and hospitals destroyed; 40 ambulances mined or machine-gunned.

December 6, 1967.—A name that should be remembered as long as Lidice is Dak Son, a Montagnard village of some 2,000 in Phuoc Long
province, the scene of what in some ways remains the worst atrocity in the entire atrocity-ridden war. Some 300 communists stage a reprisal raid on Dak Son. The chief weapon: the flame thrower, 60 of them. The purpose: purely to terrorize. The result: a Carthaginian solution, all but sowing of the salt. After breaking through the flimsy hamlet militia defense, the communists set about systematically to destroy the village and the people in it. Families are incinerated alive in their grass-roofed huts or in the shelters dug beneath their beds. Everything combustible is put to the torch: houses, recently harvested grain on the ground, livestock, fences, trees, people. One of the first Americans to approach the scene the following day: “As we approached the place I thought I saw charred cordwood piled up the way you pile up logs neatly beside the road. When we got closer I could see it was the burned bodies of several dozen babies. The odor of burned flesh, which really is an unforgettable smell, reached us outside the village and of course got stronger at the center. People were trying to breathe through cabbage leaves. . . . I saw a small boy and a smaller girl, probably his sister, sort of melted together in a charred embrace. I saw a mother burned black still hiding two children, also burned black. Everything was burned and black. The worst was the wail of the survivors who were picking through the smouldering ruins. One man kept screaming and screaming at the top of his lungs. For an hour he kept it up. He wasn’t hurt that I could tell. He just kept screaming until a doctor gave him a shot of morphine or something. . . . Fire bloats bodies I learned, and after a few hours the skin splits and peels and curls. . . . The far end of the village wasn’t burned; the communists ran out of flamethrower fuel before they got to it . . . .” Estimated toll: 252 dead, about two-thirds of them women and children; 200 abducted, never to return.

March 13, 1969.—Kon Sitiu and Kon Bobanh, two Montagnard villages in Kontum province, are raided by terrorists; 15 persons killed; 23 kidnapped, two of whom are later executed; three long-houses, a church and a school burned. A hamlet chief is beaten to death. Survivors say the communists’ explanation is: “We are teaching you not to cooperate with the government.”

June 28, 1968.—A major attack is made against the refugee center and fishing village of Son Tra, south of Da Nang. In all, 88 persons are killed and 103 are wounded by mortar and machine gun fire, grenades and explosive charges. Some 450 homes are destroyed leaving 3,000 of the 5,000 persons there homeless. Later, villagers gathering bamboo to rebuild the center are fired on from ambush.
August 13, 1969.—Officials in Saigon report a total of 17 communist terror attacks on refugee centers in Quang Nam and Thua Thien provinces, leaving 23 persons dead, 75 injured and a large number of homes destroyed or damaged.

* * * * * *

August 26, 1969.—A nine-month-old baby in his mother’s arms is shot in the head by terrorists outside Hoa Phat, Quang Nam province; also found dead are three children between ages six and ten, an elderly man, a middle-aged man and a middle-aged woman, a total of seven, all shot at least once in the back of the head.

* * * * * *

October 27, 1969.—Communists booby trap the body of a People’s Self-Defense Force member whom they have killed. When relatives come to retrieve the body the subsequent explosion kills four of them.