

Ho Chi Minh as Bloody Tyrant

Sum
9-7-69

By PHILIP POTTER

Washington. Ho Chi Minh, the father-founder of the Democratic Republic of North Vietnam, is dead, and now becomes legend.

Perhaps the best physical description of the old Communist who sought for 50 years to establish his rule over all Vietnam was that of an American expert in psychological warfare in Saigon who once wrote, "It's damned difficult to tell people to hate a guy who looks like a half-starved Santa Claus."

But there are those who did, and who would take sharp issue with, for example, the message of condolence India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi sent from New Delhi to Hanoi: "Ho Chi Minh has ceased to live, yet he is indestructible like his own people," she wrote. "His kindness, simplicity, love of humanity, self sacrifice and courage will inspire generations to come."

Bernard Levin, columnist for the London *Daily Mail*, was one of those who spurned such eulogies.

"The plain truth," he wrote, "is that Ho Chi Minh was a ruthless and bloody tyrant. His first action on completing the conquest of North Vietnam was to slaughter in cold blood some 50,000 men and women who might have opposed his rule. When his campaign to take over South Vietnam began it was waged with a policy of deliberate atrocity, as an instrument of terror, the like of which had not been seen in the modern world.

"From the cases of children literally chopped to pieces before their parents' eyes, in villages temporarily seized by the Viet Cong, to the hundreds of men, women and

children who had been clubbed to death and whose bodies were discovered after the Tet offensive, the story was the same—the grossest atrocities, committed not in the heat of the battle or the blood-lust of revenge but as a calculated and important part of gentle, witty Uncle Ho's policies."

That wispy-bearded Uncle Ho was butcher as well as poet and lover of children is chronicled by well-esteemed Vietnam authorities, including the late Bernard B. Fall, a one-time French resistance fighter who became a professor at Howard University here, and was killed on one of his many trips to Vietnam.

In one of these, "The Two Vietnams," published in 1967, he wrote of the "utmost ferocity" with which land reform was carried out in Ho's Democratic Republic—the Communist regime, purged of most of Ho's non-Communist allies in the struggle that drove the French from Indochina—that was established in the northern half of the partitioned Vietnam in 1954.

"While it is obviously impossible to give precise figures," Mr. Fall wrote, "the best-educated guesses on the subject are that probably close to 50,000 North Vietnamese were executed in connection with the land reform and that at least twice as many were arrested and sent to forced labor camps."

Ho finally relented after a popular explosion over the purge and removed Truong Chinh as secretary general of the Laodong or Vietnamese Workers party, a euphemism for the Indochina Communist party "dissolved" by Ho when he

was heading a nationalist front against the French.

It is interesting that Truong is still regarded as one of the four most powerful men in the party politburo that runs the Democratic Republic of North Vietnam.

There are those who claim Fall's figure to be a vast understatement.

One was Hoang Van Chi, a North Vietnamese doctor and chemist who in 1942 joined the Vietminh against the French and was cited by Ho for his contributions in 1948, but fled to South Vietnam in 1954 after his arrest as a member of the landlord class the Communists had marked for later extinction.

He put the slain in one province alone at 90,000 and gave this description of Ho and his ruling circle:

"A party organized by a group of intelligent and passionate youths who opposed French rule and fled to Moscow for studies, who absorbed Bolshevik philosophy and after achieving control in North Vietnam pushed the class struggle, slaughtered rich peasants, ruined middle-class peasants and small town bourgeoisie and enslaved the proletariat and intellectuals, having lost their human feelings and developed a tigerish taste for blood."

Hoang, whom this correspondent interviewed in Saigon in 1957, was no admirer of the South Vietnamese regime of then (later assassinated) President Ngo Dinh Diem either, accusing it of using the same methods as the Communists and predicting Diem's fall for failure to establish real democracy in the country.

The "Area Handbook for North Vietnam," prepared by the Foreign Area Studies of the American University in 1967, put the killed in the "social transformation" that followed the setting up of Ho's regime after the French defeat as high as 100,000.

Ho had set the stage for it in 1953, the handbook states, by issuing a party decree under which all heads of households in areas controlled by the Vietminh were classified according to alleged personal wealth, with landlords comprising the highest of five strata and landless and wage-earning peasants the lowest.

It was on the basis of this classification, said the handbook, widely used in the State Department, that the Ho regime "undertook the systematic elimination of persons in the top strata who were condemned as 'enemies of the people' and imprisoned or executed.

"The victims were mainly Confucian scholars, Buddhist monks, Catholic priests and other tradi-

dolence India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi sent from New Delhi to Hanoi: "Ho Chi Minh has ceased to live, yet he is indestructible like his own people," she wrote. "His kindness, simplicity, love of humanity, self sacrifice and courage will inspire generations to come."

Bernard Levin, columnist for the London *Daily Mail*, was one of those who spurned such eulogies.

"The plain truth," he wrote, "is that Ho Chi Minh was a ruthless and bloody tyrant. His first action on completing the conquest of North Vietnam was to slaughter in cold blood some 50,000 men and women who might have opposed his rule. When his campaign to take over South Vietnam began it was waged with a policy of deliberate atrocity, as an instrument of terror, the like of which had not been seen in the modern world.

"From the cases of children literally chopped to pieces before their parents' eyes, in villages temporarily seized by the Viet Cong, to the hundreds of men, women and

killed on one of his many trips to Vietnam.

In one of these, "The Two Vietnams," published in 1967, he wrote of the "utmost ferocity" with which land reform was carried out in Ho's Democratic Republic—the Communist regime, purged of most of Ho's non-Communist allies in the struggle that drove the French from Indochina—that was established in the northern half of the partitioned Vietnam in 1954.

"While it is obviously impossible to give precise figures," Mr. Fall wrote, "the best-educated guesses on the subject are that probably close to 50,000 North Vietnamese were executed in connection with the land reform and that at least twice as many were arrested and sent to forced labor camps."

Ho finally relented after a popular explosion over the purge and removed Truong Chinh as secretary general of the Laodong or Vietnamese Workers party, a euphemism for the Indochina Communist party "dissolved" by Ho when he

marked for later execution.

He put the slain in one province alone at 90,000 and gave this description of Ho and his ruling circle:

"A party organized by a group of intelligent and passionate youths who opposed French rule and fled to Moscow for studies, who absorbed Bolshevik philosophy and after achieving control in North Vietnam pushed the class struggle, slaughtered rich peasants, ruined middle-class peasants and small town bourgeoisie and enslaved the proletariat and intellectuals, having lost their human feelings and developed a tigerish taste for blood."

Hoang, whom this correspondent interviewed in Saigon in 1957, was no admirer of the South Vietnamese regime of then (later assassinated) President Ngo Dinh Diem either, accusing it of using the same methods as the Communists and predicting Diem's fall for failure to establish real democracy in the country.

The "Area Handbook for North Vietnam," prepared by the Foreign Area Studies of the American University in 1967, put the killed in the "social transformation" that followed the setting up of Ho's regime after the French defeat as high as 100,000.

Ho had set the stage for it in 1953, the handbook states, by issuing a party decree under which all heads of households in areas controlled by the Vietminh were classified according to alleged personal wealth, with landlords comprising the highest of five strata and landless and wage-earning peasants the lowest.

It was on the basis of this classification, said the handbook, widely used in the State Department, that the Ho regime "undertook the systematic elimination of persons in the top strata who were condemned as 'enemies of the people' and imprisoned or executed.

"The victims were mainly Confucian scholars, Buddhist monks, Catholic priests and other traditional village leaders. This show of force and brutality, reminiscent of methods employed by the Chinese Communists in an earlier campaign, took the lives of 50,000 to 100,000 rural inhabitants."

That Ho, a Comintern agent who spent years in China, knew Chinese Communist ways was attested by the Peking regime in its message of condolence to Hanoi after his death.

It called him "close comrade in arms of the Chinese people . . . an outstanding proletarian revolutionary [actually he was the son of a minor mandarin] who applied the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete practice of Vietnamese revolution."

Baltimore Sun 9/2/69

COMMUNISTS DEMAND DEATH (BLOOD DEBTS) OF THEIR
OPPONENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

NHAN DAN Editorial; Hanoi; June 24, 1965

"In conclusion, the paper warns that the U. S. imperialists and their henchmen who have incurred blood debts must repay them in blood. Just as the patriot Tran Van Dang said before his death, the Vietnamese people will fight more fiercely against them and will certainly annihilate them. By recklessly attacking the people, they will be kicked into their graves by the people just like the Ngo Dinh Diem brothers and any other despots in the world."

QUAN DOI NHAN DAN Commentary; Hanoi; December 15, 1968

"On 25 November 1968 the PLAF Command ordered all PLAF units to sweep away the stubborn villains in their bases, completely disperse the rural pacification teams, crush the mopping-up and occupation plot of the enemy, annihilate the Phoenix teams and other espionage organizations of the enemy, and protect and develop the liberated areas."

"The campaign for annihilating the stubborn villains in the puppet administration is developing strongly throughout the south. The southern troops and people have deeply thrust strong attacks against the enemy's lairs in strategic hamlets and concentration camps and punished the secret agents, policemen, Phoenix commandos, and pacification teams. Thousands of stubborn villains, who have incurred blood debts toward the people, have paid for their crimes. Hundred of pacification teams have been crushed."

Radio Hanoi to South Vietnam; April 11, 1968

"The days of the puppet government corpse are numbered. Together with the unavoidable defeat of the U. S. imperialists, the traitorous clique will certainly have to atone for its crimes one day. The present shameful and woeful situation of the Thieu-Ky clique fail to be a very good lesson for all those who still remain in the puppet army and administration to ponder."

QUAN DOI NHAN DAN Commentary; April 4, 1969; Broadcast to
South Vietnam April 5, 1969

"Our armed forces, together with the people throughout the country nurture this hatred and are determined to compel the U.S. aggressors and their lackeys to pay for their blood debts."

Liberation Radio; April 17, 1969

"In northern Quang Nam, almost all newly liberated areas have now established revolutionary administrations, and newly set up people's liberation committees have been presented to the people. In a number of areas in (words indistinct) in Quang Nam Province, after destroying strategic hamlets, local people have set up special courts to try cruel, diehard agents who owe blood debts to the people. Revolutionary administrations in the Mekong Delta have also vigorously developed their role. In the suburbs of Ben Tre provincial capital and in Nhi Binh, Tam Hiep, and Binh Chuong villages in Kien Phong Province, revolutionary administrations have also established courts to try those cruel, diehard puppet administrative agents and spies who owed blood debts but refused to obey our compatriots' teachings."

Liberation Radio; April 19, 1969

"Developing our achievements, let us combine our military offensive spearheads better and better and step up the movement to annihilate villains, smash bondage, and punish hooligans, informers, intelligence agents, and so forth, who have incurred many blood debts to the people, thus increasingly decaying the puppet administration machinery and creating conditions for widening the battlefields and annihilating the enemy right in his last dens. Let us appropriately punish pacification teams, tumble basic puppet administration organizations, smash the U.S. puppets' accelerated pacification plan and village and hamlet election farce, tighten the liberation encircling belts around the enemy dens, and create springboards for directing military spearheads at cities and provincial and district capitals."

Liberation Radio; May 2, 1969

"The liberation armed security teams also punished 303 evildoers who had incurred blood debts against the compatriots, including 88 rangers and informers, 106 policemen, 11 psywar agents, 17 pollsters, and 36 village and hamlet puppet agents."

Liberation Radio; May 4, 1969

"The braggard Thieu-Ky-Huong clique cannot avoid the thunderous blows which our people are focussing on its head in order to swiftly end the life of the traitors who have incurred many debts toward our people."

Liberation Radio; May 14, 1969

"In coordination with the PLAF's activities, compatriots in all three areas--city, city fringes, and the rural rear--are determined to rise up and, together with the guerrillas, exterminate puppets and spies, to hunt down lackeys who owe blood debts to our people, to crush the puppet machinery at basic echelons, to disintegrate all forms of enemy control in rural areas, and to smash his accelerated pacification scheme."

Liberation Radio; May 22, 1969

"A public trial of hoodlums was held by the people of Tan Binh, a town in Tay Ninh Province. With active cooperation from the armed forces the people of this town, on May 3, held a public trial of a bunch of flunkeys and hoodlums drenched with bloody crimes against the people. The people fiercely exposed and denounced their activities of collaboration with the U.S. aggressor bandits and of acting as their flunkeys to stubbornly oppose the revolution and commit innumerable crimes against the people."

Liberation Radio; May 25, 1969

"Let us look at those so-called parties which have agreed to join Thieu;s ranks. What are they? If we do not term them profiteering politicians, as Saigon papers have usually done, we can say that they are social dregs, a clique which has long served as lackeys for the imperialists, incurring many blood debts to our people. "

Liberation Radio; June 5, 1969

"People's revolutionary committees have been setting up courts to try diehard lackeys who owe blood debt to the people. Many spies and puppets have reported to local people's revolutionary committees to turn in firearms and confess their crimes. "

Liberation Radio; June 30, 1969

"The blood of thousands of our incarcerated compatriots who have been killed by the U. S. puppets scream for revenge. Pouring deep hatred into the muzzles of weapons, our southern armed forces and people are determined to advance, to strike more vigorously, painfully, and unremittingly, to force the U. S. puppets to pay their blood debts, to defeat U.S. aggression completely, to overthrow the country-selling lackeys, and to regain independence and freedom for the country and nation.

* * *

He who sows the wind shall reap the whirlwind. This is the inevitable fate of the U. S. aggressors and Thieu-Ky-Huong lackey clique. "

MASS GRAVES IN HUE

More than 1000 people were executed by the NVA and Viet Cong in the Hue area during the Communist Tet offensive, Allied authorities reported today.

The victims were found in 19 separate mass grave sites. Many had been shot, some beheaded. A number of bodies showed signs of mutilation. Most were found with hands bound behind their backs.

An officer of the 10th Political Warfare Battalion involved in investigating the executions estimated that almost half of the victims were found in conditions indicating that they had been buried alive. Many were found bound together in groups of 10 to 15, eyes open, with dirt or cloth in their mouths.

Evidence also was discovered of victims having been clubbed unconscious prior to being buried alive.

The report is based on data supplied by the National Police Headquarters, Thua Thien Province; Precinct 11 Police station in the City of Hue (where virtually all the graves in the city itself were located); records of the Tenth Political Warfare Battalion, I Corps; U.S. Army and CORDS advisors in the Hue area and interviews with Vietnamese Information Service, Radio Hue, Social Welfare and Refugee Service, and Vietnamese and American relief officials, including some eye-witnesses.

A detailed report on the mass graves investigated by Vietnamese and Allied authorities is attached.

MASS GRAVES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS EXECUTED BY VC/NVA AT HUE DURING TET OFFENSIVE

PLACE	COORDINATES	NUMBER OF GRAVES	NUMBER OF BODIES	DATE DISCOVERED	COMMENT
Gia Hoi High School	YD 733-233	22	170-200	2/28-3/16	Many bound and shot. More than half buried alive.
Gia Hoi Primary School	YD 765-235	3	10	3/2	Victims shot.
Tang Quang Tu Pagoda	YD 764-240	13	67	From 3/1	Victims shot. Buddhist monk in Pagoda heard nightly executions by pistol and rifle shots in plowed field behind the Pagoda during first two weeks of February, with victims pleading for mercy. Leader of VIMDD (Vietnam Nationalist Party), Nguyen Ngoc Ky, was among victims found here.
Bai Dau, Con Mo (District II, north of Gia Hoi)	YD 734-243	8	77	3/7-17	Victims included three Koreans and one Hong Kong Chinese, a British subject. All were tied and shot through back of head.
Xa Huong Long	YD 737-217	Unlisted	Est. 25	ca. 2/28	Just west of SW wall of the Citadel. Some victims beheaded.
An Ninh Ha	YD 731-210	2	50	ca. 2/28	Victims found in mass graves at foot of bridge.
Cho Thong Area	YD 722-213	Unlisted	Est. 100	ca. 2/2	Local people interviewed reported "single grave with 100 bodies" uncovered.