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**WOMEN OF VIET-NAM
IN THE STRUGGLE
FOR THE
SAFEGUARD OF INDEPENDENCE**

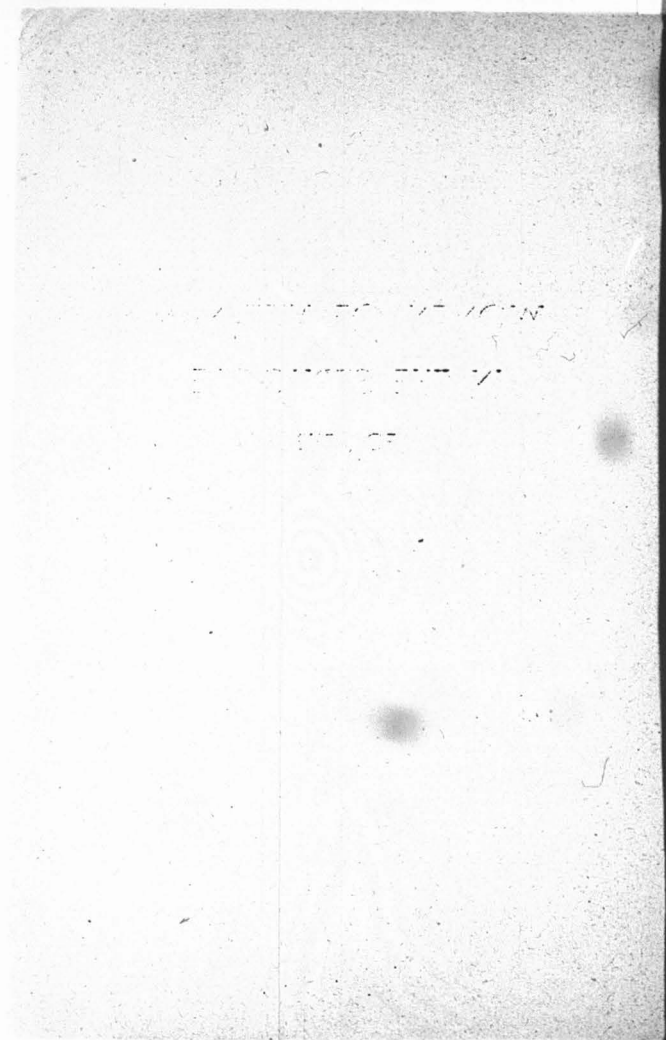
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THE UNION OF VIET-NAM WOMEN IN FRANCE

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE DEC 1948

The nation-wide war of resistance is running well into its third year. While men are serving in the army and militia or doing other war-time jobs, Viet Nam women are faced with urgent problems of raising the maintenance of the household.

Be they mothers, wives or sisters, Viet Nam women are working twice or three times as hard as they did before the war.

They have plenty to do in the fields, at the market place or at home. Besides, the war has placed other heavy duties on their shoulders.

Their activities in the rear are as follows :

- 1) In the battle for production;
- 2) In social works;
- 3) In helping the army;
- 4) In the field of politics.

Equally important is their role on the battle-front. Here their activities are of the following nature :

- 1) As nurses;
- 2) In the supply service;
- 3) As girl-couriers;
- 4) As girl-guides;
- 5) As guerrillas or commanding troops.

A special chapter will be devoted to the conditions of Viet Nam women in French controlled areas. It is an account mainly of French sadism.

I. - IN THE REAR

1) IN THE BATTLE FOR PRODUCTION

« Increase Production », « Grow more food » have been the watchwords of every Viet-Nam citizen in the rear, since the Democratic Republic assumed power. These campaigns aimed at creating a self-sufficient economy which was the only guarantee against the impending threat of famine and the successful conduct of protracted resistance.

Men were busy with war jobs, and the main burden of cultivating the land fell on the shoulders of women. Old mothers who might have stayed at home in peace-time, now took up the plough or the harrow in place of their absent husbands and sons. The collective work system has been introduced and has become popular in quite a short time. Thus during harvest-time, a group of families can be seen pulling together and working from field to field.

In the war zones, where French raids occur frequently, women work in the fields in the midst of gun-fire and bombardments.

In many provinces, members of the Executive Committee of the Union of Viet-Nam Women, in co-operation with the Resistance Committee, plan and systematically carry out increased production campaigns. A part of the yield accruing from the increased production effort is offered by the women to the local guerrillas. In many villages, the militia and homeguards get the vegetables grown by women free of charge. In Hadong province (North Viet-Nam) each village maintains a special « kitchen » from which the local guerrillas obtain vegetables and fish.

The number of women workers is on the increase in war factories. « Increased production » and « patriotic competition » campaigns are run in factories too. Women from the « Hoang Van Thu » weaving factory in North Viet-Nam, for instance, won a special award for completing one hundred meters of cotton material within one month.

Working class and peasant women have taken an appreciable part in

repairing and rebuilding dykes and raising new ones along the river banks. This work was carried on in the midst of intense firing and severe aerial bombardment. These dykes have helped to prevent floods which otherwise would have destroyed thousands of acres of crops.

2) WOMEN AND SOCIAL WORKS

a) *Rehabilitating war refugees.* The sudden outbreak of hostilities took many families unawares. The people had to migrate from the towns to the villages. The French indiscriminately attacked the withdrawing population. Such belongings as clothes, money, etc... were lost. Women around the war-battered cities spared no pains to shelter and rehabilitate the evacuees. Women built supply stations on the roadsides where war refugees were given food and lodging.

Most of the hospitals and medical stations were reserved for servicemen, and war refugees and expectant mothers encountered crushing difficulties in the way of medical help. Women organised free medical aid.

One of the most evil traditions made women believe that « childbirth is a bad omen, whereas death is a good augury ». Expectant mothers preferred to beget in the fields rather than incur the resentment of their hosts. But now, such preposterous cases never seem to occur.

Women's mutual assistance funds have been created in most of the villages for the purpose of helping sick women and expectant mothers. In villages near the front lines, women organise emergency groups entrusted with helping women and children.

b) *The New Life Movement.* The New Life Movement was inaugurated after August 1945, to complete the political revolution by a social and cultural one. Far from being abated by the outbreak of war, this movement is growing stronger than ever under the very pressure of reality.

So far as women are concerned, this movement consists in fighting down out-moded customs, such as burning votive papers. It aims also at propagating elementary principles of hygiene to be observed by women during pregnancy. It strongly recommends women to replace their fluffy robes, girdles and gowns by a simple comfortable long-sleeved shirt and trousers.

Under the impact of the new trend, wedding ceremonies have become extremely simple. The bride and groom only have to state before the authorities their willingness to become man and wife. The expensive stones and jewels of former years now give place to wedding gifts more reminiscent of the fight for freedom: hand-grenades and guns. The bride would now demand of her groom 12 or 15 hand-grenades or a rifle, and hand these over to the guerrillas of her native village.

3) VIET-NAM WOMEN AND THE ARMY

A good deal of the material aid and moral support enjoyed by the men and officers of the Viet-Nam army and militia come from the women. The devotion with which women carry out the slogan « *Help the Army* » is immeasurable.

Women members of the Union mostly concern themselves with how the combatants both at the front and in the rear are daily fed, cared for and cheered up.

In every village where soldiers make a halt, women groups generally belonging to the « Servicemen's Mothers Association » render services in such tasks as cooking, mending and food supplying.

A huge pile of silk and cotton material which formerly girdled women's waists is now saved and turned into kitbags for the rank and file. At least 10,000 such bags have been given by each province in Viet-Nam.

The festive days afford opportunities for women to express their gratitude to the army. During the winter of 1947, women worked for many days ahead to organise the New Year Festival for the combatants. On New Year's Eve, all the country lanes leading to the army headquarters were flooded with women and girls carrying fruit, cakes, poultry, pipes, tobacco and books to the soldiers.

Some weeks after the successful August Revolution in 1945, the Government called on the people to take an active part in the « Gold Giving Week », organised throughout the country with the purpose of obtaining support for the National Treasury which was emptied by the French and Japanese, and also for the purchase of arms and ammunition for the National Army which had just started the resistance in the South. Viet-Nam women, urban and country-dwellers, whole-heartedly responded to this appeal and gave all their precious jewelry to the National Fund, to a total value of millions of piastres. After « Gold Giving Week », it became a matter of great shame for any girl to be seen with golden rings and bracelets.

Women devised many ingenious ways to collect money and material to aid the Army. They appealed to the generosity of the people and collected large sums through auction sales of various items, mostly clothes which they themselves had knitted.

Viet Nam women pay particular attention to the wounded. July 27th is a national festival day and is observed as « War Wounded Day ». On this day, hundreds and thousands of piastres and as many meters of cotton stuff are collected for the wounded soldiers.

The « Servicemen's Mothers' Association » is a unique organisation. When a unit of the army passes through a locality, they are sure to find food and lodging in special stations set up by the local branch of this society or if not, in the private house of a serviceman's mother. The mother cares for them and treats them as her own sons. Generally women over 40 are enrolled in this association. They pay particular attention to the war wounded. They shelter them and look after them during the whole period of convalescence, as home inmates. The soldiers regularly keep up correspondence with their « mothers » when they return to the army. In this way, our wounded soldiers are given the comforting impression of having thousands of good mothers in every part of the country.

In Thai Nguyen province (North Viet Nam), Mme BA HUY gave 1,200,000 piastres worth of farmland, cattle and cash for the construction of a sanatorium housing hundreds of maimed and crippled soldiers. In Cao Bang province (North Viet Nam) Mme LANG LUONG, a medical practitioner, has nursed and cured over 200 war wounded.

4) IN THE FIELD OF POLITICS AND PROPAGANDA

Viet Nam women have put forth an army of propagandists and political cadres. Wherever they go, these political cadres organise meetings, inform the population about the situation in the country, explain the duty of a citizen, urge them to increase production, to fight against illiteracy and to combat French aggression. Rich women also give proof of their touching spirit of sacrifice, especially those who have never undergone hardships and have been used to living in luxury.

One of the most outstanding woman in the political cadre was 22 year-old Miss MINH HA, who recently ended her life in a French jail. She organised the people in the coal mine areas of Hongay (North Viet Nam) which had been occupied by the French. She succeeded in reviving the various local administrative committees which had become disorganised and defunct by the sudden attack of the French. She was caught at a secret meeting and taken to prison, where she was tortured. She refused to disclose any secret information, and finding no hope of saving her honour, she committed suicide on 14th July, 1948.

II. - ON THE BATTLEFRONT -

1) SERVING AS NURSES

The humanitarian character of Viet Nam women is fully aroused in the heavy task of nursing the wounded soldiers. They follow the combatants as far as the advanced outposts, wearing the simplest and most convenient clothes and carrying with them some elementary first-aid supplies. With a rolled mat on one shoulder and a medical bag on the other, they go ahead on most difficult and dangerous paths. Here is an article from a local paper :

« Once, on the battlefield, advancing in the darkness of the night, a group of guerrillas started their attack on an enemy post. Pom! Pom! The grenade exploded in the midst of a continuous thunder of guns and machine-guns. « Forward », repeatedly shouted the commander. Along with the guerrillas, the girl nurses crawled forward on the grass. « Oh ! I am wounded! » groaned a guerrilla whose leg was pierced by a bullet. T. (the nurse) hastened to carry him a little way off from the fighting line. She opened her medical bag which contained nothing but some tincture of iodine, some cotton wool and bandages. In the darkness she silently and patiently dressed the wound of the guerrilla, regardless of the bullets which whistled near her head. In the immense and remote plain covered by the black curtain of night, she seemed a fairy who had come down from heaven to attend the unfortunate fighter with her magic medicine. »

Many nurses are wounded and killed in action. No one in South Viet Nam will forget Miss BA's tragic death. The Viet Nam troops attacked an enemy post. The commander and his men launched the attack under a rain of bullets. One of these lodged itself in the shoulder of a guerrilla, causing profuse bleeding. BA immediately dressed his wound and tried to carry him on her back to a nearby Red Cross post. In spite of her tenacious and heroic efforts she could not go far with her heavy burden. The enemy came nearer every moment. Anxious for her safety, S. the wounded guerrilla said « Sister, my wound is rather serious and I am

very tired. I doubt I shall live. Please take care of your own life. Leave me here and go away, because it is dangerous to linger here any longer.» Looking at his bandages completely stained with blood, she forgot herself and thought only of his misfortune. Standing upright and making a last effort, she succeeded in carrying her comrade a little further. But, alas, she was seen by the French and was shot at close range in the head.

2) WORKING IN THE SUPPLY SERVICE

Many women are working in the supply service in the battlefield areas. Every hard battle has witnessed the ability, courage and selflessness of Viet Nam women. For example:

The battle of Hang An (South Viet Nam) lasted for nearly one full day. The Viet Nam guerrillas had to remain at their post, lying down in the ricefields for many hours without eating or drinking. On hearing this news, the girls of the Association of Women for National Salvation immediately organised a kitchen to prepare rice and hot water to be sent to the front. The mission was entrusted to the most skilful and daring members of the association. They crawled along the muddy ricefields, carrying with them rice and boiled water in big cans and bottles. They distributed food to the fighters and spoke encouragingly to them. Sometimes French bullets whistled near them but they remained undaunted. Thanks to them, the guerrillas were able to carry on the fighting successfully.

In the uplands of North Viet Nam last year (1947) women refused to hide at the approach of the enemy. They went on with their supply task and other routine jobs.

In Thai Nguyen province, 50 miles North of Hanoi, no less than 2,500 women volunteered for supply services during the French winter offensive.

The Viet Nam troops who had besieged the French weaving factory at Nam Dinh (North Viet Nam) said that they had never missed a single meal because there was a whole company of supply women, mostly former factory workers, who brought in food every day. In order to reach the besiegers, the women had to wade belly-deep in muddy trenches. At first, men on guard told them not to come in too close. «They are firing like hell», they said. But the women insisted that they should be allowed to do their duty. «Why can't we go, if you men can», they retorted.

3) GIRL COURIERS

Besides being efficient nurses and good cooks, Viet Nam women are also famous couriers and liaison agents. It is indeed difficult to imagine

all the dreadful scenes in which they play the most difficult parts with full success, thanks to their intelligence and resourcefulness.

Once, a locality near Saigon was about to fall into the hands of the Gurkhas who, under British command, were directly aiding the French. Many newspapers, handbills and other important materials had to be shifted to the other side of the river. The underground workers were discussing how to carry the materials; the bridge across the river was heavily guarded by Gurkhas who searched all passers-by. A girl liaison agent named E. volunteered for the task. While her comrades were still hesitating about the decision, she went to the kitchen and came back with a big tin. «I am going to sell cakes», she said. Everybody understood what she meant and accepted her proposal. In a minute she became a cake-hawker. No one in the street suspected that under her cakes were hidden important materials and sometimes a typewriter too. She crossed the bridge several times without being searched by the guards. Thanks to her resourcefulness, not a single important paper fell into the hands of the enemy.

Robert TRUMBULL, correspondent of the «New York Times» in Saigon, gave on January 18th, 1947, the following account of his interview with a Viet Nam girl working in the underground movement:

«The girl courier, who is 24 years old and pretty, is interested in politics both as a patriot and as a feminist. She travels as much as 200 miles on each courier journey, disguised as a coolie and using any handy mode of transportation. She is welcomed in any Viet Nam village. She said that «all the traitors are in Saigon». Once she was arrested on suspicion. She said she was beaten with sticks by the police and subjected to what she called «electric treatment». This consisted, she said, in passing a current through her body by electrodes held at the temples.»

It is not rare for a girl to have to go across immense fields, carrying in both hands heavy baskets of important documents. Sometimes she has to cross thick forests, regardless of heat, water or rain, or of tigers or snakes. Sometimes she finds enemy troops on her way. She has to disappear at once into some thorny bushes or plunge into a pool, breathing only through two bamboo tubes.

4) GIRL SCOUTS AND INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Whenever Viet Nam guerrillas planned their attack against an enemy post, the strength and position of which they did not always correctly know, they needed someone for getting information. Such tasks are often fulfilled by women. Here is an example:

It was in 1946, in South Viet Nam. As on many others occasions,

Mai, a girl-scout, offered her services and went out with her revolver. She went alone. 24 hours passed without her turning up. While her comrades were in deep anxiety, a human form appeared from the darkness of the night. It was MAI, back with most vital information. When the attack started at dawn, Mai assaulted the enemy position with a sub-machine gun. Unfortunately a bullet hit her in the chest. Before closing her eyes for ever, she made a last effort, called a nearby comrade and said: « Comrade H. please come and save the gun ». Until the last minute of her life she kept high her morale and consciousness, thinking of the gun rather than of her own life.

Another example of a woman intelligence agent. At Myloc (North Viet Nam), a young retailer had lived for 3 months in an underground shelter from where she was to spy on the enemy's movements. She came out at night to cook her meals after the French had withdrawn to their camp. One afternoon her refugee mother returned home and called her. Both of them were caught and abused by the French. The next day she took her mother to a safe neighbouring village, then got back to her shelter. Burning with subdued hatred, she stayed there day after day passing out information to the guerrillas. « As a result », she said, « the men always returned from their night attacks with huge war booty and broad cheers ».

5) WOMEN SERVING AS GUERRILLAS AND COMMANDING OFFICERS

Although Viet Nam women are not admitted in the regular army, many of them are serving in the various local guerrilla troops, in defence of their own village or district. Many of them died for the Fatherland. Yet women all over the country are fighting, thus making the popular saying — « When the foe is at the door, women fight as well as men » — come true.

The women units of local guerrillas can be found everywhere in Viet Nam. In some districts, women form as much as one entire battalion. Like men guerrillas, they are divided into 2 categories: the home-guards and the partisans.

The home-guard formations consist of women who have been given the task of defending their own village only. They live just like other women, tilling rice-fields. But every day, they devote some hours to physical and military training. When the enemy approaches, they help all children and aged persons to evacuate to safety. As for themselves, they keep ready to fight by combining their activities with the activities of the partisans and the regular army.

The partisans are composed of guerrilla units formed by women who have abandoned their ordinary life to devote themselves to the military defence of an area larger than their own village, viz. generally, their district. These units are needed in zones frequently raided by the French.

Women partisans go from village to village to oppose the French attacks. They are also given charge of launching constant and small nocturnal assault against French isolated posts, in order to harass them and reduce their number as well as lower their morale. During their wanderings, women partisans can bring the local population valuable help in their field work and organise theatrical shows to entertain them or popular classes to fight illiteracy among them.

Viet Nam women who were formerly very peaceful, are now impressive with their courage and sacrifice on the battlefield. Even girl dancers and singers who were looked down on by the old society have written with their blood glorious pages in the history of the heroic battle of Hanoi in December 1946.

Every sector of the front now has its heroines.

In the « Better training, more victories » campaign launched last year by the High Command of the Viet Nam Army, prizes were won by the outstanding units of women guerrillas in Bacninh, Anlac, Namdinh, (North Viet Nam), Thua Thien, Quang Ngai (Central Viet Nam), and in Giadinh and Mytho (South Viet Nam).

And here are some more names of women guerrilla leaders who died in defence of their country:

Miss MINH THU, 22 years old, Secretary of the Namsach section of the Union of Viet Nam Women, Haiduong, North Viet Nam, killed in action on June 15th, 1947.

Miss PHUONG, 19 year old girl-student and guerrilla group leader, Vangiang, Bacninh (North Viet Nam). Had seized many arms from pro-French elements. Shot by the French in September, 1947.

Doon CAMPBELL, Reuter's correspondent, reported from Hanoi on January 18th, 1947:

« ...the French are throwing bombs, shells and armour against the Vietnamese who, nine-tenths of the time, are fighting without arms. In the heart of what is now a blazing wilderness, I almost trod on bodyless heads of Annamite boys. A French colonel, commanding tanks taking part in the operation, suggested that the boys had been beheaded for wanting to surrender. A dead girl was found still clutching a sword with which she had been rallying nationalists to fanatic resistance. »

III. — VIET-NAM WOMEN IN FRENCH CONTROLLED AREAS

1) VIET-NAM WOMEN VICTIMS OF FRENCH SADISM

No word can describe the sufferings of Viet Nam women in French-occupied areas or frequently raided by their troops. Houses are set on fire, crops are burnt, furniture and jewelry looted, cattle captured. Parents, husbands and children are killed during enemy raids and those who survive are shot, tortured to death or taken as slave-prisoners. As for the women, because they are women, they inevitably become preys to the lust of French soldiers. It is a fact established with sufficient evidence that in compensation for the numerous hardships they have to undergo in the present war of conquest in Viet Nam, in compensation for the lack of ideals to support them in their fight, French soldiers in the Expeditionary Corps are given full liberty to satisfy their bestial desires, and to this end Viet Nam women are considered as the only stimulus to their spirit.

Limitless is the list of acts of atrocities committed by French soldiers upon Viet Nam women.

Cases of a single woman raped by a dozen or more French soldiers have occurred almost everywhere. French soldiers do not leave even teenagers alone, or women over 60 years of age. They do not spare pregnant women. They do not pay any attention to the place, be it a church or a pagoda. After raping, they usually indulge in all sorts of sadism, an account of which would shake the conscience of the world with horror.

Here are some cases of such revolting French sadism.

On January 12th, 1947, French troops entered a house in Hangoot Street. After a long search, they lugged out the whole family: father, mother and two little boys. The father was shot dead. The two boys were dragged from their mother's arms, soaked with petrol and burnt alive. The woman was raped by the whole squad even after she was dead.

On February 11th, 1947, French troops were searching the students' hostel at Hanoi when they heard a woman's groan from a ground floor dining room. They rushed in and saw a young pretty nurse with her thigh torn up by a mortar shell, lying in a pool of blood. One after the other, they quenched their lust on her, heedless of the blood that was running from her thigh. They went on abusing the woman a long time till they finally found out that she was dead.

A 10 year-old girl in Mytho, (South Viet Nam), straying from her home, was caught by the French. They slit her genital organs open and raped her to death.

During their operations near Namdinh (North Viet Nam), French troops raped a 15 year old liaison girl, took out her eyeballs and tore her in half.

On June 17th, 1947, French troops raped to death 6 women aged from 60 to 80 at Camgiang (North Viet Nam).

At Hoabinh (North Viet Nam) since they could not find women, French soldiers were found to have indulged in sexual acts with cows. A 70 year old woman happened to pass by. They captured her and raped her, saying: « Though she is old, she is still better than a cow ».

On April 10th, 1947, French troops raided the Daila locality (North Viet Nam). A pregnant woman who happened to be there took to flight. But she was caught. Heedless of her entreaties, the French raped her, drew out their bayonets and opened her belly. They toyed with the foetus, letting out sporadic gales of laughter.

In the provinces of Quangbinh, Quangtri, Thuathien (Central Viet Nam) French soldiers raped pregnant women, then with the nailed heels of their shoes, trod on their bellies, till the foetus was pulled out.

On festive days, French troops broke into churches, drove out the men and raped all the women and girls present, before the very eyes of Christ and Our Lady.

On January 18th, 1947, French troops raided Khuong-Thuong village (Hanoi suburb). Eight Viet-Nam Red Cross nurses were raped; three of them died following the abuse.

At Yenson (North Viet-Nam) the French raped a woman then slit her breasts and stuck them on the walls.

At Hoi-Phu, Tu-Son (Binh province North Viet-Nam) French troops, after raping an ambulance girl, ordered her to run naked on the road. Then they jumped into their cars, caught her up, raped her again, and finally ran her over.

At Hué (Central Viet-Nam) mothers were forced to throw their babies

into the river from the bridge of Song-Huong, and then were raped by French soldiers.

Most scandalous is the «tax on marriages» in French controlled areas of Central Viet-Nam. Under this tax the husband has to offer his wife to the French officers, the very first night. Chinese civilians in Quangtri city (Central Viet-Nam) were also forced to submit to this shameful tyranny.

468 women were victims of French sadism during the French attack against Sontay, 20 miles NE of Hanoi, in 1947.

791 women were raped in the Southern part of Bacninh province (North Viet-Nam) in the first half of 1947. This number did not include those who in shame did not make any declaration to the authorities.

Outside Hanoi, the number of women raped by the French is estimated at 3,000. About 50 per cent of the women were raped in Thusthien province (Central Viet-Nam) and thousands of others in the three provinces of Quangbinh, Quangtri, and Thuathien (Central Viet-Nam). were infected with venereal diseases by French, German and Moroccan soldiers.

Hundreds of women and girls have been captured and «distributed» to French troops in Laos, at Hanoi, Haiphong and other cities in order to «raise morale».

2) REACTION OF THE VIET-NAM WOMEN

The French colonialists believed that they could obliterate the revolutionary and resistant spirit by means of arms and terrorism. This has proved a gross miscalculation.

French sadism and cruelty, far from terrifying Viet-Nam women, have made them revolt and have aroused in them an eagerness and determination to fight to the last. They realise that the return of French colonialists would mean more open sadism, and slavery for ever.

Burning with hatred, the most peaceful of them now make up their mind to take revenge on the French. They have learned through chafing experience that it is no use screaming when faced with French savagery. Instead of being satisfied with keeping underground relations with the guerrillas and helping them by all possible means, they choose to go on directly to guerrilla action by themselves.

Here are some examples of women killing French soldiers.

In September 1945, when the Gurkhas helped the French in the operations against Saigon, a girl selling pop corn in Saigon market succeeded in killing a group of them who had come to buy her goods, by putting

explosive into her stove. She was fully conscious of her own fate yet she fearlessly resorted to this.

During the same period, a beautiful girl named Co Tu, feigning to carry water in a village occupied by the enemy, attracted the bestial attentions of a group of Gurkhas and killed them all with the hand-grenade she had hidden in her jar, when they came to tease her.

Seven women were selling vegetables at the Bacninh market in January 1947, when 2 French soldiers bounced in looking for eggs. A Viet-Nam guerrilla who was among the market-goers pulled out a hand-grenade. But a young woman stopped him: «Put it back, brother, I will take them alive for you». She winked at 5 or 6 women. Within a few seconds, the two French soldiers were surrounded, disarmed, and were handed over to the guerrillas, their hands tied behind their back.

Miss SAM, 24 year old guerrilla fighter in Tuson, Bacninh (North Viet-Nam) sprang from behind her door and slashed two passing French soldiers with a butcher's knife. One of the soldiers who escaped, drew out his gun and shot her on the spot.

In April 1948, the French organised a fair in Saigon which was an outstanding failure, since nobody attended it. When the fair was inaugurated, General NGUYEN VAN XUAN, puppet President, was approached by a beautiful girl student, very nicely dressed, who presented him with a box. «This is a homemade product», she said. «They have forgotten to exhibit it in the fair.» Briskly, she took out a hand-grenade — a Viet-Nam hand-grenade — and intended to hurl it at the puppet President. But the guards caught her and took her to prison. Nothing has been heard of her since.

If they cannot kill French soldiers, Viet-Nam women and girls in French controlled areas keep actively helping the guerrillas in ambushes.

A little girl saved the life of a guerrilla commander from a French officer by striking the latter's face with a pointed stick. She was instantaneously shot down. Before closing her eyes, she said to her elder comrade: «Sister, I am going to die. Please cover my body with the Viet-Nam flag». President HO CHI MINH once recalled these words with tears in his eyes.

In order to attract enemy soldiers into the street, two women who were formerly forced to prostitution, staged a sham fight in front of a French garrison and tore each other's clothes. A big crowd gathered round them. Viet-Nam guerrillas suddenly appeared and killed many of the French who were busy looking at this scene. The trick was successful but it cost the lives of both heroines, who washed out the shame of their erroneous past with their patriotic blood.

The spirit of Viet-Nam women grows more and more determined with every instance of French cruelty and sadism.

Those who live in areas tightly controlled by the French have now adopted underground shelter life to avoid being captured by French soldiers. These shelters are like labyrinths, and sometimes extend over a mile. They have proved impregnable strongholds against all enemy attempts, including the pumping of tear gas or smoke.

On October 20th last year, the first anniversary of the Union of Viet-Nam Women, a great number of women left the enemy-occupied villages to attend the meeting in the free zone after covering several miles.

In the course of a meeting held in the French controlled area on the third anniversary of the August Revolution this year, women of many occupied villages pricked out blood from their finger tips to write letters to their fellow-sisters in free zones.

The 15th August of each year is observed by Viet-Nam women throughout the country as « anti-terrorism day ». Women's meetings are held on that day, in free zones as well as in occupied ones, where participants take the vow never to forget the barbaric French attacks on the life and honour of Viet-Nam women and to avenge them with all their might. Collections and auction sales are organised by the local branch of the Union of Viet-Nam Women. Money and gifts obtained are brought to the victims' houses with comforting words from their fellow-sisters.

« Anti-terrorism day » is of great significance. It eloquently expresses the steady will of all Viet-Nam women to live freely in an independent country. It reminds everyone of the atmosphere of freedom and democracy they enjoyed before the locality was occupied by the French. And it suggests to everyone that freedom and democracy will soon be theirs again, as a result of their efforts, which are the continuance of the efforts of so many heroines who, after TRUNG TRAC, have fallen for the cause of the Fatherland.

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