

Six Hours To Liberate South Viet Nam

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Editor's Note: Tran Van Dinh, Vietnamese journalist and former acting ambassador to the United States, writes a regular column for the College Press Service.



WASHINGTON (CUP-CPS)—When the \$2,639,000 bomb-proof, shatter-proof U.S. Embassy in Saigon was dedicated last September to replace the old one which had been bombed March 1965, a Vietnamese journalist friend of mine wrote me in obvious sadness that "the sun will never set on the American Empire in South East Asia".

Indeed with the imposing Pentagon East, the expanding bases at Cam Ranh, Da Nang, Bien Hoa, just to cite a few huge and permanent installations, it seemed to some Vietnamese who have forgotten the durable spirit of resistance of the Vietnamese people, that the U.S. power cannot be touched, let alone attacked. At any rate, the U.S. Embassy (with reinforced concrete construction surrounded by a terracotta-faced sunscreen that also served as a blast shield, protected by an eight-foot high wall, a helicopter pad on the roof) was until January 30, 1968, the symbol of American power, the power to stay, to destroy, to change culture and civilization, the power to dispose and propose.

Then at 3 a.m. on January 30, on the occasion of TET (Vietnamese Lunar New Year, the Year of the Monkey), the citadel of American power was assaulted by a squad of bare-footed, peasant-dressed members of the National Liberation Front of South

Viet Nam (NLF, called by the Western press, Viet Cong). The siege lasted six hours and the Embassy was rescued by a detachment of the 101st Airborne Division which landed on the helicopter pad on the top of the chancery. When the battle ended, 19 NLF bodies were found in the compound. Six U.S. servicemen were killed and five wounded.

The representative of U.S. power in Viet Nam, Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, who lives nearby and who had been earlier whisked away to a safer place, told the press in Saigon the evening of January 31 that "the attack on the Embassy failed because they were never able to enter the chancery building." Anyone who watched the Huntley Brinkley show on January 31 could judge by himself and see by himself what actually did happen. Of course, Ambassador Bunker cannot admit that the members of the NLF forces have penetrated the Embassy: no Emperor can say that his throne is touched by the commoners, and by "rebels" at that.

The attack on the U.S. Embassy was part of a simultaneous assault on the South Viet Nam presidency, the Pentagon East, the South Viet Nam Army General Staff, and the South Viet Nam government radio (which was blown up in shambles). President Thieu had to use the

master's voice, the U.S. Army Radio, to announce Martial Law (not against the NLF but against neutralists and people who talk about peace) and the suspension of a Constitution which has never been implemented. Thieu also called on the people "to evacuate areas infiltrated by the Viet Cong" so that the U.S. Air Force could bomb the NLF strongholds around the city.

If Thieu meant what he said, he should start by evacuating his own office to Honolulu or Washington, D.C., or have it bombed. Thieu should be intelligent enough to know that his office as well as all agencies of the Saigon regime are penetrated by the NLF.

The attacks in Saigon signaled the assault and occupation of more than half of the 44 provincial capitals and the shelling of at least 25 airfields. In the old imperial city of Hue, the third largest city in South Viet Nam, the NLF flag was flying on the traditional flagpole. Once in 1945 (August) the yellow flag of the Vietnamese monarchy was lowered and replaced, at the same flagpole by the Red background, yellow star flag of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. Several big cities (until February 2nd, time of this writing) such as Pleiku, Kontum, Quang Tri, Qui Nhon are still being held by

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Stars for students

— Editor's comment: This satire . . . refers to the "war" between students and citizens in West Berlin which has been going on for over a year now. On February 18th, 80,000 citizens assembled for a counter demonstration. In the course of the afternoon, numerous students were beaten up — and wearing a beard, long hair, or even corduroy pants or rimless glasses sufficiently identified you as a student. The police was powerless — and in addition hesitant to take action since a student had been shot by a policeman during a similar demonstration last summer.

(The following was translated by Karl Kuepper of the German Department, from an article which appeared on March 1st, in Die Zeit (The Times). Die Zeit is a weekly newspaper in West Germany. The "editor's comment" which follows is part of the translated reprint. — Ed.)

Dear Student P.

You may have noticed that I only furtively greeted you when I recently saw you on Kurfuerstendamm. I hope you didn't get a false impression of me. I have to be careful these days. You know, I have a family, and you are a student of the Free University.

Of course I have nothing against students. I have known many respectable students. A grandfather of mine was a student himself. Some great men, to whom German culture owes much, were students at one time of their lives. Nevertheless, due to their exaggerated intellectualism students will always be a strange disruptive element in our society.

One must therefore understand the justified public anger about students and one would welcome that countless democratic citizens of Berlin have opposed a tiny minority of radicals in an impressive demonstration of freedom. As our acting mayor Schuetz remarked so aptly, the world shall know where Berlin stands.

I noticed that you were walking with a cane and that your head was bandaged. I therefore assume that you were part of these marginal events of which we have heard in the meantime. You may recall that on the day before the freedom demonstration took place I had expressedly warned you to leave the house since you look so much like a student which might have a provocative effect on some citizens of the free part of Berlin. Only a facial operation would probably help to eliminate your slight resemblance to Dutschke (a well-known student leader — ed. —), but the least you could have done was to get a hair cut and shear off your beard. Perhaps workman's clothes would have prevented the freedom loving Berliners to beat you up after the senate of the city had ordered the freedom demonstration to be held.

You and your kind must finally realize that you are only guests in our society, and that the patience of all respectable German democrats has been exhausted. The students are the reason for our calamities — therefore our people must be protected from them. This may be difficult at times since there are students who cannot be recognized as such. This makes it difficult for the police to decide whether they should join in the beating up since it is a student or only watch since it is a journalist.

It would therefore make matters much easier if students could be made to wear some symbol for identification — perhaps a star. This would in no way discriminate against them, it would only help to protect the innocent. Some people have recently demanded work camps for students, but one would have to consider the reaction outside Germany in such a case. Certain hostile groups keep spreading lies and propaganda maintaining that Germans have not changed.

Nevertheless it should be in the interest of all concerned to look for solutions to the student question. Emigration and re-settlement of students in Madagascar seems like a passable preliminary final solution. Rather dead than red!

Yours,

Wolfgang Ebert.

UBC may start trend with "Back Trudeau" committee

MONTREAL (CUP) — Response to a UBC Back Trudeau committee has prompted its organizers to initiate a national movement at campuses across Canada.

Political science grad student George Haynal, chairman of the committee, says more than 1,200 signatures have been collected in several days. Letters have been sent to more than 60 university newspaper editors asking for

support and information about local groups backing Trudeau.

The committee hopes to collect another 4,000 when students invade the downtown area and suburban shopping centres.

None of the other 11 Liberal leadership candidates have comparable student organizations.

Ironically, three UBC delegates to the convention are all committed to John Turner.