

### APPENDIX III

WASHINGTON, December 20, 1972.

MR. DANIEL TEODOBU,  
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New York, N.Y.

DEAR MR. TEODOBU: Thank you for your letter and your Christmas card, and following are my answers to your questions:

*Q. How good is Mr. Gareth Porter's knowledge of the Vietnamese language in your judgment?*

A. Mr. Gareth Porter had the correct tones when he pronounced a few Vietnamese words, which indicated that he had some language training, but as the spoken language is very different from the written one, there is no certainty that he can write, read and understand the text in a book or in a newspaper. As a matter of fact, there are many indications which are undeniable evidence that he cannot. These are only a few:

(a) In the footnote part of his paper he mentions twice the title of a book 'Toan-quoc Khang-chien' (Whole Nation Resistance) but for some unknown reason he omits the first part of the first word and writes 'Quoc Khang chien' which is nonsense in Vietnamese. It took me many days to discover which book he is talking about.

(b) On page 46 of his paper, he copies two words from General Giap's speech which, in the original text are: 'dê-phông lêch-lạc', meaning 'to take precautions to avoid deviations'. Mr. Porter, however, writes 'dã phòng lêch-lạc', which actually means 'has prevented deviations'. This is not all. He translates what he writes into 'committed deviations', which is the very opposite of both what General Giap said and what he himself mistakenly writes. Other mistakes of the same nature clearly indicate that Mr. Gareth Porter is still a long way from reading and understanding written Vietnamese.

*Q. Mr. Gareth Porter refers to many books and newspapers published by Hanoi. How accurate are these references?*

A. (a) As footnotes Mr. Gareth Porter refers to eight booklets, all of them written by a propaganda team in Hanoi. It should be noted that although Mr. Porter mentions the titles of these booklets in Vietnamese, there is reason for believing, however that—at least in certain cases—Porter read the English version of the documents listed rather than the Vietnamese, because, aiming at overseas propaganda Hanoi had put out official translations of these documents in English, French, and other languages.

(b) Mr. Porter also refers to articles in Nhan Dan, the official party paper. I have, however, found that instead of the original texts in the Nhan Dan, Mr. Porter is working from translations into English done by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (a U.S. federal service), since some articles from the Nhan Dan were broadcast by Radio Hanoi, monitored and translated into English by the FBIS. The proof is that whenever there is a mistake—a difference between the original text in the Nhan Dan and the English translation of the FBIS—the same mistake appears in Mr. Porter's writing. Following are a few examples:

(1) On page 47 of his paper Mr. Porter criticizes the late Bernard Fall for some supposed inaccuracy. He writes: "As for the local party secretary in To Hieu, (not the Chairman of the resistance committee as stated by Fall) . . ." and Mr. Porter gives a reference—Nhan Dan, August 24, 1956—as a proof that he is right and Fall was wrong. I checked Nhan Dan, August 24, 1956 and this is what I found: Nhan Dan describes the man as "an acting party-branch secretary cum village committee chairman". It seems that, to be brief, Fall mentioned only one of the two titles, that of 'village chairman', while the translator working for the FBIS also thought that one title would be enough, and he chose that of 'party-branch secretary'. The result has been that, by comparing the title he saw in the FBIS with the one mentioned by Fall, Mr. Porter hastily concluded that Fall was inaccurate. The title is certainly not important. What is important here, is the

fact that Mr. Porter only reads the English texts in the FBIS and lets readers believe that he actually works on the original Vietnamese texts in the Nhan Dan.

(2) On page 49 of his paper, Mr. Porter criticizes Gittinger and William Kay who believed that the DRV had admitted that "nearly one-third of the persons tried and convicted as landlords had been condemned in error" and Mr. Porter gives a reference; Nhan Dan, November 13, 1956. I checked Nhan Dan, November 13, 1956 and I found that Gittinger and William Kay were right. The Vietnamese text in the Nhan Dan did admit that "After the rectification of classification was completed, people who had been wrongly classified as landlords have been re-classified [into a non-landlord class] and the rectification [of classification] has been quite systematic. Rectification has been carried out in every village. There are villages where the rectification was relatively small [unimportant], approximately 30 percent, and there were villages where the rectification was great [important], exceeding 50 percent." The article was a review of the whole campaign of Rectification of Classification, which ended after some 'two thousand villages' in the 'Delta of Tonkin' had completed the work. By reading the whole article in the Nhan Dan, it becomes quite clear to any mind that the Nhan Dan was referring to the percentage of rectification to be made, which by itself reflects the percentage of people who had been wrongly classified as landlords through a previous classification during the course of the Land Reform campaign. Messrs. Gittinger and Kay were completely right—perhaps they had a better translator—but Mr. Porter, by relying on the text in English he found in the FBIS, erroneously believes that "some have corrected their mistakes relatively less, about thirty percent, while other have corrected over fifty percent of them." Two things induced Mr. Porter into error. First, the translator working for the FBIS was unfamiliar with the whole process of classification and re-classification and appeared to be confused by such terms as 'rectification from wrong to right' and 'rectification from right to wrong' which abound in the text, and so produced a very wrong translation. Next, Mr. Porter apparently failed to read the article (in the FBIS) from beginning to end, because if he did, he would have realized that it was a review of a whole campaign after it had been completed, and somewhere in the text, the author has clearly stated that all known errors had been corrected. This case, again, shows how risky it is, when doing academic research, to base one's conclusions on a few translations sloppily done by 'non academic translators.'

Q. Mr. Gareth Porter challenges your translation of General Giap's speech. In a TV debate, he said that he had your translation and his own checked by some other Vietnamese and that this Vietnamese stated that Porter is right, you are wrong. What is your reply to this charge?

A. I strongly believe that the Vietnamese who helped Mr. Porter in reading General Giap's speech is none other than Mr. Tran Van Dinh, whose name is mentioned by Porter in Footnote No. 39, page 34 of his paper. There is much to say about the changeable Mr. Dinh, but in connection with the problem of translation, let me tell you how capable Mr. Dinh has proved himself to be in the very field of translation from Vietnamese into English.

In the Washingtonian issue of April 1968, Mr. Dinh wrote a long article in which he discussed KIM VAN KIEU, a masterpiece of Vietnamese poetry. It is a novel in verse known to every Vietnamese and taught to Vietnamese students in elementary schools, high schools and colleges. Following are a few points in the article which reveal the extent of Mr. Dinh's personal knowledge of his native language:

(a) There are three main characters in the novel, KIEU, a girl of good family who had to sell herself to a brothel house to save her father, arrested and jailed by a corrupt official; KIM, her lover, and her sister VAN, whom she recommended him to marry in her place. The author combined the three names into the title "KIM VAN KIEU." In his article Mr. Dinh wrote: "... the gangsters who kidnapped Kim Van Kieu for money. ... proving by that very fact that in his mind Kim Van Kieu (similar to Kim Il Sung in North Korea) was the full name of the girl (Kim, family name; Van, middle name; Kieu, personal name). The whole Vietnamese community in Washington is shocked to realize that there still exists a Vietnamese who has not read KIM VAN KIEU and who fails to understand that Kim Van Kieu is, as previously stated, a combination of three names, instead of a single one."

(b) Mr. Dinh quoted a total of 49 verses from the Kim Van Kieu, translated into English, without attribution, thereby making readers believe that he him-

self did the translation. Actually, after checking, a Vietnamese friend of mine found out that Dinh simply reproduced the 43 verses from a "Kim Van Kieu," in English, by Le Xuan Thuy, Khai Tri Publishing House, Saigon, 1963. There is even evidence that Mr. Dinh did not reproduce Le Xuan Thuy's translation by hand, or by typing. He simply xeroxed a few pages and gave them to The Washingtonian, which without checking, sent them direct to the printer. I say this because on page 44 of the *Washingtonian*, between two verses, there is the following sentence: "*These attitudes and techniques are in the footnotes*"—but there are no footnotes in the *Washingtonian*. Actually, it was an item in Le Xuan Thuy's book, a reference to a footnote in the Appendix of that book. Mr. Dinh forgot to delete that reference when he xeroxed Le Xuan Thuy's text.

(c) Mr. Dinh said that the Vietnamese disregarded material wealth and "in the Vietnamese hierarchy (sic) of values, a rich man is a *trọc phú*." That is very true. *Trọc* (濁)<sup>1</sup> is a term borrowed from Chinese, meaning impure, dirty and *phú* (富)<sup>2</sup> is another term borrowed from Chinese, meaning rich. *Trọc phú* (濁富)<sup>3</sup> therefore, is understood by Chinese and Vietnamese as 'dirty rich,' 'uneducated rich,' 'or nouveau rich.' But what surprises Vietnamese is the fact that Mr. Dinh gave the following definition of *trọc phú*: "bald wealthy; having nothing in his head and his heart." To all appearances, Mr. Dinh mistakenly believed that *trọc* was a vernacular term, in the native Vietnamese tongue, meaning 'bald or shaved head,' and then, strangely enough, he assumes that a person who does not have any hair on his head must also be devoid of any feeling in his heart.

(d) The author of the novel, Nguyen Du, who had served the previous dynasty was somewhat reluctant to accept the offer when the founder of a new dynasty offered him a high position in the royal court. Nguyen Du had to be reluctant because had he eagerly accepted the offer, he would have been regarded by his fellow Confucians as a man who lacked loyalty. Mr. Dinh knew that because he wrote: "... Nguyen Du finally and reluctantly consented to engage himself in the *hoan lo* . . . as officialdom and public service were called in those days by writers and scholars." That is also very correct. *Hoan* (宦)<sup>4</sup> is a term borrowed from Chinese meaning *mandarin*, and *lộ* (路),<sup>5</sup> another Chinese term meaning *road*. *Hoan lộ* (宦路)<sup>6</sup> stands for "mandarinal career," something all young students dreamed about for centuries. The surprising thing is: Mr. Dinh gave to *Hoan lộ* the following definition: "the road of misfortunes." To all appearances, Mr. Dinh confused two Chinese characters, one *Hoan* (宦)<sup>7</sup> meaning *mandarin*, and another *Hoan* (患)<sup>8</sup> meaning *misfortune*. The confusion came from the fact that the second one is more widely used in spoken Vietnamese than the former, which is only known to those who have a solid background in Chinese studies. Mr. Dinh did not. That kind of difficulty is also common to most Vietnamese of Mr. Dinh's generation who went to school after the study of Chinese ideograms had been interrupted. In the romanized system two homonyms are spelled alike, but in the former system two homonyms with two different meanings were represented by two different characters. The written language was thus much clearer. These observations about Mr. Dinh's article in the *Washingtonian* prove that if a Vietnamese of Mr. Dinh's stature (former diplomat, high-ranking in Diem's Government) has difficulty in reading and understanding a Vietnamese text, how much more difficult it is for an American who only had a few months or perhaps a year of language training. But nobody is to blame. The difficulty simply lies in the fact that in almost any written Vietnamese text, only one half is vernacular Vietnamese, while the other half is a vocabulary borrowed from classical Chinese. Chinese is to Vietnamese what Latin is to English except that there is less Latin in modern English than there is Chinese in modern Vietnamese.

The situation described above concerns the Vietnamese language in general, but during the last twenty years the situation has become worse in North Vietnam. This is because, apart from Chinese terms borrowed centuries ago from classical Chinese, there has been a flood of new Communist terminology imported to North Vietnam from Mainland China. Worse still, North Vietnamese also took the liberty to invent new terms with new meanings by combining two

\*Because the complex Chinese ideographic characters are very difficult to distinguish when reduced to the size of the fine type lines in this section, the characters which appear above are here reproduced in a more legible size. This procedure will also be followed with all Chinese characters which appear beyond this point in the text.

<sup>1</sup>濁 <sup>2</sup>富 <sup>3</sup>濁富 <sup>4</sup>宦 <sup>5</sup>路 <sup>6</sup>宦路 <sup>7</sup>宦 <sup>8</sup>患

Chinese characters, or to give to some classical Chinese terms a new meaning which was naturally only understood by themselves. Such distortions of the Chinese language (or more precisely Vietnamese terms of Chinese etymology) confused everybody outside North Vietnam: Vietnamese in South Vietnam, Chinese translators in Taiwan as well as in Peking. The confusion reached such a peak that in 1957 a North Vietnamese delegation was invited to Peking to clarify the whole mess. Working together for three years, a joint-commission of Chinese and Vietnamese lexicographers produced an entirely new 'Vietnamese-Chinese Dictionary' published in 1960 by the Chinese Government in Peking. Since then, Hanoi politicians and political writers seem to have stopped inventing new Chinese terms.

General Giáp, for instance, displays a special liking for these 'Chinese-character-Vietnamese-meaning' terms. In his speech he used as lot of them, and I was not surprised when I saw that two of these terms have become a subject of controversy between Mr. Porter and me.

(a) One is *Truy bắt*, a combination of two Chinese characters, *Truy* ( 追 ),<sup>9</sup> meaning to pursue, to run after someone, to hunt him down and *Bắt* ( 逼 ),<sup>10</sup> to oppress, to compel someone to do something against his will. *Truy bắt*, therefore, stands for a process by which you apply on someone a continuous pressure or physical pain until you get from him what you want; and, since *Truy bắt* was used during the Land Reform to extract confessions from the victims. I translated it into 'torture'. Mr. Porter on the other hand believes that the correct equivalent should be 'coercive measures'. As this term is not clearly defined in any dictionary. Mr. Porter is free to interpret the way he likes. But, then, I do not see any basic difference between 'torture' and 'coercive measures' as both were used to extract confessions. If there was one, it must be a difference of degree, that is it depends on the amount of pain inflicted on the victim to extract some confession from his mouth. If 'coercive measures' are too painful, then they are quite close to 'torture'. Only when they are mild, then they may be something else. Chances are: 'coercive measures' used during the Land Reform in North Vietnam were far from being mild, as revealed in the following quotations from Nhan Dan of November 7 and 12, 1956. A party member newly released from jail wrote:

"... [although I am quite calm now], I still have some mixed feeling towards the Land Reform cadres and particularly towards T, in charge of the tribunal, who *truy bắt* me in a very cruel manner." Nhan Dan, Nov. 12, 1956.)

Another party member who had experienced the same "coercive measures" wrote:

"At a certain moment I thought I should confess [to the crime] so as to have a slight chance to survive and later, to justify [my conduct] before the Party." (Nhan Dan, Nov. 7, 1956.)

And here is a more vivid description by another party member, which appeared in Nhan Dan of October 30, 1956:

"... My past achievements have been turned upside down by a certain number of cadres in the Ha Tinh province who *truy bắt* me all day and all night long to compel me to accept which I never committed, or never thought about committing.

"The *truy bắt* process kept increasing day after day . . . I could not remain silent. Some other ideas emerged and turned around my mind like a revolving stand. To surrender or to resist. To surrender means a misfortune for ten thousand generations. To resist means death . . . If I died, how could I have an opportunity to explain [my case] to the Party? . . . Generations after generations my descendants will be labelled as those of a reactionary. Their future will be doomed and they will bitterly suffer . . ."

I do not believe that if Mr. Porter has read these few passages from the Nhan Dan he would not accuse me of "distorted translation," when, to convey the idea, I deliberately translated *truy bắt* into *torture*.

(b) Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese and Koreans were all using the term *aw tsi* ( 處死 )<sup>11</sup> to mean "to sentence to death," or "to execute." In 1956, the opposition papers still used the same *aw tsi*. However, for some unexplained reason, that term, was banned from the official communist vocabulary during the Land Reform; when thousands of people were sentenced to death and executed. Also, at the same period, another term, *aw tsi*, ( 處置 )<sup>12</sup> became widely

<sup>9</sup> 追 <sup>10</sup> 逼 <sup>11</sup> 處死 <sup>12</sup> 處置

used but with a new and vague meaning. In classical Chinese *xu tri* means: 1) to arrange things, 2) to handle a difficulty, to solve a problem. During the Land Reform, however, thousands of people were *xu tri*, and all of them ended their life in front of the firing squad. Under such circumstances, *xu tri* became a slang, meaning "to solve" with the implied idea of "final solution."

For instance, when one North Vietnamese asked another about what happened to a certain landlord, the reply might have been: "He has been *xu tri* last week," and the one who asked the question fully understood that the landlord had to go through a long process which finally led him to the firing squad, some time last week. This was the reason why when General Giáp admitted that many innocent people had been *xu tri*. I could not but translate the term into "to execute." Mr. Porter prefers to translate the same term into "to discipline." He can, because it is simply a matter of interpretation, but, as far as I can investigate, no Chinese, Vietnamese or Japanese dictionary ever define *xu tri* as "to discipline." I understand, however, the reason why Mr. Porter—or Mr. Dinh who stands behind him—is reluctant to accept *xu tri* as "to execute," and that reason is: on the occasion of the Rectification of Errors Campaign, in the fall of 1956, a certain number of party-members, who had been previously said to have been "*xu tri*," were unexpectedly released from jail and came home alive. The situation was as follows: Stalinist terror had been criticized by Khrushchev at the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in early 1956, and then, during the Summer of the same year, a huge number of Party-members were wrongly classified as landlords and executed. Ho Chi Minh then issued a new order: "capital punishment must be postponed in case the victim is a party member," pending a Rectification of Errors campaign he may have had in mind, since at some earlier period the Chinese had implemented the same kind of campaign in China.

This means that almost at the very end of the Land Reform party-members said to be *xu tri* were not executed on the spot but discretely kept in some jail and then released during the Rectification of Errors campaign. Such a change in policy brought with it a new change of meaning to *xu tri*. It was precisely such a 'twisting of meanings' of more than one Chinese term which confused translators in Peking and which resulted in the confection of a new Chinese-Vietnamese Dictionary, published by China in 1960. In that Dictionary, the term "*xu tri*" is now given two meanings. A classical one: to handle a problem, and a new one (which is specifically North Vietnamese) 'to punish'. The irony is that classical dictionaries (both Chinese and Vietnamese) already had another term for 'to punish', and which stands next to *xu tri* (with a rising tone) and that term is *xu tri* (with a falling tone, marked by a dot under the 'i'. (處治)<sup>18</sup>

The whole story is very complicated as semantics usually is. I do believe that if you ask any scientific linguist, of any country, he will tell you that meanings change with time and space and the real meaning is in the people's mind, not in dictionaries.

*Q. Mr. Porter challenges the authenticity of Dr. Nguyen Manh Tuong's speech, which was published by Cach Mang Quoc Gia in Saigon, and translated by you in your book 'The New Class in North Vietnam'. Can you prove the authenticity of that speech?*

A. I do not have any official evidence of its authenticity, because it has never been published in Hanoi. I do have, however, some indirect proof which attests that:

(1) There was a National Congress of the Central Committee of the Fatherland Front, which was held in Hanoi, during the last week of October 1956. Confirmation can be found in Nhan Dan of October 23, November 1, November 3, 1956.

(2) Dr. Nguyen Manh Tuong did deliver a speech at that congress, because Nhan Dan of November 3, listed Dr. Nguyen Manh Tuong as first speaker and introduced him as "Lawyer Nguyen Manh Tuong, Deputy Chairman of the Association of Vietnamese Lawyers."

(3) The main themes presented by Dr. Nguyen Manh Tuong in his speech—as published by the Cach Mang Quoc Gia—can be found in Nhan Dan November 3 1956 describing what had been discussed at the Conferences, the Nhan Dan wrote:

"Most serious of all were cases in which our own rank and file was struck with losses of the lives and properties of a (certain) number of peasants, cadres and families who had contributed to the Revolution . . . ."

... The system of democratic justice was not yet fully (implemented) and there were cases in which the Law of the State was not respected in the countryside during the Land Reform, and in urban areas during the campaign of population census."

Looking at the Cach Mang Quoc Gia, in Saigon, this is what Dr. Tuong said: "I ask you, Ladies and Gentlemen, for permission to bow before the memory of all the innocent people killed, not by the enemy, but by our own hands. . . . People say: "We have struck ourselves." That sentence makes our hearts ache. We have therefore to confess that we made no difference between friends and enemies. . . . We have solemnly announced in our Declaration of Independence and in our Constitution that our government is built on a democratic foundation. Nevertheless the people have found that we actually lack democracy. . . . Because of this lack of democracy, serious mistakes have been committed in Land Reform."

(4) Dr. Nguyen Manh Tuong did not deliver his speech once, but three times. According to Nhan Dan of December 20, 1956, Dr. Nguyen Manh Tuong gave two more talks, one at the Doan-Ket Club (reserved for intellectuals) on December 5, and another one, at the location of the Socialist Party, on December 10 1956, and very probably he repeated the same arguments.

It should be recalled that when Dr. Nguyen Manh Tuong delivered his most famous speech at the National Congress of the Fatherland Front, sometime during the last week of October 1956, he did not get into any trouble for two reasons (1) that week was the week of the Hungarian revolt in Budapest. (2) The Party was in a conciliatory mood. Truong Chinh himself came on behalf of the Lao Dong Party to thank the speakers and solemnly promised to consider both their criticisms and suggestions. But on December 5 and 10 the same year, i.e. more than one month after the Budapest Revolt had been crushed by Khrushchev on October 26, Dr. Nguyen Manh Tuong made a most serious mistake by repeating the same criticism addressed at the Party. This time, the Nhan Dan counterattacked. To counterattack, the Nhan Dan of December 20 quoted some of Dr. Nguyen Manh Tuong's arguments which were as follows: (1) In case of doubt, the accused person must be pardoned, (2) The same principle was respected by communist Poland at the trial of the Poznan affair, (3) If legality was respected there would be no mistakes in Land Reform, (4) Judges must decide independently, (5) the National Assembly was powerless because it did not have any right, including that of checking upon the responsibility of the Government. All these arguments faithfully reflect Dr. Nguyen Manh Tuong's educational background. He had two doctorate degrees, one in Letters and one in Law. Very versed in Latin and Greek, he always displays a strong admiration for the Greek spirit of democracy and the Roman concept of legality. These arguments do exist in the text of his speech, published by the Cach Mang Quoc Gia, and they provide us with enough ground to believe that the speech is authentically his. Besides, looking at the beautiful style, the deep knowledge of what had happened inside North Vietnam, no Vietnamese can believe that someone in South Vietnam was competent enough to manufacture such an eloquent attack against the Communist regime in the north.

*Q. The Cach Mang Quoc Gia in Saigon which printed Dr. Nguyen Manh Tuong's speech told you that they got a copy of this speech from Rangoon. Tran Van Dinh assures Gareth Porter that the text of the speech was only a fabrication produced by a secret police and counterintelligence agency. (see Footnote No. 39 on Page 34, Gareth Porter's paper). What did Tran Van Dinh do in the Diem government at that time that would give him any knowledge of this?*

A. This is all I know. The Cach Mang Quoc Gia in Saigon published Dr. Nguyen Manh Tuong's speech on April 22, 1957. I translated that speech, included it in my book, "THE NEW CLASS IN NORTH VIETNAM" which was published in December the same year by Cong Dan Publishing Company. In January 1958, Tran Van Dinh, who was serving the Diem Government as Consul General in Rangoon, ordered fifty copies of my book from my publisher along with fifty copies of another book "THE QUYNH LUU UPRISING" from another publisher, all of them to be sent immediately by air to Rangoon.

In 1958, I made a trip to India, serving as a guide and interpreter to a group of Vietnamese socialists. On our way home in June 1958, we stopped at Rangoon for sight-seeing and we paid Dinh a visit. Dinh told me that my book was very useful to him. He said he distributed it far and wide to all Burmese personalities and press correspondents in the city, with the effect that when Ho Chi Minh came to Rangoon for a State visit on February 14, 1958, the Burmese press was already well-informed about what had happened inside North Vietnam: the

bloody Land Reform, the Nhan Dan Affair (the revolt of the intellectuals) and the peasant's revolt in Quyinh-luu etc. . . . Dinh showed me four copies of THE NATION, the biggest newspaper in Rangoon, and in each copy I saw an editorial very critical of the DRV. In most of them were quotations from Dr. Nguyen Manh Tuong's speech.

Very proud of his anti-communist propaganda feat, Dinh added: "Ho was so mad that he cut short his visit to four days instead of a whole week as previously scheduled. Then, as soon as Ho returned to Hanoi, the DRV police questioned Dr. Nguyen Manh Tuong on the way by which his speech had reached Rangoon." Also according to Dinh, Dr. Nguyen Manh Tuong said he had only one copy and that copy was handed over to Xuan Thuy (now chief negotiator in Paris, Secretary General of the Fatherland Front at that time). Later when I met him in Saigon Dinh said to me: "Tuong made a public statement in which he apologized for not having described the good aspects of the regime and he said he would sue before the International Tribunal anyone who translates and publishes his speech." Jokingly, Dinh told me: "Look for a good lawyer, someone better than Tuong and be ready to go to The Hague." I noted what Dinh told me in my travel diary.

To sum up, Dinh was personally involved in this whole affair. Either he must have been certain that the speech was authentic, or if he suspected that it was a fabrication he should not distribute it and be involved into a most dishonest form of anti-communist propaganda (objected to by Porter). I am sure, however, that Dinh, like any other Vietnamese who has read Dr. Nguyen Manh Tuong's speech, cannot but believe that it is authentic.

*Q. Gareth Porter charges that you were personally connected with CIA, with Diem's psychological warfare operations, with USIA propaganda in Saigon. How do you reply to these charges?*

A. It's rather difficult you know. If one did something and someone says that one did not, then one can have some material proof to refute the charge. But when one did not do something and one is accused of doing that thing, then simply by not doing, one does not have any document to prove that one did not do that thing.

But despite this, I can demonstrate that Porter was wrong and vicious in his attacks:

(*q*) *Connection with the CIA.*—In the Foreword of my book, I openly thanked the Congress for Cultural Freedom for a grant they gave me when I came to Paris in 1960. Basing himself on my public acknowledgement and of the fact that much later, in 1967, it was revealed that the CCF in Paris had received some funds from the CIA, Porter charges that my book was CIA inspired. I simply want to mention a few facts: (1) I started writing my book 'From Colonialism to Communism' when I was in India in 1959. In chapter I, I talk much about India because, living at that time in India, I had the Indian audience in mind. 2) It was not the CIA, but leaders of the Praja Socialist Party and the Bhoodan (land distribution) Movement in India who asked me to write the book. Being interested themselves in land reform, they wanted to learn about the various methods used in other countries. Proof of this: In the Indian edition of my book—which appeared prior to the Pall Mall edition in London and the Praeger edition in New York—I wrote the following dedication: "To my friends in the Bhoodan Movement and the Praja Socialist Party". 3) Since I could not complete the book before I abandoned my post in New Delhi and landed almost penniless in Paris, I had to look around for a grant and finally got one from the Congress for Cultural Freedom. The grant which amounted to less than US \$2,000 barely kept me alive for more than one year to complete my manuscript.

I was not the only person who received financial support from that international organization, hundreds of men of arts and letters around the world also did, and among them were many Americans who are now well-known for their anti-war writings. 4) It should be recalled that in 1960 nobody was aware of the fact that the CCF in Paris had received some funds from the CIA in the US, since this was only disclosed in 1967, i.e. 7 years later. 5) There was only one Vietnamese who is publicly known to have received funds direct from the CIA—known as OSS during world War II—and that man was Ho Chi Minh. Needless to say, during some thirty years of his life he continuously received money from another secret organization—the Comintern. Which one is better than the other? The CIA or the Comintern? And is it more moral to spread Communism than to objectively describe how Communism actually is?

(a) *My connection with the Diem government.*—After I came to Saigon in April 1955, I obtained a job at the Ministry of Information. I was appointed chief of the Cultural Bureau, in charge of briefing foreign visitors on Vietnamese history and culture. However, the creation of that bureau was not approved by the Vietnamese Civil Service Commission, with the result that I could not be paid. After 8 months working without pay, I had to quit to look for some other means of living. I would like to add that the Ministry of Information in South Vietnam like its counterpart in any other country might be in charge of propaganda, but never deals with intelligence which is the responsibility of other specialized services.

(c) *Connection with Saigon USIA.*—When Mr. Porter came to my office he asked me if I had any connection with USIS in Saigon. I had never been employed by USIS or had any direct connection with them. However, I also told him that when I completed my translation of the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin in 1956, USIS, on learning of the existence of the translation, had arranged for its publication by a Saigon publishing house. For this I received a very modest reimbursement from the publishing house—something under \$100. Maybe Mr. Porter did not clearly understand what I said, or else, in bad faith, he deliberately twisted what I had told him into the story that I had worked as a translator for USIS in Saigon, thereby implying that I was a paid agent of "American imperialism." In reply to this third accusation by Mr. Porter I simply challenge him to produce any document attesting that I was on the USIS payroll during the whole period I was in Saigon. Besides, how could I? I just came out from North Vietnam and would not have been "cleared" to work for any U.S. agency if I ever applied.

Q. *Gareth Porter declares—with documents in hand—that the DRV government was very lenient in its policy, and that different landlords were given different treatments. He charges you with distortion of reality when you said that all landlords were subject to the same harsh treatment. What is your reply on this point?*

a. If you consider a liar anyone who says something you don't find in official communist documents, then when Nikita Khrushchev who revealed to the world unbelievable crimes committed by Stalin (something you cannot find in any Soviet official document), then you should consider him as the greatest liar in the world. As you know, nobody ever did. Besides, I think one should not solely rely on official statements to characterize the true nature of any regime. Not only in communist countries but almost everywhere there is a noticeable disparity between official statements and practical policies.

I have all the official documents Mr. Porter has and many more. Better still when I was in North Vietnam, I had to study these documents for months at a time. As Porter claims that he read the Hanoi publications and believes anything he saw in these publications, I simply want to point out one small footnote in Hoc Tap of October 1956 which by itself clearly demonstrates that Mr. Porter is wrong. It is a small footnote added to an article "The Ideological Origin of Mistakes Committed in Land Reform and Party Reorganization", by Minh Nghia (Clear Explanation) which many people believed to be a pen-name used by Ho Chi Minh. The footnote runs as follows:

"For instance, according to our policy, there are 'Resistance landlords', families having contributed to the revolution, etc., these landlords should be treated differently, but because of a concept according to which everybody in the landowning class is a reactionary, an enemy, that correct point in our policy has not been implemented. Thus, no experience has been had to enrich and to put that [particular] point into a concrete form, and even today, the policy of different kinds of treatment [reserved to different kinds of landlords] has not yet materialized."

Q. *Do you recognize any error or inaccuracy in your book "From Colonialism to Communism"?*

A. After checking, I admit to two errors, one found by Mr. Porter, and one by another critic.

(1) On page 104 of my book, when I calculated the average land ownership of each landlord in the Hanoi suburban area I made a mistake: Instead of 18 acres, I wrote 1.8 acre for each landlord.

(2) On page 216, when quoting the story of a man back from jail, I referred to Nhan Dan of November 14, 1956; instead of November 4, 1959. I made that mistake when I typed the manuscript.



Q. Last question: *How do you explain the divergence of views between you and Gareth Porter?*

A. It is simply a matter of approach. Mr. Porter studies the processes of Land Reform in North Vietnam by reading a few propaganda booklets published by Hanoi and articles in the FBIS which are not always accurate, compared to the original texts in Vietnamese.

For my own part, I lived through the whole process, and I described what I saw with my own eyes. For me documentary evidence is only secondary. Also Mr. Porter believes too firmly in anything he found in the Nhan Dan and in other Hanoi publications. A critical eye is in my view the first requirement for any academic research. This lesson I received from two Asian philosophers. The first one is Buddha who said: "Don't believe anything you are told, or you read in a book, unless it conforms with common sense and rationality." The second one is Mencius who also said: "Better not to have books than to read books and believe everything written in the books."

I want to add one more thing: During the Land Reform in North Vietnam in 1953-54, the Communists organized *To Kho* sessions, where illiterate peasants were pressured into making false and outlandish accusations against those who had been designated "landlords." Mr. Porter's paper reminds me of the *To Kho* sessions I witnessed at the time. There were the same distortion of the truth, the same free hand for inventing false charges, the same imaginary plot against the DRV, and above all, the same conviction that the Lao Dong Party is always right, the same tendency to look upon anyone who opposes the Party as a bourgeois reactionary, a lackey of French colonialism or American imperialism.

But one small difference disturbs me very much: While in North Vietnam false charges were made by illiterate peasants in front of largely illiterate audiences, charges of the same qualitative nature are now coming out from the printing press of a famous institution of higher learning in the United States; Cornell University.

This I find surprising, to say the least.

Sincerely yours,

HOANG VAN CHI.