

# Hanoi Regime Reported Resolved To Oust Nearly All Ethnic Chinese

## Millions of Dollars Being Exacted From the Refugees Said to Be a Major Source of Government Revenue

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HONG KONG, June 11 — Vietnam appears determined to expel virtually all the members of its ethnic Chinese minority and is exacting hundreds of millions of dollars from them before their departure, much of it to repay Soviet aid and arms sales, according to refugees and intelligence sources here.

Despite denials by Vietnamese officials, there is growing evidence that the exodus is being organized by the Government. The regime regards the Chinese as of doubtful loyalty and as unproductive city dwellers who are an obstacle to plans for rural development.

A Vietnamese official who is in charge of emigration in Ho Chi Minh City recently told the representative of a foreign relief agency that the Government wanted to expel the Chinese as quickly as possible and asked for his help. The Vietnamese official, Vu Hoang, the head of the consular department of the Foreign Ministry, said there were still 800,000 to 1.2 million Chinese in southern Vietnam following the departure of 300,000 Chinese during the last year.

Roughly 200,000 others have been expelled or have fled from northern Vietnam in the last 12 months, leaving 50,000 there, by the count of a Western diplomat in Hanoi. Since Vietnam's border war with China in February, the number of departures has speeded up, with 3,000 a day leaving from north and south in the last few weeks, refugee officials say.

### Subjected to Harassment

To encourage the Chinese to depart, they have been subjected to harassment, including loss of jobs, closure of schools, curfews, intimidation by the police and the creation of detention camps.

An International Red Cross official who has worked in Vietnam believes that, as more refugees are putting out to sea, the likelihood of their reaching a foreign shore has been declining. From talks with leaders of the Chinese community in Ho Chi Minh City, the official calculates that the proportion of those drowning or dying of exposure, hunger and thirst at sea has risen from 50 to 70 percent. The reason, he believes, is that fewer seaworthy boats are being used.

The traffic in human beings has a double advantage for the Vietnamese Government since the police have been collecting 10 taels of gold, or over \$3,000, from each adult leaving southern Vietnam. The diplomat in Hanoi estimates that these funds make up the largest single export commodity of Vietnam's threadbare economy, replacing its traditional leading export, coal.

An intelligence report reaching here contends that the Vietnamese have used some of this gold to make a down payment of \$100 million to the Soviet Union for its aid and arms sales. Soviet aid to Vietnam runs \$1 million to \$2 million a day this year, the diplomat says.

The gold collected from the refugees is melted down in the Bank of Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City and shipped to the Bank of Foreign Trade in Hanoi before transport to Moscow, refugees report. Some gold still bearing faint Vietnamese Government markings has shown up in Soviet gold sales in Europe, according to the intelligence report.

In addition, international banking sources here say, overseas Chinese eager to help their relatives in Vietnam remitted \$242 million to the Bank of Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City in April, the last month for which figures are available. Most of the money is thought to be designed to pay for boat passages.

Such an amount, in one month, is more than half of Vietnam's total estimated exports for all of 1978, \$416 million. This year, because of the disruption caused by Vietnam's incursion into Cambodia in support of the new government there and because of the border war with China, regular exports are expected to be lower.

### Change in Composition of Exodus

The refugees leaving now differ from the earlier small groups of boat people who escaped after the Indochina war ended in 1975. The earlier refugees were largely ethnic Vietnamese leaving clandestinely. About 80 percent of the present flow consists of ethnic Chinese and is arranged by the Vietnamese Government.

According to refugees arriving here, the Government is so eager to keep control of the flow, and evidently wring all possible profit from it, that some refu-

gees planning to leave surreptitiously are being approached by police officials and are urged to arrange their departure openly through them.

In another case, according to refugees who arrived here on the freighter Sen On, Vietnamese security forces opened fire last Christmas on a boatload of 220 people who tried to leave without clearance. Only 18 people were said to have survived.

The descriptions by refugees of their experiences differ only in slight detail whether they are from north or south.

Tran Van Hong is a 44-year-old former printer from Haiphong, the port city. Last winter he was dismissed from his job without cause, he said in an interview here. He said he was repeatedly detained and interrogated by the security police and threatened with death if he did not either leave the country or report to one of the new rural resettlement zones.

Then his two children's Chinese school was closed and they were forbidden to attend regular Vietnamese schools, he said. His wife lost her job in a garage, and a curfew during hours of darkness was imposed an entire Chinese neighborhood. Vietnamese friends came to say that they could no longer remain in contact. The rice ration, a little over two pounds a month, was cut off, Mr. Hong said.

Finally, a policeman put him in touch with the captain of a fishing boat that was to leave for Hong Kong. For the equivalent of \$650 a person, which he paid to the policeman, passage was arranged. "We had to sell all our furniture and our clothes," Mr. Hong said. "When we got aboard the boat, the police searched us and took the little jewelry we had hidden."

To insure that the emigration plan works, the Vietnamese have reportedly set up two camps in the north for Chinese who balk at the choice of risking their lives at sea or of moving to a resettlement zone. The camps, described by refugees as concentration camps, are at Vinh Bao, near Haiphong, and at Nghe An.

In the south, the authorities have set up two transit camps near the port of Vung Tau to process the refugees, according to some people who arrived on the Sen On. The refugees are brought to the camps by bus from Ho Chi Minh City and are then taken to their boats on other buses.

### Chinese Connections Are Crucial

Evidently few people with Chinese connections are exempt. Nguyen Van Minh, 31 years old, was a Soviet-trained civil engineer from Hanoi and a party member. Two months ago, he says, he was called in by the police and questioned.

"You have always been a loyal Communist, but isn't your grandmother a Chinese?" the police were said to have asked. When Mr. Minh said she was, he was given the choice of a boat or a resettlement area.

In like fashion, Nguyen Van Tri, a 30-year-old postal clerk from Haiphong, was called in by the police. He is an ethnic Vietnamese, and his wife is Chinese. "Either you divorce her or you leave with her," he was told.

Even a former Vietcong provincial propaganda official from the Mekong Delta found himself condemned because one of his ancestors was Chinese. "I expected more, after 11 years of fighting for the motherland," he remarked in his new refugee camp home. He declined to give his name, having left his family behind.

Other refugees reported a new development in the Vietnamese Government's involvement. They said that after the police had put them aboard their boat and confiscated their belongings, they were ordered to sign the following declaration:

"I am very happy to give all this property to the Vietnamese Government. This government is very good to give us the opportunity to see our families again."