

Buddhists Need To Unite For Political Action

(Editor's Note: The following is one installment of a series of articles on the war in Vietnam written by Howard Moffett, Colleague Press correspondent in Saigon. The Daily Nebraskan has run two series of Moffett, who was former editor of the Yale Daily News.)

Thousands of Vietnamese disappeared from Central Vietnam after Prime Minister Ky brought his heel down on the Buddhist-led Struggle Movement in Hue and Danang last spring.

They were students, soldiers, citizens, priests. Virtually all were non-Communist Vietnamese nationalists, but they were bitterly opposed to the American-supported military government in Saigon.

Some were imprisoned at government detention centers throughout Vietnam; of these a few have subsequently been released on good behavior. Others, it is rumored joined the National Liberation Front. Still others went into hiding — a few have given themselves up in the months since May, but many are still trying to keep one step ahead of the National Police.

Buddhist Student Leaders
This is the story of three who did not join the NLF. They were Buddhist student leaders in Hue, the ancient imperial capital of the River of Perfumes about which no one can tell you is you don't know.

Of the three, only K— really looks like a revolutionary. A former president of the Hue Buddhist Student Association, he is thin and nervous, smokes continuously. His features are stut, his eyes dark and darting behind rimless spectacles, and his hair won't stay down. He does not like to talk in English, but when he begins to speak in Vietnamese one listens intently and nods whether one understands him or not.

Struggle Movement
K— was in Hue when the Struggle Movement began. For several weeks, he traveled with Thich Thien Minh as the monk sought support for the Struggle in Dalat and Saigon. When Ky sent his troops against Danang, K— went into hiding in Saigon. In August the government paid him the dubious honor of announcing that he had joined the Viet Cong, along with several other student leaders none of whom actually went over to the NLF. He has stayed indoors for eight months — reading, talking with a few trusted friends, never venturing into the streets for so much as a haircut.

T—, by contrast could pass for a young executive on the make. He is smooth, carefully groomed, self-confident and handles English well. In fact the only thing he cannot handle is a question about where the Buddhist student movement goes from here.

Beaten Daily
His appearance belies what he has been through. Captured in the initial crackdown, he was held in Saigon from June to December. For the first two months he was kept in a small room without light.

His head was shaved and he says he was beaten daily while undergoing intensive questioning. "I tried to explain to them that I was a nationalist, that I only wanted to build a national assembly, that I didn't want Ho Chi Minh to take over our country," he said. Clearly they weren't convinced.

Last Confucian
P— is brooding, heavy-lidded, slow of speech, aloof but meticulously courteous. In a recent intramural drama festival he played a court mandarin, and even in Western clothes he looks something like a last Confucian. He came to Saigon at once when Danang was attacked and has been hiding ever since.

I met them several times in a sparsely furnished students' room in Saigon. The story that follows is told largely in their own words. It should be read not as an account of fact but as a point of view, factual at times, that is held by some of Vietnam's leading Buddhist students. After all, Vietnamese politics — like American — are fashioned not out of facts but out of what people believe.

There are four Buddhist student associations in South Vietnam — one each at the University centers of Saigon, Dalat, Hue and Quihon. All are young; the University of Saigon itself was established only in 1954.

Partly because Ngo Dinh Diem discouraged student political activity, partly because of a traditional Buddhist trend not to take sides on temporal issues, the four groups from the beginning emphasized cultural and social rather than political activities. "We participated in politics as citizens, not as Buddhist students," the three young men said several times.

Topple Governments
Yet twice in the last three years — during the 1963 revolution against Diem and again in the Struggle Movement last spring — Buddhist students have taken to the streets in an attempt to topple governments.

The Hue leaders explained that political action could only come by agreement among all four associations. Their last joint meeting was in Hue last March, just before the outbreak of the Struggle Movement.

"We wanted to help our country," said K—. "We decided that the cause of most of Vietnam's social problems was the war. Therefore our problem was: how to stop the war? We felt that the Vietnamese people did not start the war, and that they are not responsible for it. And we thought that to have peace, we needed a strong and independent government."

Wanted Peace
Therefore we had to let the world know we wanted peace and a strong, independent government — this is what the Struggle Movement was all about.

What would a strong, independent government be? "One support by a majority of the people and acting as the people desire. We don't want an extremely strong, independent government now because that is impossible — but we want an elected government, not one kept in power by the Americans."

Ky Government
P— explained, "The Ky government for Americans, not for Vietnamese. . . . If Johnson says 'We must fight to the last man against the Communists,' Ky will say 'We cannot negotiate.' But if Johnson says 'Let us seek peace,' Ky will say the same words. So we can say that Ky has not really stood for our country."

"The mistake of the U.S. is always to support the government which supports the American government. Americans seem to believe that a strong Vietnamese government is a government supported by Americans."

Lesson
T— added, "The lesson of the past three years is that the U.S. government does not want leaders responsive to the hopes of the Vietnamese people." I asked if he believed the U.S. had controlled all the coups d'etat since 1963. "Surely," he said.

The government called the present Constituent Assembly largely in response to pressure brought by the Struggle leaders. Now the assembly is scheduled to finish the Constitution sometime in March, and elections have been prom-

ised for late summer or early fall. Will these elections give the Vietnamese people the independent civilian government they want?

Free Elections Impossible
Plainly, the Hue student leaders think no. "In the present circumstances (meaning as long as the military government is supported by the U.S.), it is impossible to have free elections."

Freedom in elections depends on the way they are organized." It would be easy, P— explained, for the junta to manipulate any elections held under its auspices.

The three cited the September Constituent Assembly elections as an example. "Saigon radio reported that 95 per cent of the people voted," P— said with a broad smile. "But even in the United States only about 50 per cent vote at the most."

"I think BBC (British Broadcasting Company) said it was about 24 per cent, and I think that was about right."

Ky Or Thieu Stoooges
P— said most of the provincial delegates are stoooges of Ky or Thieu (Lt. Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu, chairman of the junta by whose grace Ky governs). But he felt this was not so true of the delegates from Saigon: "Some of the assemblymen are supported by the people—Tran Van Van and Phan Quang Dan for example."

Both Van and Dan had been strong opposition voices in the assembly. Van was assassinated in December, and the murder has been blamed by everyone on everyone else. Dan narrowly escaped assassination when his car was mined in January.

Asked if he thought the government was responsible for these acts of violence, P— replied: "We cannot say for sure that the government did it, but if you ask the common people on the streets, that is what they say."

Assassination
Remember, Tran Van Van was on his way to the assembly when he was killed, and it was said he was going to try to bar the military from running in the elections.

Observers in Vietnam still argue over the extent to which the Struggle Movement was influenced by NLF agitators.

One American newsman, for example, swears that Thich Tri Quang's radio broadcasts were dictated by Viet Cong propagandists. The argument proves little except that after six years of open warfare it is still difficult to distinguish between Vietnamese nationalists, Communists, anti-Communists and non-Communists — for those who count themselves in the first group may also be in any of the last three.

At first K—, T—, and P— stated flatly that there were no Viet Cong elements involved in the struggle. Then T— said, "Precisely how can we know whether a citizen is a VC or a nationalist?"

"They always try to infiltrate, but we remained in control of the movement. . . . The VC would consider as enemies the leaders of the Struggle Movement."

Tranh Dau
Adding to the confusion was the fact that the Vietnamese words for the Buddhist-led Struggle — tranh dau — carry roughly the same meaning as the NLF's term for its "popular struggle" program—dau tranh.

The Hue students explained: "The terms are commonly used by both sides to indicate undying opposition to the established regime. The NLF is only the best organized struggle movement."

"The important distinction," they said, "is in purposes or aims. The aim of our Struggle was to ask for a constitutional assembly in order to come to a civilian government. The aim of the Communists is to communicate Viet Nam and make it a part of the Communist bloc."

Attitude
Their attitude toward Communism was much harder than many peace-loving American students might expect. Listen to the same young men that have just demanded free elections: "Since we are nationalists, we cannot accept a Communist victory in the elections."

Communism is not acceptable — socially, historically or culturally — to Vietnamese society. Communism is connected to for-

eign powers and therefore it is against the interests of Viet Nam."

They do not want U.S. troops to leave Viet Nam, for that would mean a takeover by the Communists. At the same time, they maintain that only if the U.S. permits a truly independent Vietnamese government to emerge will the Vietnamese themselves rally to drive out the Viet Cong.

To what extent then is the National Liberation Front a Communist organization? "—By Communist, we mean anyone directed and controlled by the international Communist bloc. When we say Viet Cong we refer to those who have infiltrated from North Vietnam and China."

Patriots
But there are patriots within the NLF whom we do not call VC. ("Viet Cong" is short for "Viet Nam Cong San," literally meaning Vietnamese Communists. Thus the students are more exclusive and more correct in their use of the term than the government, the press, and most Americans who tend to use "VC" as a catch-all for NLF supporters.)

This is how T— and K— describe the origin and growth of the NLF. It was born because of the wrong policies of Diem and the Americans. Diem thought all opposition parties were his enemies and so he failed to deal with them and unify them behind him.

Mistake
He also made the mistake of thinking all nationalists who fought in the resistance with the Viet Minh were Communists, and therefore he suppressed the old Viet Minh. These people went to the mountains and organized under Mr. Tho (Nguyen Huu Tho, chairman of the NLF since 1960).

"They asked for help from the North against Diem — weapons, materials. The first stand of the NLF was not anti-American but anti-Diem. Now the NLF is anti-American because it is supported by North Viet Nam. To get weapons and material aid, Tho has had to accept orders from Ho. The same thing has happened to us: to get weapons and materiele, we have had to accept orders from the U.S."

Vietnamese Nationalists
And there, in a nutshell, lies the dilemma of Vietnamese nationalists who want to be dominated neither by Communists nor by anti-Communists. Neither the NLF nor Saigon and Washington are prepared to tolerate the rise of a Third Force, which is what the Struggle Movement sought to accomplish.

What then of the future? What are Buddhist student leaders planning and what chances do they see for Vietnamese representative government?

When I asked these questions, K—, T— and P— did not answer or look up for a long time. Their bitterness was subdued but to me they seemed frustrated almost to the point of despair.

Government Watches
"All Hue student leaders are now being watched by the government. We can do nothing," they said. "The Hue Buddhist Student Association is gone. There have been no elections this

year. Buddhist students in Hue cannot even go to the pagodas to pray. They are not permitted to take their examinations. They cannot meet."

The three agreed that students are to play a role in Vietnamese political life in the coming year, the initiative will have to come from the capital, from students at the University of Saigon or the new Van Hanh Buddhist University.

Civilian Leaders
Pressed to name possible civilian leaders who might rally to the support of non-Communist Vietnamese in the coming elections, none of the three would offer any suggestions. It almost seemed as if they hoped some unknown nationalist leader, like the 15th century peasant king Le Loi, might drop out of the sky into office, sweeping both the Americans and the NLF before him.

What about the influence of Tri Quang? "—Many people still support him—but in their minds, without guns." It seemed to me that T— summed everything up—all the hopes, all the contradictions, all the futility—when he said, "Up to now we have been hopeless. Now we hope for peace. The generals must return to the battlefield if we want to win the war. But stopping the war is a bigger and bigger problem — it is out of our hands now."

Home Ec Meet Applications Due
The Agriculture and Home Economics Executive Board is awarding four \$25 scholarships to four students attending the American Home Economics Association Convention in Dallas, Texas, June 26-30.

Applications can be obtained in room 116 in the Home Economics Building, according to Sally Roberts, Agriculture Executive member.

"Applications are due April 21 at 5 p.m. in Room 221 in Burr Hall," Miss Roberts said.

Miss Roberts said that interviews are April 26 beginning at 8 p.m. in the East Union. Applicants are to sign for an interview in Room 116 of the Home Economics Building.

No Accompaniment . . . Qualifications Set For Ivy Day Singers

All organized groups of women at the University except honorary groups may participate in the Ivy Day Sing, according to Karen Wendt, Ivy Day Sing Chairman.

All singing groups must have from eight to 25 members. Solos are discouraged. All members must be carrying at least 12 hours this semester with no failures in the 12 hours.

No Outfits
No groups may have instrumental accompaniment and no group may wear like outfits especially purchased for the sing.

Professional help in preparation of the music is strictly prohibited. No medley of songs and no songs used by the same group in the three previous years may be used.

Director 'Active'
The director must remain "active" in the group participating and be regularly enrolled in the University.

Any group not ready to go on at the exact scheduled time of the performance, will be disqualified. Groups are requested to notify Karen Wendt of the names of leaders and selections before the meeting.

Prof Urges Learning By Full Participation

(CPS)—If a Pennsylvania State University philosophy professor has his way, students in his department may soon find themselves experiencing "non-reflective learning" on the grid-iron.

Professor Richard Gotshalk suggested that the philosophy department organize itself as a football team, because "one learns essentially by participation, and without such non-reflective learning, one's reflection suffers and if one's reflection suffers, so does one's teaching."

Philosophical Reasons
"Since the philosopher receives an essential nourishment from a non-philosophical sharing in reality," Gotshalk said, "it is for sound philosophical reasons that the philosophy department should form a football team."

He said that his involvement in playing football as

a youngster led him to greater awareness of his physical surroundings.

Rare Time
"The moment came on a brisk November day," he recalled "It turned out to be one of those rare times when everything went well for me. I made one good gain after another."

When the coach called a time-out, Gotshalk said he was "touched by a sense of the presence of what had been around me all along. Within me arose a certain response: a sense of strangeness, and a sense of being alive and at home there on that field."

NEBRASKAN

APPLAUDS

Newly elected officers of Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity are: G. Richard Russell, president; Bob Seeger, vice president and pledge trainer; Wayne Garrison, treasurer; Gary Ailes, secretary; Larry Weick, keeper of annuals; Buster Johnson, usher; Arnie Yannon, sentinel; Clark Milligan, assistant pledge trainer; Chuck Sweetman, scholarship chairman; Jim Stasiowski, Mike Naeve, Bob Kelley, class representatives; Paul Johnson, house manager; Tom Penney, social chairman.

New officers of Love Memorial Hall are: Connie Rickertsen, president; Margie Rosentrator, secretary; Fayrene Lockhorn, treasurer; Catherine Nispel, historian; and Sharon Monson, song leader.

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New officers of Abel III are: Jeff Lurie, president; Dale Montgomery, vice president; Harry Woodbury, social director; Ron Olds, activities director; Rod Michaelson, secretary-treasurer; David Karel, publicity director; Andy Eastman, intramurals director; John Backhus, scholastic director.

New Union Program Council officers are: Pam Wood, president; Jo Christensen, vice president; Doug Miller, secretary-treasurer.

Area directors, committee chairmen and assistants are: Karen Jones, image director; Susie Williams and Dave Buntain, public relations; Barb Detlefsen and Julaina Kemist, hospitality.

Sid Logemann, culture; Pam Dalling and Kathy Simmons, contemporary arts; Kathy Augustin and Sue Cumberland, music.

and Jeanie Pinkerton, special events.

New members of Phi Eta Sigma include: Robert Dale Barteo, Larry Dean Eisenbauer, Victor Faessel, James Robert Haire, John C. Hall, Gordon James Hrnleek, Larry Allen Holle, Larry Curtis Johnson, Walter Albert Lamml.

Stuart Jay Leipziger, Gerald Arven, Kenneth Ray Marra, Kenneth Leon Nagel, Ronald Dean Reitz, Brian Kent Ridenour, Dennis Lee Ross, Thomas Dean Sindelar, Timothy L. Von Aschwege, Larry Flick Wilson.

Red Cross Executive board members, chairman and assistants for second semester have been chosen.

Executive Board Members are: Lynn Grosscup, president; Anne McGough, first vice president; Trudy Lieberman, second vice president; Charlotte Peterson, secretary; and Kent Oates, treasurer.

Committee chairmen and assistants are: Veterans Hospital—John Hall, chairman, Jim Woodland, assistant; Whitehall—Walt Baum, chairman, Linda Jeffrey, assistant; Publicity—Margo McMaster, chairman; Geoff Heiden and Connie Lechner, assistants.

Adult Activities — Judy Tassler, chairman, Joan McCullough, assistant; Cedars — Jim Evinger, chairman, Becky Reinhardt, assistant; State Hospital — Jo McDowell, chairman, Mary Ann Davis and Mary DeLay, assistants.

Malone Center — Susie Kunc, chairman, Karen Mueller, assistant; Orthopedic — Barb Tetro, chairman, Nancy Fritzier, assistant; Handicrafts — Cel Ahrens, chairman, Louise Phillips, assistant; Water Safety — Sue Cooper, chairman, Sherri Addams, assistant.

Leadership — Ann Ward, chairman, Ann Quinan, assistant; Villa Marie—Doug Drury and Jane Handa, co-chairmen; and LARC — Sherrie Sicklebower, chairman, Diane Dirks, assistant.

New officers of Chi Phi fraternity are: Vic Hancock, president; Russ Eisenthart, vice president; Rodger Housley, secretary; Mike Hroch, treasurer; Mark Christensen, social chairman; Bob Jay, pledge trainer; Alex Currie, house manager; Walt Radtorian; Ron Niederhaus, cliffs, rush chairman.

New officers of Quiz Bowl are: Dave Cummins, president; Maxine Burnett, vice-president in charge of arrangements; Nancy Peterson, vice-president in charge of questions; Ann Van Steenberg, secretary-treasurer; Rodney Powell, assistant to the president.

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