

ECONOMY GAINING IN NORTH VIETNAM

AUG 29 1975

Bomb Ruins Being Repaired and Industrial and Farm Output Is on the Rise

NYTimes

HANOI, North Vietnam, Aug. 28 (Agence France-Presse)—North Vietnam is rising quickly from the ashes of 30 years of war and eight years of American bombing.

The changes are readily apparent on a trip through a few of its provinces or in photographs published from day to day in the press.

Industrial activity and farming have become more or less normal where, three years ago,



The New York Times/August 29, 1975

Three provinces (diagonally shaded) are among areas where big changes can be seen.

there were ruined or damaged buildings, half-demolished blast furnaces, razed cement works, as at Haiphong, wrecked rail centers, knocked out bridges and erased roads.

Large hydroelectric dams have been built, including one in Yen Bai Province. Engineering plants like the one at Cam Pha, taken underground during the air raids, have grown tenfold in size. They are also said to have increased their output tenfold in their effort to meet the economy's requirements.

The output of coal, one of the main resources, is officially put at five million tons this year, against 1.5 million in 1957.

Gain in Electricity

Foundries like that in Gia Sang, in Bac Thai Province, northwest of Hanoi, are producing steel and castings, and the modernized Haiphong cement works is bigger than before. Electrification is another big achievement.

Parts of Haiphong are unrecognizable. One district, Can Tre, was virtually wiped out by B-52 bombers in 1972, but it now boasts 25 acres of new dwellings.

Most of the bridges in North Vietnam are restored, including the one at Ham Rong, in Than Hoa Province. It was so important a target, that, according to official statistics, it was raided more than 5,000 times between 1964 and 1972, and 70,000 tons of bombs were dropped.

The press hails the nation's achievements day by day. A few days ago in one of dozens of such reports, a worker reached his annual production goal five months and eight days ahead of schedule.

The man in the street, with his caustic outlook tends to suspect that the targets are really for six months, not 12.

Buying Power Declining

Like the farmer, who is not so well off, the town dweller is basically willing to believe only one statistic—his buying power. This, whether the authorities concede it or not, has fallen sharply since the war.

While some press commentators refer to inflation as a sickness of the highly industrialized countries, especially the capitalist ones, it is nevertheless true that in Hanoi the price of a chicken or a piece of pork—which is rationed—is twice what it was three years ago.

Such articles as fruit juice, preserves, carpets, basketwork and fish products are "reserved for export".

"Now we have to pay for the war," a North Vietnamese told a visitor. "We beat the Americans, but it is the rice bowl for us, and not much besides."

The standard of living is unchanged after 30 years. North Vietnamese seem prepared to accept the postwar situation, though with some reservations.

ETUORIAN REPORT