

WXPost

MAY 1 1975

Hanoi Cheers Victory

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Agence France-Presse

HANOI, April 30—For a few hours this afternoon, the usually austere city of Hanoi was one big street festival celebrating the fall of Saigon.

Truck-borne bands played on street corners, and colorful dragons, weaving slowly through the throngs, invaded the main thoroughfares where tens of thousands of inhabitants made traffic—both vehicle and pedestrian—impossible.

Rarely, a vehicle managed to open a path through the human tide. One car, a pre-war luxury French Citroen 15, was practically buried in North Vietnamese flags of red with a gold star and in pictures of the late President Ho Chi Minh.

Those same pictures, showing a youthful, smiling "Uncle Ho," were on every corner. Thousands of North Vietnamese flags sprouted from public buildings and individual balconies. A few flags of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam were also in evidence.

Hundreds of colored electric bulbs hung in garlands across streets and in trees, and all public parks and gardens wore gay banners.

Schoolchildren were the first to benefit from the somewhat improvised fiesta. At 4 p.m., children dressed in white shirts and blue trousers with the red kerchief of the Ho Chi Minh Youth around their necks capered through the streets setting off hundreds of firecrackers, an unmistakable sign of joy in North Vietnam.

Their elders were doing the same—even to ministry officials who, on learning of the cease-fire this morning, set off strings of fireworks.

Although today was not an official, nonworking holiday, it is no exaggeration to say that by noon few people remained at their jobs.

The entire city had set off light-heartedly to claim Hanoi's streets and to gather in a dense crowd that, by late afternoon, was tirelessly circling a little lake, a little more than a mile around.