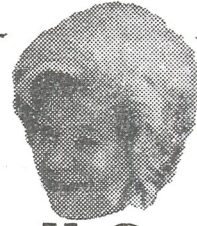


The New Vietnam



Mary McGrory

THE NEW Government of South Vietnam is far too busy to draw a bloodbath for their erstwhile foes, it seems. They are behaving more like missionaries than conquerors.

This is according to a young Quaker couple, Sophie and Paul Quinn-Judge, who after two years as representatives of the American Field Service, left Saigon on July 28, and observed more repression and retribution under President Nguyen Van Thieu than under his successor.

The Communist take-over went with amazing smoothness, they reported, partly because the city surrendered without a fight, and partly, it is apparent, because there was a government structure underground which surfaced at the appointed moment.

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BUDDHIST and Catholic students, highly organized during the last bitter years of the Thieu regime, moved forward on April 30 to establish order and disarm the ARVIN troops.

The Quinn-Judges, who are both 26, stressed at a recent news conference that they had no contact with government high officials. They only told what they observed.

Life in Saigon goes on. The day after the city fell, the shops opened. Three days later the markets were back in business. Peasants forcibly urbanized by massive American bombings are being encouraged, with rice and money to go back to the land. Eighteen thousand have done so. Three thousand more have applied.

Arthur Hoppe will be back on Monday.

Prostitutes are being urged to learn some more seemly occupation such as sewing. The Thieu military is being reeducated, common soldiers for two or three days, higher echelons for two or three months, in their guilt in American war crimes.

In the first days after the fall large rallies were held to introduce the people to their revolutionary committees. Criticism of them was heard and heeded. Former police officers and officials with bad reputations have been weeded out.

American ties did not disqualify. The Quinn-Judges know a prominent Buddhist layman who was the local EXXON representative. He is a committee member.

A campaign against illiteracy is in full swing. Volunteers give classes three nights a week.

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THE QUINN-JUDGES are, unlike some Americans exposed to many years of White House blood-bath rhetoric — which climaxed inevitably with the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of terrified Vietnamese — were not surprised by the conciliatory tone of the new order.

Some Vietnamese are still aghast at living under Communist rule. Sophie Quinn-Judge said she had several whispered conversations with such people. They also brought back messages from several Vietnamese who urged relatives who either have come to the U.S. or were evacuated here, to come home.