

Our Man Hoppe**Life Is Sacred
--In America****Arthur Hoppe**

IT WAS in the 43rd year of our lightning campaign to wipe the dread Viet-Nar-ian guerrillas out of West Vhtnng. The U.S. Supreme Court had just ruled that the death penalty was, as presently administered, illegal.

It took some time for the momentous news to filter down to the little Vhtnngian hamlet of Whar Dhat.

Now in order to save Whar Dhat from Communism and build a viable democratic structure for its freedom-loving peoples, its loyal American allies had been forced to bomb, strafe, napalm, rocket and generally shoot up the village on alternate Tuesdays and Thursdays for the past 43 years.

This had understandably earned the eternal gratitude of the entire surviving population of Whar Dhat. His name was Mr. Thang Sa Lot.

But at the same time, Mr. Thang received the news of the Supreme Court's decision with elation.

"At last my dear American friends have decided that killing people is illegal!" cried Mr. Thang, emerging from his 40-foot-deep well. "At last freedom-loving me is safe from Communism to build a viable democratic structure! At last this war is over!"

Just then, a seven-ton bomb dropped from a B-52 blew Mr. Thang 50 feet into a drainage ditch.

"Maybe," said Mr. Thang thoughtfully, as he dusted himself off, "I should spread the word."

★ ★ ★

NOW Mr. Thang was not only the surviving population of Whar Dhat hamlet, he was also the surviving population of Wot Dhat Province. This made him Provincial Chief.

Provincial Chiefs were always welcome at the Embassy in Sag On of Our Ambassador, Henry Cabbage — because Our Ambassador, as he was fond of say-

ing, liked "to keep in touch with the hopes and aspirations of the indigenous population."

So after hitch-hiking to Sag On, Mr. Thang was granted a three-minute audience.

"I just dropped in, Mr. Ambassador," said Mr. Thang, "to express my gratitude for making me a viable democratic structure—now that the war is over."

"The war is over?" said Our Ambassador, surprised. "I hadn't heard. Maybe it happened while I was on the ninth fairway."

"Your Supreme Court ruled that killing people is illegal and you can't have a war without killing people," said Mr. Thang, instinctively dropping flat as a plane passed over. "But would you mind telling the others?"

"Oh, that," said Our Ambassador. "I'm afraid the Court merely ruled that we can't kill criminals. And you certainly aren't a criminal, are you?"

"I'm afraid I'm a law-abiding citizen," said Mr. Thang glumly. "I'm afraid."

"But look on the bright side, Mr. Thang," said Our Ambassador, clapping him on the back. "It shows how sacred we hold human life now that we no longer kill criminals in America."

"Well," agreed Mr. Thang, "it's a start."

★ ★ ★

OUR Ambassador excused himself to catch a plane to Washington for consultations.

"Washington?" said Mr. Thang, his eyes suddenly lighting up. And he cleverly smuggled himself aboard the aircraft disguised as an amusing Vhtnngin souvenir.

The moment the plane touched down on American soil, Mr. Thang grabbed a pistol from a guard and—rooty-toot-toot—put an end to Our Ambassador.

"At last," said Mr. Thang happily as the guards led him off, "I am safe."