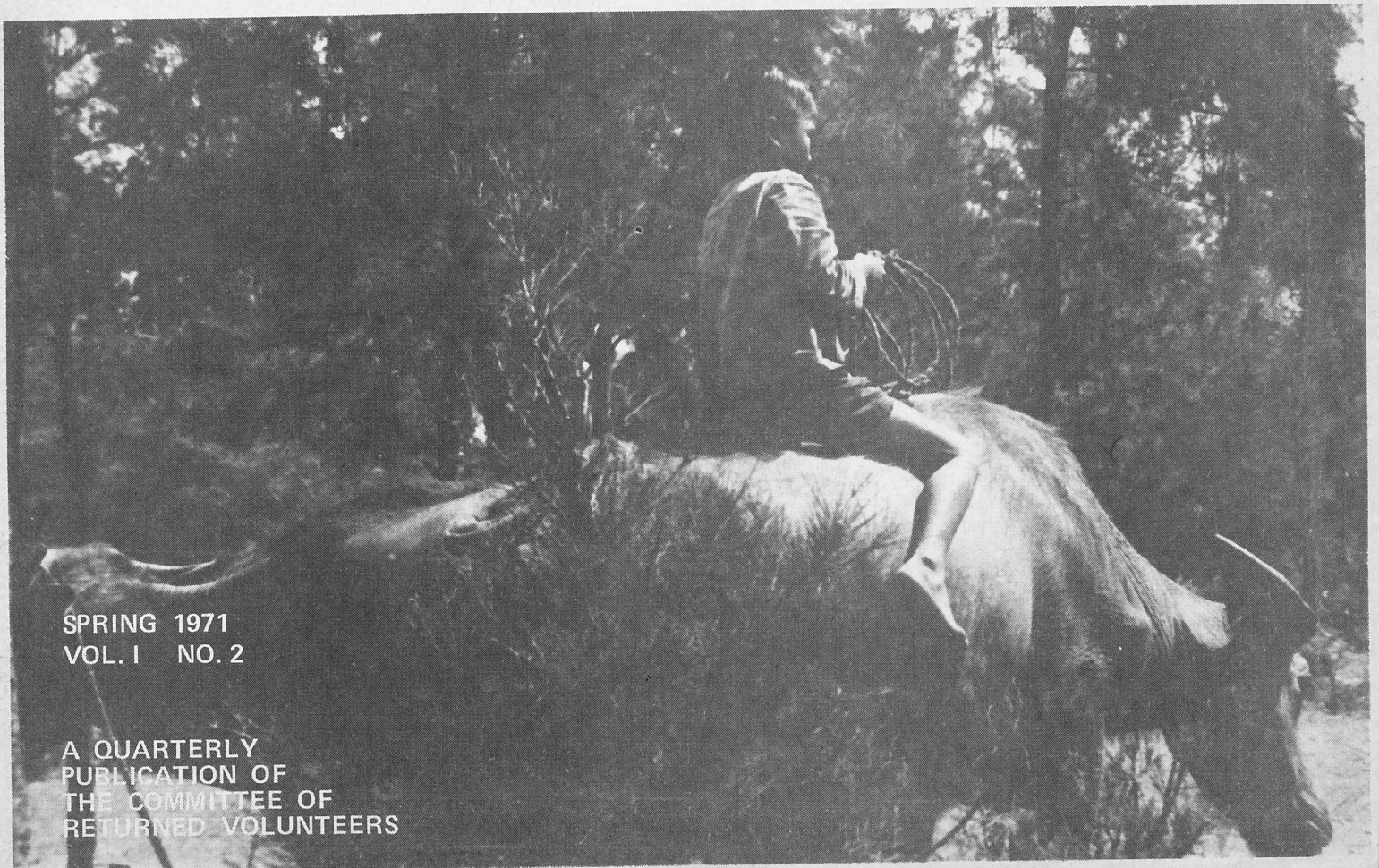
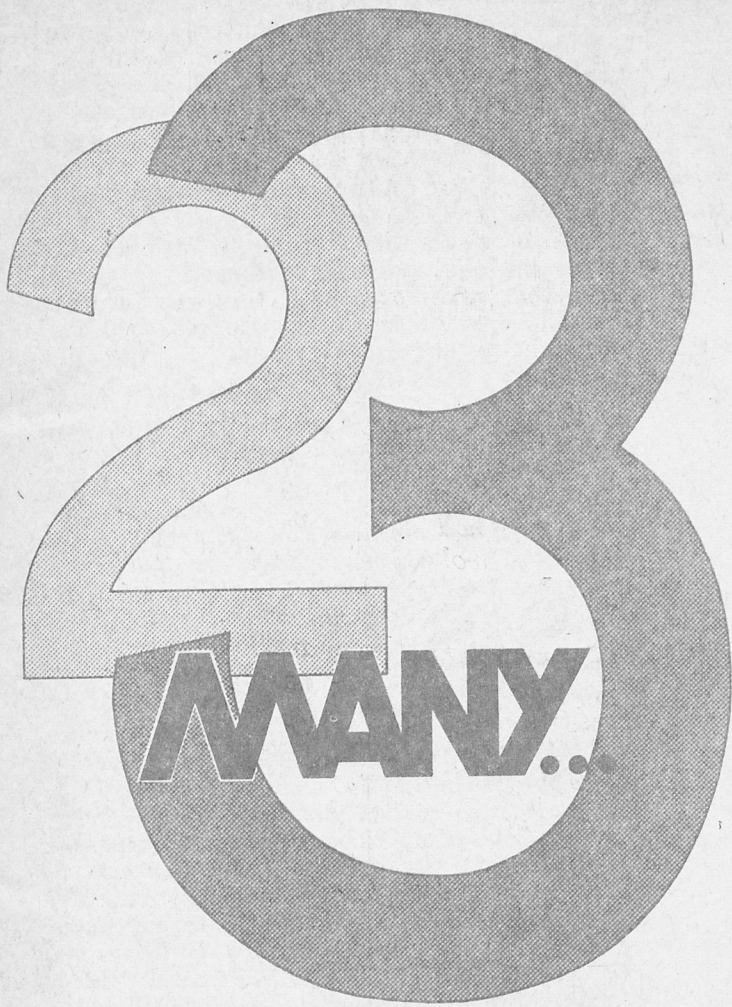


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PEOPLE'S PEACE TREATY

[Doug Hostetter, New York CRV, spent December 1970 in Viet Nam as translator for the NSA delegation whose task was to draft a peace treaty with students of both North and South Viet Nam.]

Everything happened so fast that there was a definite air of unreality about the prospect of visiting Viet Nam. I kept wondering whether I was going to wake up and discover that it was all just a dream too good to be true. But when I got my cholera shot and walked around with a very sore arm for two days I was sure there was at least some reality in it!

Ever since the U.S. National Student Association national student congress last summer, NSA had been planning to travel to North and South Viet Nam to work out a peace treaty with Vietnamese students. The 15-member student delegation selected from officers in NSA schools across the country had a fair geographic balance: two women, one black and two Puerto Ricans. At the last minute I was asked to go both as a delegate and an interpreter; I read and speak Vietnamese as a result of my three years in community development in central Viet Nam with the Viet Nam Christian Service.

About the same time I joined the trip, NSA learned from Saigon that none of the delegates would be allowed to enter South Viet Nam. Fortunately NSA neglected to place my name on the list of delegates circulated to embassies and the press. So, I left for Viet Nam a few days before the delegation's scheduled departure, traveling on a tourist visa. NSA continued to struggle with the State Department and the Saigon embassy, but was unable to secure admission for the delegates into South Viet Nam. The group went directly to Hanoi.

I arrived in Saigon November 29, 1970, and spent the next ten days traveling and meeting with students, teachers, refugees, peasants and old friends. The Saigon students had been expecting us but had feared that we would be kept out of Saigon. These students come mainly from upper class homes (the French colonial education system was calculated to train only a few students from wealthy families to run the French administrative bureaucracy -- better known as Vietnamization) and until last winter most of the students were happy with their privileged position in Vietnamese society.

But last winter, in their attempt to rediscover what it meant to be Vietnamese, they ran directly counter to American and Saigon government programs calculated to help them discover what it meant to be American. The Saigon students had their first taste of real repression at the time of the U.S. invasion into Cambodia; they began to understand the Saigon government and the meaning of the American occupation. Greater understanding led to more anti-government and anti-American activities and to more repression, which further clarified the Saigon government's position and brought new people into the movement.

Saigon students drew up the first draft of the Peoples Peace Treaty, a strong statement calling for immediate withdrawal of all U.S. and allied forces and for the formation of a new Saigon government which would truly represent the People of the south and work for peace, independence, and reunification.

Before I left Saigon for Hanoi, the students and I held a press conference with a few American reporters. We asked them to release the story only after I was out of the country, but we should have asked them to wait until I had gotten the treaty safely into Hanoi! The day after the story was cabled back to the U.S., five Laotian police searched my hotel room in Vientiane for "illegal documents." Among the suspicious documents which they collected from my luggage for further study were: the DRVN peace proposal, the PRG peace proposal (even they knew that Nixon's peace plan wasn't worth studying!), military postcards bought in the Saigon PX, and Cleaver's Soul on Ice. Having been warned just before the police arrived, I had been able to remove the treaty and some letters. After a complete search of the room (and my ballpoint pen -- they thought it might be carrying a secret message), the police Lt. Col. in charge of the investigation stood up and proudly announced in broken English, "We search just like they do in the United States. I was trained in Ft. Knox!"

In Hanoi the North Vietnamese students were excited to see the South Vietnamese students' draft treaty and they asked many questions about the movement in the Southern cities. The draft treaty worked out with the Northern students was essentially the same as the one worked out in the south except that it required the Americans to end their intervention in Laos and Cambodia in accordance with the 1954 and 1962 Geneva agreements.

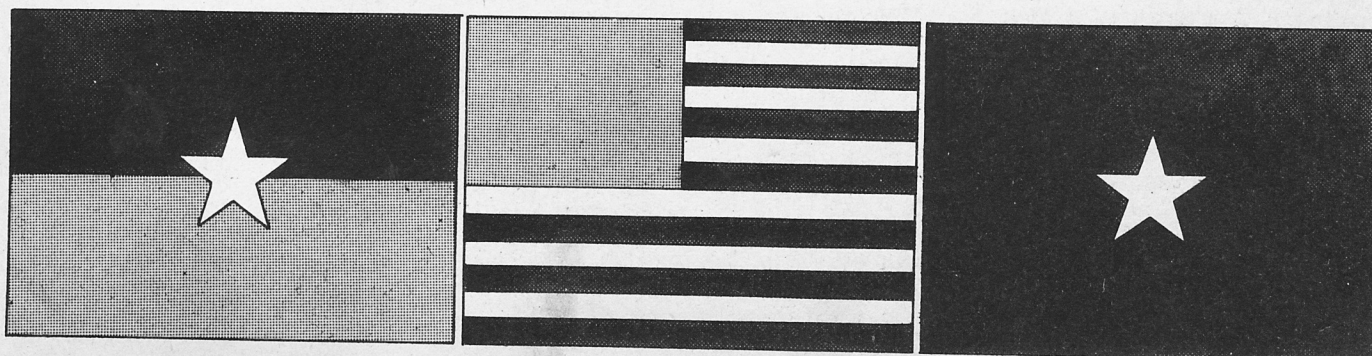
Later on in the week we learned that there was a group of PRG students traveling in the North on some special mission and requested a meeting with them. The PRG students were by far the most impressive group of students we met. I am sure that part of what made them such beautiful people was the fact that their studies were not alienated from the reality of their struggle. Their university is literally underground in the middle of a war zone in the South. Most of their studies are closely related to their very survival. Medicine, for example, is the study of preventative and rehabilitative measures to be used against exposure to poison gases and chemicals, ways of using local herbs and available material to cure and prevent disease. All students are engaged in both theoretical and practical research as well as the actual defense of their university. But the impressive thing was that in all of their struggle they have not forgotten or neglected the human and cultural elements: one of the four departments of their University is Music, Art and Dance!

The most frightening two days in the north were spent with the War Crimes Committee in Hanoi, where they documented the advances in American weapon technology. We saw new cluster bombs, BB bombs, and pellet bombs whose fragments are so small that the damage done to the body cannot be traced surgically, and new plastic

pellets and bb's which cannot be detected by X-ray. There was a "pocket mine," made of cloth plastic and powder which cannot be located by electro-magnetic mine detectors. And a new "improved" napalm which burns hotter than the old. They also showed us the effects of these weapons on their people: we were introduced to some of the victims who had been crippled or maimed by these weapons. It was evident that calculated destructiveness to human life was the primary purpose and not a by-product of these weapons. There is no way in which a pocket mine or a BB bomb can be used in "protective reaction" against Sam missile sites or truck convoys; they can only be used to kill and maim human beings indiscriminately.

Before we left Hanoi, Prime Minister Phan Van Dong met with our group for an hour. He said he was pleased with the treaty we had worked out with the students and felt that this could be the beginning of a new age of cooperation between the Vietnamese and American peoples struggling for common goals: 1) an end to the war, 2) an end to Vietnamization, 3) the recognition of the rights of the South Vietnamese to self-determination, and 4) the establishment of friendly relations between the people of the U.S. and Viet Nam.

Phan Van Dong had that beautiful combination of warmth and humanity along with courage and resolution seldom found in one person. "We are all human, we have the same feelingsThere is no longer space separating us, satellites travel around our world in 90 minutes. Why can't we all be friends?" At times he was almost fatherly, but he spoke as one who learned from experience and history. "You must be prepared. If necessary you may have to go to prison, but this is not to be feared. You need courage, courage...the rest will come by itself."



Latest Developments

[These are some comments from a letter from Doug dated March 28, 1971, regarding some plans for implementing the People's Peace Treaty.]

I just came back from a national board meeting of the PPT so will fill you in on some of the latest developments. There are now Peace Treaty offices in at least 12 American cities. Three hundred student body presidents have endorsed the treaty, we know of at least 10 schools where there has been a campus wide referendum and the Peace Treaty has passed in every one. Over twenty-five student senates have passed the treaty. Other organizations which have passed the treaty as an organization are National Lawyers Guild, the New Party, The New England World Federalist. Goddard College has passed the treaty and has offered scholarships of X(?) number of South Vietnamese students for next year and X (?) number of North Vietnamese students after the hostilities have stopped. A new group has been formed in Hollywood to work around the treaty called Entertainment In-

dustry for Peace--they are over 1,000 already and have offered their services to help in fund-raising events. They are also planning a big splash for the Hollywood Bowl on May 2 with Doris Day, Julie Andrews, and Aretha Franklin speaking out for peace! CRV has printed the treaty and background literature in Spanish. Scientist groups who have ratified the treaty are working on antidotes for defoliation and U.S. gases. Among the thousands who have signed, we now have a West Point Cadet, the Mayor of Des Moines Iowa, an IRS auditor and a horse breeder! The U. of Wisc. has started a blood drive for North Vietnam as a part of its ratification. Boston area churches are fasting for peace the week before Easter and taking the treaty to churches on Easter. I must close; keep us informed.

