

## PHOTO ESSAY

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### Vietnam 1978: Life After War Through the Lens of a Western Tourist



Photo 1: Scene at Củ Chi

The photographs in this essay were taken in August and September 1978, just over three years after the end of the “American War” in Vietnam, marked by the fall (or liberation) of Sài Gòn to the communist forces of the North. I was in Vietnam as part of an educational tour organized by Professor Stewart Fraser from La Trobe University in Melbourne, who specialized in education and Asian studies. This was his second educational visit to Vietnam in two years.<sup>1</sup> His first visit in 1977 was organized under the auspices of the Australian Union of Students, during which Professor Fraser built trust and established networks with officials and agencies in Vietnam. These connections facilitated our tour the following year. At the time, I was a history teacher at a Melbourne high school and a photography tutor in adult education. Our tour included visits to Hà Nội and Hồ Chí Minh City, with brief trips to outlying areas, including Hòa Bình Province, Củ Chi, Vũng Tàu, and the Mekong Delta. Our itinerary included “official” visits to institutions such as schools, orphanages, museums, and rehabilitation centers, which were specifically requested by our tour group. Beyond these formal visits, where we were accompanied by interpreters and institutional officials, we were free to travel independently and engage with whomever we wished. This tour occurred during the early years of postwar recovery and restructuring and offered a rare perspective on life under a new regime.

As an avid photographer documenting daily life in Vietnam, I was equipped with two Pentax SLR cameras, several Takumar lenses, and a supply of 35mm black-and-white film (plus

some color slide film). I took photographs wherever we went, essentially taking on the role of a street photographer as I explored everyday life in Hà Nội and Hồ Chí Minh City, capturing images of whatever caught my interest. Upon my return to Melbourne, I exhibited some of these photographs in a suburban art gallery. Since then, for over forty-six years, the negatives and prints have remained in storage. This essay presents a select few photographs from the hundreds that I took on that 1978 tour. My accompanying commentary provides historical context to the photographs, drawing largely on Western literature.

The significance of these photographs lies in their visual documentation of a key political and socioeconomic period in Vietnam, seen through a “Western eye.” The years 1975-1986, often referred to as the subsidy period<sup>2</sup> or the *bao cấp* era,<sup>3</sup> marked a time when Vietnam’s newly unified socialist republic imposed Soviet-style central planning and government subsidies in pursuit of socialist ideals. During this period, the everyday struggles of Vietnamese people were marked by rationing and government controls—presenting a new reality for those in the south, while continuing the austere conditions long familiar to those in the north. This subsidy period ended in 1986 with the advent of economic liberalization, known as *Đổi Mới* [Renovation].

During this state subsidy period, particularly in the early years when our 1978 tour took place, there were few Western visitors to Vietnam, and we were privileged to be granted permission for our educational visit. The only other overseas visitors I recall seeing were socialist personnel from Russia or East Germany, who were involved in postwar reconstruction.<sup>4</sup> Access to Vietnam for Westerners was restricted in the immediate postwar years, especially in Hồ Chí Minh City, formerly Sài Gòn, as it transitioned from the capital of the former capitalist Republic of Vietnam to full integration within the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Just a few years before—and for the decade preceding—the city had been the center of war efforts in the south of Vietnam, often referred to as “the most photographed war,” the “television war,”<sup>5</sup> and even the “celluloid war.”<sup>6</sup> A plethora of images by professional photographers brought the Vietnam War into the living rooms of Americans and other nations around the world. In sharp contrast, during the years after 1975, the beginning of the subsidy period, professional Western photographers were largely absent, resulting in a critical gap in Western visual documentation of everyday life in Vietnam. Christina Schwenkel, a sociocultural anthropologist, writes that for the U.S. press, “Vietnam ceased to remain a country of newsworthy interest when it ceased to exist as a war.”<sup>7</sup>

In recent years, as Americans and their war allies commemorate various anniversaries linked to the war, Western media has placed increased focus on Vietnam, primarily through the perspectives of returning veterans.<sup>8</sup> In Australia, where I live, the national broadcaster, ABC, produced the documentary *Our Vietnam War*,<sup>9</sup> featuring veterans reflecting on their wartime experiences and postwar lives. However, while attention is often paid to the impact of aerial bombardments, large casualty numbers, and the effects of Agent Orange, there is little focus on how the war affected the daily lives of Vietnamese people. One veteran poignantly remarked on these asymmetrical experiences, saying “Australia paid a price. The Vietnamese country and the Vietnamese people paid a bigger price,” highlighting the vastly different scales of impact experienced by each side. Despite increased commemorative media, especially from the perspectives of veterans, there remains a significant gap in Western understandings and photographic imagery of how the Vietnamese lived through and adjusted to their postwar conditions, especially as the South struggled to adapt to a new socialist way of living.

I have deliberately and frequently used the term “Western” in this essay because I am cognizant that my photographs, along with this commentary and much of the literature I draw on, represent a Western perspective. This term serves to underscore both the origins of my perspective and the way it may shape my interpretation of Vietnam’s postwar society. By acknowledging this positionality, I hope to offer a more self-aware analysis of my own photographic work.

Our educational tour of Vietnam predated the publication of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1979),<sup>10</sup> and unlike contemporary photographers, I was largely unaware of how my background and perspectives shaped my representation of Vietnamese life, particularly the lives of Asian individuals. As a young (late 20s), privileged, British-born schoolteacher from Melbourne, my understanding of the political, social, and historical contexts of the war and postcolonial society in Vietnam was limited. My knowledge of the war was influenced in part by what I had seen nightly on the TV news in the late 1960s as a school student in Britain. This news coverage, dominated by US media, fostered an “American orientalism”<sup>11</sup> that, whether consciously or not, influenced my perspective.

From my Western perspective, unconsciously carrying the legacies of colonialism, I was undoubtedly drawn to photographing scenes of poverty involving non-Western subjects and the “exotic.”<sup>12</sup> My choice of subject matter also likely reflected my political beliefs. As Jennifer Good and Paul Lowe observe in relation to photojournalism, “one way or another, a photographer’s political views will always manifest themselves in the aesthetic choices they make.”<sup>13</sup> Although I was not a photojournalist, my two cameras and telephoto lenses gave me the appearance and posture of one. And at the time, while I did not explicitly articulate a political motive, my role as a member of an Australian educational tour to Vietnam in 1978 inevitably framed my perspective through an ideological lens, as it did for the other tour members.

The decision to visit Vietnam during this postwar period would suggest, at the least, an affinity with the country and its people, and possibly its socialist ideals. It was certainly an anti-war stance; indeed, some members of our tour had actively participated in Australia’s anti-war moratorium protest marches in the early 1970s, while I was still at university in the United Kingdom. At the time, I gave little thought to how or whether my photographs would be viewed publicly, but in hindsight, I was photographing with an imagined Western audience in mind, with the intent to create “visual alliances”<sup>14</sup> with like-minded anti-war individuals.

What captured my interest and attention through the camera lens likely diverged from the priorities and concerns of the local Vietnamese and their government. This divergence in patterns of visual interest and representation has been demonstrated recently in academic work contrasting American and Vietnamese photographic visions of war in Vietnam.<sup>15</sup> This difference in perspective was brought home to me in a particularly memorable instance on September 2, 1978, National Day in Vietnam, when I photographed a young “street child” asleep on a footpath in Hồ Chí Minh City (Photo 2).

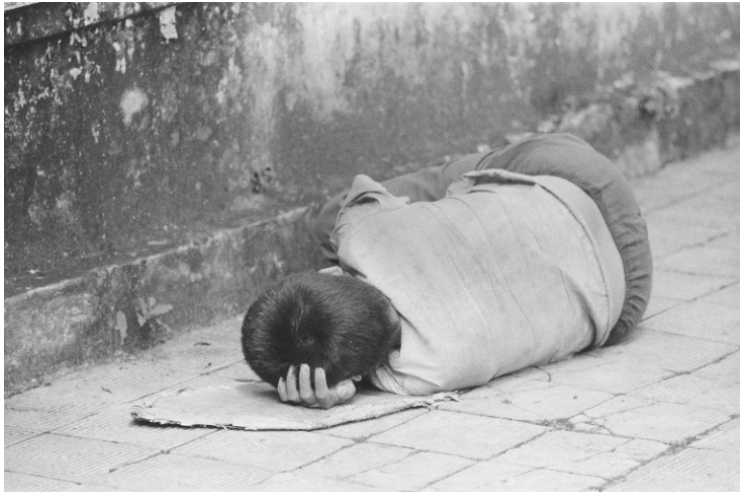


Photo 2: A street child in Hồ Chí Minh City

For me, this image symbolized the pervasive urban poverty in Vietnam. As I took the photo, a passing local cadre took offense at my choice of subject matter and guided me to a nearby house, where a group of cadres briefly questioned me about my identity and the hotel where I was staying. I suspect that my choice to photograph a sleeping street child—with little status in Vietnamese society and referred to locally as the “dust of life” [trẻ bụi đời]—was perceived as potentially reflecting negatively on life in the new socialist republic. After all, why would a Westerner choose to capture such an image, especially on Vietnam’s Independence Day?

This incident aside, I encountered few obstacles while taking photographs in Vietnam. Presenting myself as a lone Westerner with a camera—though occasionally accompanied by fellow tour members—I was generally well received, often eliciting curiosity from groups of children. This welcoming attitude may have stemmed from the fact that neither I nor my tour group was American. As our tour leader, Professor Fraser, noted<sup>16</sup> regarding his educational tour the previous year, the first by an Australian group to visit the reunified Vietnam, there was “unconcealed distaste for most things American” across both the north and south. We, on the other hand, were an Australian group, although it seemed “conveniently forgotten or politely ignored” that the Australian prime minister’s mantra in the mid-1960s had been “all the way with LBJ,” in support of the United States during the war.

### **Hồ Chí Minh City and the South**

Just a few years earlier, Hồ Chí Minh City—formerly Sài Gòn and the bustling capital of South Vietnam—was undergoing a “socialist revolution,” transforming from a capitalist economy to a socialist state with sweeping economic, social, and cultural consequences for daily life.<sup>17</sup> During this “subsidy period,” private property was progressively transferred to state ownership in both urban and rural areas, a shift that met resistance from many property owners and supporters of capitalism. Earlier in 1978, the year of our tour, private trade was banned, and a unified currency was introduced, a move that particularly impacted the ethnic Chinese traders in Sài Gòn’s Chợ Lớn district.



Deteriorating economic conditions and persistent political repression<sup>18</sup> led many to escape from southern Vietnam as “boat people,” seeking refuge in other Asian countries such as Hong Kong and the Philippines, with the ultimate destinations for many being the United States and Australia. Notably, the port of Vũng Tàu, one hundred kilometers south-east of Hồ Chí Minh City and once a primary point of entry for Australian troops and military equipment during the war, became a key departure point for those fleeing the country. The port featured a multitude of small fishing craft (Photos 3 and 4) that could be co-opted for the overcrowded and usually perilous sea journeys of those escaping.<sup>19</sup> The arrival of increasing numbers of Vietnamese boat people in Australia during the late 1970s fueled political tensions, forming a contentious backdrop to our tour.<sup>20</sup> Conservative public opinion in Australia at the time likely viewed our group as communist sympathizers. Moreover, shortly after our tour, Marxist-inspired Australian academics visited Vietnam and published extensive works on the socialist revolution.<sup>21</sup>

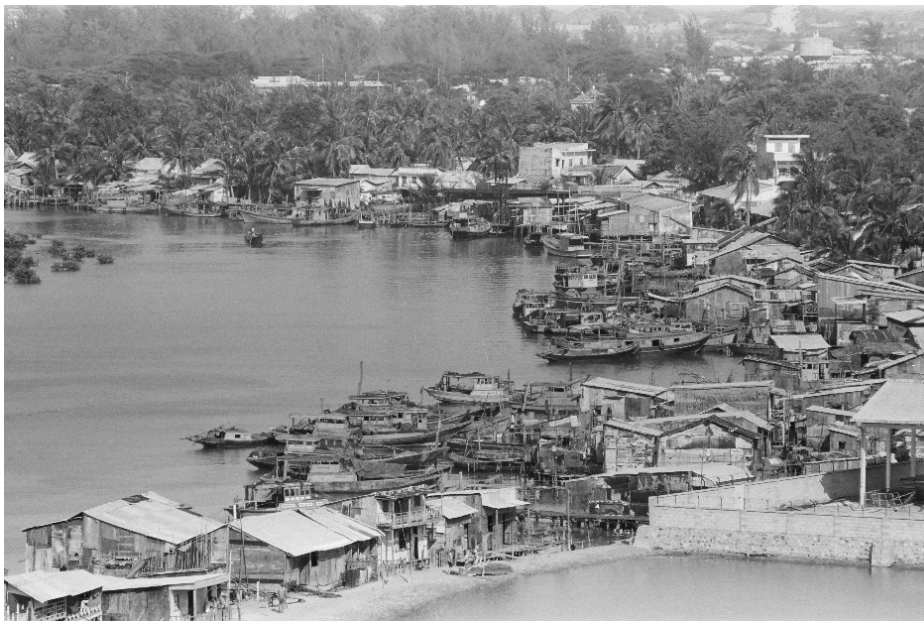


Photo 3: The port of Vũng Tàu



Photo 4: Small fishing craft at Vũng Tàu of the type used by “boat people” fleeing Việt Nam

In the 1960s and early 1970s, Sài Gòn was renowned for its corruption and pockets of decadent living. It was often referred to as an “American brothel” and described as a city where “everyone is helpful” but only “for a price.”<sup>22</sup> However, following the withdrawal of US influence and the fall of Sài Gòn, the city, renamed Hồ Chí Minh City, underwent a rapid shift to socialism, leaving its residents to endure significant economic and social hardships. These included food shortages, as rice production in the Mekong Delta had declined due to war-related disruptions, coupled with the migration of many rural inhabitants to the cities and efforts to rapidly collectivize agriculture in the south.<sup>23</sup> On the streets of Hồ Chí Minh City, poverty was visible, as evidenced by the large numbers of homeless “street children” (Photo 5).



Photo 5: Street children in Hồ Chí Minh City

One of the many social tragedies of the war was the large number of orphaned children. Just prior to the fall of Sài Gòn, several thousand orphaned infants and children were airlifted for adoption in the United States and other Western nations as part of “Operation Babylift.”<sup>24</sup> Thousands more were left homeless on the streets of Hồ Chí Minh City or housed in the city’s orphanages (Photo 6).

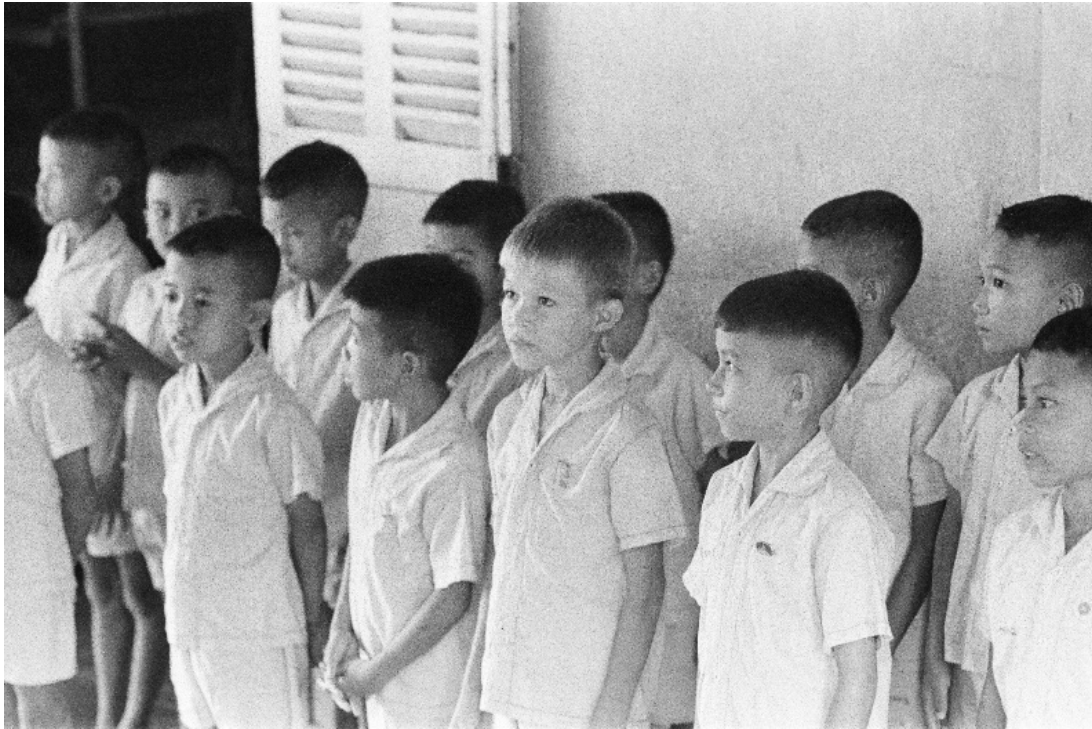


Photo 6: Boys at an orphanage, Hồ Chí Minh City

An American television journalist visiting Hồ Chí Minh City two years after our tour noted the “dozens of ... Amerasians, the children of Vietnamese mothers and American fathers, in the streets, markets, and parks”<sup>25</sup> These “Amerasian” children, or *con lai Mỹ* as they were known in Vietnamese,<sup>26</sup> were often identified by their appearance, specifically their “American face.” They became a politically contentious issue for US authorities in the years after the war as US politicians and the media presented them as “biological Americans,” asserting they should be brought home to the United States.<sup>27</sup> In Vietnam, however, Amerasians were often marginalized and discriminated against, particularly Black Amerasians.<sup>28</sup> After the war and particularly following the American Homecoming Act of 1988, many Amerasian children were accepted as immigrants to the United States, primarily because of their “Caucasian” features. As Congressman Tom Ridge put it, “the face is the roadmap.”<sup>29</sup> Upon arrival in the United States, many faced further marginalization and discrimination, experiencing what has been called their “second struggle for survival.”<sup>30</sup>

Another lasting legacy of the war, as well as of society in pre-1975 Sài Gòn, was drug addiction. By the end of the war, estimates suggested that there were between 250,000 and 300,000 drug addicts in Hồ Chí Minh City.<sup>31</sup> In response, the new socialist government established compulsory “reeducation” schools for drug addicts while attempting to curb both

drug trafficking and addiction. It was rare for a group of Westerners to gain access to one of these schools. Documentation from our visit later formed part of a study on drug addiction in Vietnam, coauthored by Professor Stewart Fraser and another member of our tour group, Tony Knight.<sup>32</sup> All the inmates in the school we visited were young adult men (Photo 7).



Photo 7: A re-education school for drug addicts in Hồ Chí Minh City

Before 1975, heroin was the primary drug trafficked in Sài Gòn, favored by American and other Western personnel. After 1975, however, black opium reemerged. The government's approach to drug addiction framed it not as a crime but as "the cumulative result of various historical and colonial circumstances, of which he [the addict] is a mere victim."<sup>33</sup> The aim was to "remedy the evils left by the former regime."<sup>34</sup> Treatment for addiction included ideological reeducation, physical labor, and various medicinal practices such as acupuncture and traditional herbal remedies. During our visit, though necessarily limited in scope, we observed some collective activities involving the inmates, such as singing, recitations, and other ritualized exercises designed to instill in them "a new conception of life."<sup>35</sup> These activities appeared emblematic of how Vietnam's reeducation and rehabilitation schools have sought to address "social evils" like drug addiction and sex work. Nguyễn-Võ Thu-Hương describes how these institutions, with their spatial organization and routines, resemble schoolyards, where inmates become "school children again to learn anew good habits" under the paternalistic protection of wardens.<sup>36</sup>

Cultural life and entertainment in Hồ Chí Minh City also underwent significant changes after 1975. Gone were the bars, nightlife, and vice. Yet some aspects of the old capitalist ways persisted, particularly in popular music, as cafés, despite the prohibition, continued to play pre-1975 pop music. In larger hotels catering to foreign visitors—our tour group included—along with various Eastern European "advisers," Western-style cabaret entertainment was popular, perhaps in recognition of the perceived preferences of foreigners (Photo 8).





Photo 8: Hotel cabaret performance

From my Western perspective, there was a disconcerting contradiction in being entertained by the cabaret strains of *Those Were the Days* (a 1968 pop song by Mary Hopkin with catchy lyrics like, “we’d live the life we choose, we’d fight and never lose”), while, in this new socialist society, the everyday lives of so many Vietnamese people remained depressed. One former Vietnamese intellectual who fled the country in 1979 as one of the many boat people, wrote that Western music, like all people and activities associated with the capitalist ways of the former South Vietnam, was considered “false” by the new communist regime.<sup>37</sup> Others called Western popular music “yellow” [vàng], a term that signified variously that it was “unwholesome,” reactionary music hostile to the revolution, or “neo-colonial poison” for those of the south who listened to it.<sup>38</sup>

Contradictions were also evident on the streets of Hồ Chí Minh City, where urban poverty stood in stark contrast to the relics of pre-1975 affluence, such as lines of abandoned Chevrolet “Bel Airs” (Photo 9). Just a few years earlier, Sài Gòn’s streets had been crowded with bustling traffic. By 1978, however, private motor vehicles had been banned, and fuel costs and shortages would have prevented their use even if they had been permitted.<sup>39</sup> As a result, bicycles became the primary means of urban transport (Photo 10).





Photo 9: Abandoned Chevrolets in Hồ Chí Minh City



Photo 10: Parked bicycles in Hồ Chí Minh City

Our tour took place during Vietnam’s National Day of Independence, commemorating when President Hồ Chí Minh declared Vietnam’s Independence on 2 September 1945. This celebration was still a recent experience for the residents of Hồ Chí Minh City, with parades and festivities reflecting both national pride and the influence of the socialist state.

One of the central aspects of the celebrations was the prominent display of images of “Uncle Hồ” (Photo 11). Parades featured both military and civilian leaders, as well as veterans (Photo 12). The strong presence of women’s military units in the parade (Photos 13 and 14) underscored their prominent contributions to the war effort.<sup>40</sup>

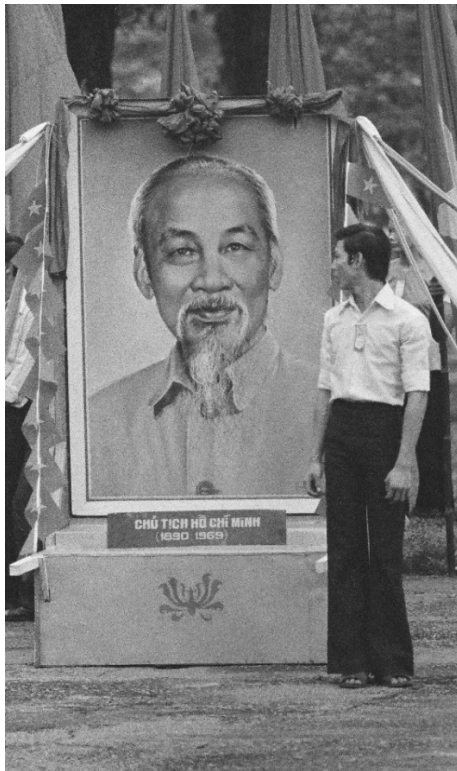


Photo 11: "Uncle Ho"



Photo 12: Military and civil elites marching on Independence Day



Photo 13: Women's military unit



Photo 14: A member of the women's military unit

The parades also highlighted the participation of children, many of whom wore white tops and red scarves. These young participants were members of the Hồ Chí Minh Youth Pioneers Association, an organization established in the early 1940s in the north and extended to the south after 1975, which encouraged children to embrace and promote socialist ideals (Photos



15 and 16). This image of disciplined, uniformed youth stood in marked contrast to the numerous children visible on the streets of Hồ Chí Minh City.



Photo 15: Marching young Pioneers



Photo 16: A young Pioneer

## Hà Nội and the North



Photo 17: A street scene in Hà Nội

To our tourist group, Hà Nội appeared economically depressed and underdeveloped compared to Hồ Chí Minh City (Photo 17), reflecting the distinct historical and political trajectories each city had followed over the previous thirty years. While there was a general absence of Western photographic images of Hà Nội at this time, several notable exceptions emerged in the following years. These included the work of Thomas Billhardt,<sup>41</sup> an East German photographer known for his photojournalism in Hà Nội during the war, who returned several times after the war. Additionally, the photography of John Ramsden,<sup>42</sup> a British diplomat stationed in Hà Nội from 1980 to 1982, and William Crawford,<sup>43</sup> an American photographer working in Hà Nội starting in 1985, provided valuable documentation of postwar life in the city.

The densely populated Red River Delta region endured devastating U.S. bombing during the war, and Hà Nội was particularly affected by the infamous “Christmas bombing” of December 1972, described by one US researcher as “the most extensive bombing campaign in the history of warfare.”<sup>44</sup> The war’s toll, combined with the Soviet-inspired “high socialism” that began after Hồ Chí Minh’s defeat of the French in 1954, left Hà Nội and most of its citizens in dire economic straits. Material conditions were poor, and basic commodities, especially food, were in short supply and rationed.<sup>45</sup> Long queues for rationed goods were a constant feature of daily life,<sup>46</sup> and life remained a struggle, particularly for Hà Nội’s aging residents who had lived through the deprivations of the war years (Photos 18, 19, 20). As finding food at government stores was a “nightmare,”<sup>47</sup> there was a proliferation of street vendors selling food produce in the illicit informal economy<sup>48</sup> (Photo 21, 22).



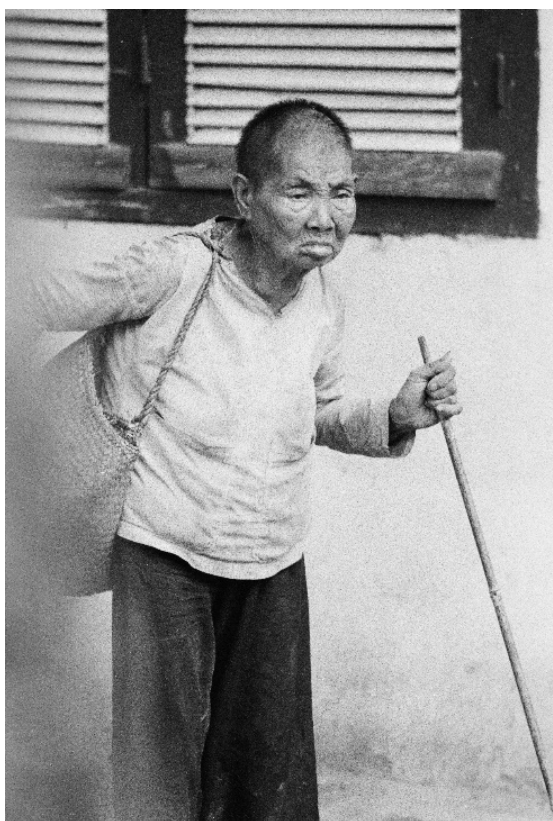


Photo 18: An aging citizen of Hà Nội



Photo 19: An aging citizen of Hà Nội

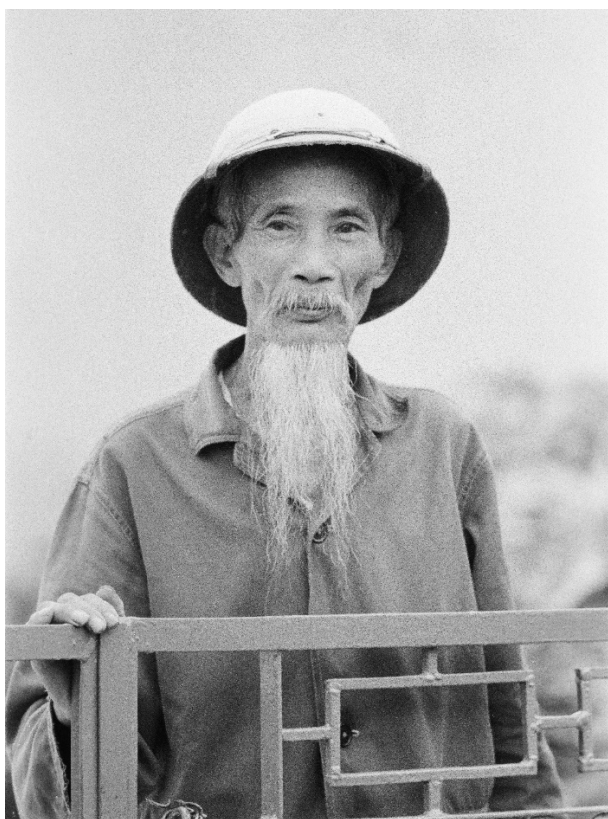


Photo 20: An aging citizen of Hà Nội

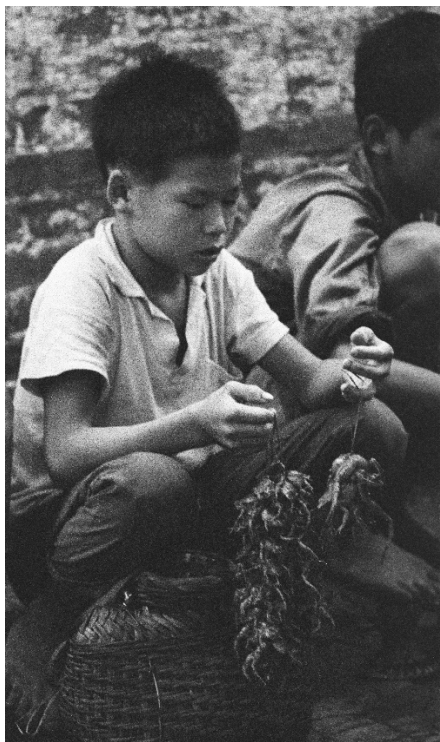


Photo 21: A young boy selling frogs



Photo 22: Street vendors selling food, mainly fruit and vegetables

The streets of Hà Nội were sparsely populated with motor vehicles, and transportation was largely reliant on bicycles, rickshaws, or the aging but heavily utilized tram network—often featuring young children clinging to the rear of crowded trams (Photos 23, 24, 25). Water buffalo-drawn carts still featured on Hà Nội's main streets (Photo 26). Houses, many displaying French colonial influence, were typically overcrowded, shared, and poorly maintained (Photo 27). Contemporary reflections on childhoods during this time in Hà Nội indicate that houses lacked basic amenities such as access to clean water, and that they featured cramped, leaky rooms and communal kitchens and toilets.<sup>49</sup>



Photo 23: Bicycle travel on Hà Nội streets



Photo 24: A crowded tram in central Hà Nội



Photo 25: Typical tram travel for young children





Photo 26: A water buffalo-drawn cart in a busy Hà Nội street



Photo 27: Hà Nội houses

A large proportion of men of working age were in the military. A 1960 draft law had mandated conscription for all men aged 18 to 27, requiring at least two years of service. This high level of military mobilization continued even after 1975 and reunification as the border



conflict with Cambodia continued, escalating to war in late 1978, and with the subsequent war with China. An undercurrent of militarism was evident in Hà Nội, as seen in the widespread presence of men in uniform and rifle drills in the city's parks (Photo 28).



Photo 28: Rifle drills in a Hà Nội city park

Life in the countryside outside of Hà Nội was similarly grim. Ensuring sufficient rice for the population was a constant issue for Hồ Chí Minh's newly formed socialist government from the mid-1950s onward. The combination of the ongoing war with the United States and South Vietnam, and the difficulties in establishing a state-managed collective economy in the Red River Delta caused a steady decline in rice production from the early 1960s through the 1970s. Consequently, many rural communities remained impoverished (Photos 29, 30). One researcher noted that by the late 1970s, the Vietnamese command economy was in a state of crisis.<sup>50</sup>



Photo 29: Rural life in Hòa Bình Province



Photo 30: Winnowing rice in rural Hòa Bình Province

## Concluding Comments

Our tour of Vietnam occurred at a pivotal time in the country's history. The war with the United States had ended, and the newly unified Socialist Republic was navigating the challenges of implementing a socialist system in the south while consolidating it in the north. There was also an impending war with Cambodia and China.<sup>51</sup> That year, 1978 was an early year in the “subsidy period,” a period that one U.S. researcher has described as “arguably the darkest hour for Việt Nam in a history of many hard times.”<sup>52</sup>

In the past two decades, the subsidy period has increasingly been recognized as a distinct historical era in Vietnam, attracting closer scrutiny as researchers have focused on the everyday life experiences of “ordinary citizens.” This shift in awareness can be traced in part to a 2006 exhibition at the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology in Hà Nội titled *Hà Nội Life Under the Subsidy Economy (1975-1986)*. As the scholar Ken MacLean has argued, the exhibition officially invited the public to reflect on the strategies Hà Nội residents employed to navigate a time marked by “seemingly endless deprivation of basic necessities.”<sup>53</sup> Prior to the exhibition, the period of “high socialism” in Vietnam had been relatively neglected in official histories, but the exhibition marked the beginning of the “rehabilitation of this decade.”<sup>54</sup>

Ironically, despite the widespread hardships that rendered the subsidy period a “dark” chapter in Vietnam's history, the 2006 exhibition encouraged a degree of nostalgia for this period.<sup>55</sup> It provided citizens who had lived through the subsidy period with the opportunity to “reminisce about the past they had experienced.”<sup>56</sup> MacLean cites a former engineer who claimed the subsidy period was “a time of hardships, but also greater equality in society.”<sup>57</sup> Interestingly, recent research indicates that reminiscing about the subsidy period has been “commodified” for tourism in contemporary Vietnam. This phenomenon, referred to as “recreational communism,” includes the emergence of restaurants and cafés designed to recreate aspects of daily life during the subsidy era.<sup>58</sup>

The photographs featured in this essay have only recently been resurrected and digitally scanned after nearly half a century in storage. They present everyday life in Vietnam in 1978 from my perspective at the time: as a tourist and a young high school history teacher from Melbourne with a passion for photography. Revisiting these images for publication has required me to view them anew, now as a retiring academic from a different discipline, providing a historical context that is both reflexive and informed.

I recognize, however, that my perspective on Vietnam—particularly during this postwar era known as the subsidy period—is just one among many. Perspectives inevitably differ depending on a variety of factors, including sociopolitical background. For instance, local Hanoians, who may nostalgically recall a more egalitarian era despite the endless queues for food, are likely to view this period very differently from many members of the Vietnamese diaspora, who fled the country as boat people at the same time I was touring the country.

I am also cognizant that my perspective could have been profoundly different under other circumstances. Had I obtained Australian citizenship a few years earlier, my name might have been drawn in the “birthday ballot” that determined conscription for the Vietnam War. In that case, my experiences—and my view of life in Vietnam—might have taken a very different trajectory.

But regardless of varying perspectives, hopefully this photo essay offers a contribution to documenting everyday life in Việt Nam during this so-called “darkest hour,” albeit framed through the lens of a Western tourist.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Stewart Fraser, “The Four Rs of Vietnamese Education: Revolution, Reunification, Reconciliation, and Redevelopment,” *Phi Delta Kappan*, 58, no. 10 (1977): 730-734.

<sup>2</sup> Ken MacLean, “The Rehabilitation of an Uncomfortable Past: Everyday Life in Vietnam During the Subsidy Period (1975–1986),” *History and Anthropology*, 19, no. 3 (2008): 281-303; Nguyen Van Huy, “Life in Hanoi in the State Subsidy Period: Questions Raised in Social Criticism and Social Reminiscences,” in *Historicizing Theories, Identities, and Nations*, ed. Regna Darnell and Frederic Gleach (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 219-251.

<sup>3</sup> Thi Lam Dien Tran, “People of Hà Nội in the Bao Cấp Era: Everyday Life Under Vietnamese Socialist Rule, 1954-1986” (master’s thesis, University of Ottawa, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> See Christina Schwenkel, “Post/Socialist Affect: Ruination and Reconstruction of the Nation in Urban Vietnam,” *Cultural Anthropology*, 28, no. 2 (2013): 252-277.

<sup>5</sup> For example, see “Impressions: Australians in Vietnam: Photography, Art and the War,” [https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/exhibitions/impressions/aust\\_vietnam](https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/exhibitions/impressions/aust_vietnam) (accessed 16 May, 2024).

<sup>6</sup> Patrick Hagopian, “Vietnam War Photography as a Locus of Memory,” in *Locating Memory: Photographic Acts*, ed. Annette Kuhn and Kirsten Emiko McAllister (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 202-222.

<sup>7</sup> Christina Schwenkel, “Exhibiting War, Reconciling Pasts: Photographic Representation and Transnational Commemoration in Contemporary Vietnam,” *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, 3, no. 1 (2008): 36-77, 39.

<sup>8</sup> For example, see “Vietnam War: 50th Year Commemoration,” <https://www.army.mil/vietnamwar/#:~:text=The%20United%20States%20of%20America,Da,y%2C%20November%2011%2C%202025> (accessed 12 November, 2024).

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<sup>9</sup> “Our Vietnam War,” <https://iview.abc.net.au/show/our-vietnam-war> (accessed May 24, 2024).

<sup>10</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

<sup>11</sup> Osamah F. Khalil, “American Orientalism,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

<sup>12</sup> See for example, Sara Blokland, “Photography Framing Poverty” (master’s thesis Film and Photographic Studies, Leiden University, 2011); Jennifer Good and Paul Lowe, *Understanding Photojournalism* (London: Routledge, 2017).

<sup>13</sup> Jennifer Good and Paul Lowe, *Understanding Photojournalism*, 79.

<sup>14</sup> Thy Phu, Erina Duganne and Andrea Noble, *Cold War Camera* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2022).

<sup>15</sup> Thy Phu, *Warring Visions: Photography and Vietnam* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022). See also Schwenkel, “Exhibiting War, Reconciling Pasts”

<sup>16</sup> Fraser, “The Four Rs,” 730.

<sup>17</sup> Hy V. Luong, *Postwar Vietnam: Dynamics of a Transforming Society* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Trương Huy San (Huy Đức), *Bên Thắng Cuộc, Tập I & II*, (Osinbook, 2012).

<sup>19</sup> For a recent account of one such journey departing from Vũng Tàu, see Joy Damousi, Filippo Nelli, Anh Nguyen Austen, Alessandro Toffoli, and Mary Tomsic, “Forced Migration, Oceanic Humanitarianism, and the Paradox of Danger and Saviour of a Vietnamese Refugee Boat Journey,” *The Historical Journal*, 65, no. 2 (2022): 505-526.

<sup>20</sup> Katharine Betts, “Boatpeople and Public Opinion,” *People and Place* 9, no. 4 (2001): 34-48; Hal G.P. Colebatch, “An Analysis of the Australian Reception of Political Refugees with Particular Reference to the Case of the Vietnamese Boat People” (PhD dissertation, University of Western Australia, 1994).

<sup>21</sup> For example: Melanie Beresford, “Revolution in the Countryside: Report on a Visit to Vietnam: October–November 1985,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 16, no. 3 (1986): 391-424; Melanie Beresford, *Vietnam: Politics, Economics, and Society* (London: Pinter, 1988).

<sup>22</sup> For an outline of popular perceptions of corruption in Sài Gòn in this era, see Tuan Hoang, “Ideology in Urban South Vietnam, 1950-1975” (PhD dissertation, Notre Dame University, 2013), 1, 4.

<sup>23</sup> Trung Dang, *Vietnam’s Post-1975 Agrarian Reforms: How Local Politics Derailed Socialist Agriculture in Southern Vietnam* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2018); Luong, *Postwar Vietnam*.

<sup>24</sup> Dana Sachs, *The Life We Were Given: Operation Babylift. International Adoption, and the Children of War in Vietnam* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999); Sabrina Thomas, *Scars of War:*



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<sup>25</sup> Jana K. Lipman, "The Face is the Road Map: Vietnamese Amerasians in U.S. Political and Popular Culture, 1980–1988," *Journal of Asian American Studies*, 14, no. 1 (2011): 33-68, 33.

<sup>26</sup> Sascha Wölck and Christina Rogers, "Labeling Difference – On Discrimination and the Social Standing of Children Fathered by US Soldiers During the Vietnam War," in *Linguistic Construction of Ethnic Borders*, eds. Peter Rosenberg, Konstanze Jungbluth and Dagna Zinkhahn Rhobodes (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2015), 113-129.

<sup>27</sup> Lipman, "The Face in the Roadmap."

<sup>28</sup> Lipman, "The Face in the Roadmap"; Wölck and Rogers, "Labeling Difference."

<sup>29</sup> Lipman, "The Face in the Roadmap," 47.

<sup>30</sup> Trin Yarbrough, *Surviving Twice: Amerasian Children of the Vietnam War* (Washington DC: Potomac Books, 2005).

<sup>31</sup> Stewart Fraser and Tony Knight, "Vietnam: Drug Addiction: Whose Problem? A Case Study from Ho Chi Minh City," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 14, no. 3 (1981): 138-146.

<sup>32</sup> Fraser and Knight, "Vietnam: Drug Addiction."

<sup>33</sup> Fraser and Knight, "Vietnam: Drug Addiction," 144.

<sup>34</sup> Fraser and Knight, "Vietnam: Drug Addiction," 139.

<sup>35</sup> Fraser and Knight, "Vietnam: Drug Addiction." 140.

<sup>36</sup> Nguyễn-Võ Thu-Hương, *The Ironies of Freedom: Sex, Culture, and Neoliberal Governance in Vietnam* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2008), quote on 174.

<sup>37</sup> Nguyen Long, *After Saigon Fell: Daily Life Under the Vietnamese Communists* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of Asian Studies, 1981).

<sup>38</sup> Philip Taylor, "Music as 'Neo-Colonial Poison' in Postwar Southern Vietnam," *Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 14, no. 1 (2000): 99-131.

<sup>39</sup> Nguyen Long, *After Saigon Fell*.

<sup>40</sup> Sandra C. Taylor, *Vietnamese Women at War: Fighting for Ho Chi Minh and the Revolution* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999); Karen G. Turner, "Vietnam as a Woman's War," in *A Companion to the Vietnam War*, ed. Marilyn B. Young and Robert Buzzanco (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 93-111.

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- <sup>45</sup> Melinda T. Kerkvliet, "The Food Problem in Hanoi During the Subsidy Period: How Workers Coped," *South East Asia Research*, 19, no. 1 (2011): 83-106; Thi Lam Dien Tran, "People of Hà Nội in the Bao Cấp Era"; Sarah Turner, Hanh Thuy Ngo, Thao Dinh Nguyen and Yvette Buttery, "From Strict Socialism to Social Evils: Changing Childhoods over Three Generations in Urban Vietnam," *Population, Space and Place*, 30, no. 6 (2024); Nguyen Van Huy, "Life in Hanoi in the State Subsidy Period";
- <sup>46</sup> Ken MacLean, "The Rehabilitation of an Uncomfortable Past"; Margaret Bodemer, "Making Ordinary People Actors in National History: 'Hanoi Life Under the Subsidy Economy' in the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology," *Suomen Antropologi: Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society*, 35, no. 2 (2010): 56-67.
- <sup>47</sup> Kerkvliet, "The Food Problem in Hanoi During the Subsidy Period," 91.
- <sup>48</sup> Lisa Barthelmes, "Mobile Street Vendors in Hanoi: Features and Dynamics of a Distinct Socio-economic Group," *Vietnam Social Sciences*, 4 (2015): 73-81.
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- <sup>53</sup> Bodemer, "Making Ordinary People Actors in National History," 58.
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- <sup>56</sup> Nguyen Van Huy, "Life in Hanoi in the State Subsidy Period," 243.
- <sup>57</sup> MacLean, "The Rehabilitation of an Uncomfortable Past," 296.
- <sup>58</sup> Emmanuelle Peyvel, "50 Shades of Red: Recreational Communism in Post-Socialist Vietnam," *Tourist Studies*, 21, no. 4 (2021): 526–549.

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